EVALUATION OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS PROGRAMME FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT INITITIATIVE IN LIBERIA

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Approval of the Thesis

EVALUATION OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS PROGRAMME FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT INITITIATIVE IN LIBERIA

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Doctor of Philosophy in Education

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Abstract

EVALUATION OF EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS PROGRAMME FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT INITITIATIVE IN LIBERIA.

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Inadequate employability skills is the major contributor to extreme poverty in Less Developed Countries (LDCs). Education data from FHI360 (2014) asserts that 51.0 percent of the Liberian population aged 15 and 24 are illiterate and 60.0 percent did not complete primary education. Current literature lacks evidence on the role of motivation and apprenticeship towards decent jobs in informal economies. Challenge faced by LDCs is evaluating the effectiveness of employability skills that enable youths' access to decent jobs.

This study advanced evaluation strategy of contribution analysis for effective employment interventions. The three theories that dominate this study include the good theory about soft and employability skills, experiential learning within the context of communication, informal learning about apprenticeship placements, and an extensive review of employment theories. The research adopted mixed methods approach, randomised, stratified and purposive sampling techniques and surveyed a sample of 85 youth drawn from Montserrado, Bong and Buchanan Counties of Liberia. Data collection instruments used were structured questionnaires and interviews.

The research hypothesis were tested using SPSS, Pivot Tables and XLSTAT statistical tools. Analytical techniques used consist of Factor Analysis, Cronbach Alpha and Correlation Coefficient. Study tested an employment theory of change and extensively discussed the policy implications. Results showed that investment in employability skills provided a platform where youths became financially independent shortly after the skills acquisition, but poor in the long-run on account of low work motivation. Furthermore, an employment ecosystem, will enable youth live above the international poverty line of $2 a day. Study elaborated on the required ecosystems for decent job creation through evidence-based processes for learning and adaptation of humanitarian interventions in employment. Study provided new knowledge about contribution analysis for micro and macro interventions in predominantly informal economies.

Keywords: Employment Ecosystem, Soft Skills, Employability Skills, Youth Intervention, Empowerment, Contribution Analysis, Apprenticeship Knowledge, Work Motivation, Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis has been composed solely by myself and that it has not been submitted, in whole or in part, in any previous application for a degree. Except where states otherwise by reference or acknowledgment, the work presented is entirely my own.

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List of Abbreviations

AFD	The Agence Française de Développement
AK	Apprenticeship Knowledge
ALMP	Active Labour Market Policies
AS	Attrition Support
BV	Baseline Value
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CV	Curriculum Vitae
CLA	Collaborate, Learn and Adapt
CRM	Customer Relationship Management
DV	Dependent Variable
DSEXP	Debt Servicing as a ratio of Exports Earnings
E&E	Employment and Entrepreneurship
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
FY	Fiscal Year
FHI360	Family Health International 360
FME	Federal Ministry of Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoL	Government of Liberia
GYCs	Government Youth Centres
GTM	Grounded Theory Methodology
HRM	Human Resources Management
HIES	Household Income and Expenditure Survey
ICT	Information, Communication and Technology
ILO	International Labour Organisation

INGOS	International Non-Governmental Organisations
IV	Independent Variables
IPs	Implementing Partners
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
LDCs	Less Developed Countries
LGEAs	Local Government Education Authorities
LISGIS	Liberia Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Services
LNYP	Liberia National Youth Policy
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
MOYS	Ministry of Youth and Sports
MSMEs	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises
N	No
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
Oc	Outcomes
Op	Outputs
PBIGDP	Public Investment to GDP ratio
POPGR	Population Growth Rate
PRIGDP	Private Investment to GDP ratio
PROSPECTS	Promoting Sustainable Partnership for Economic Transformation
RAG	Red, Amber, and Green
REB	Research Ethics Board
SADD	Sex and Age Disaggregated Data
SIDA	Sweden International Development Agency
SMEs	Small-and-Medium-sized Enterprises
SEL	Soft and Employability Skills

SIDA	Sweden International Development Agency
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Result-oriented, and Timely
SMOEs	State Ministries of Education
SMT	Senior Management Team
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SSP	Soft Skills Practice
TOT	Terms of Trade
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN-DDRR	United Nations Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration Program
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USAID	United Stated Agency for International Development
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
WB-MPO	World Bank Macro Poverty Outlook
WM	Work-Readiness Motivation
Y	Yes
YIF	Youth Investment Fund

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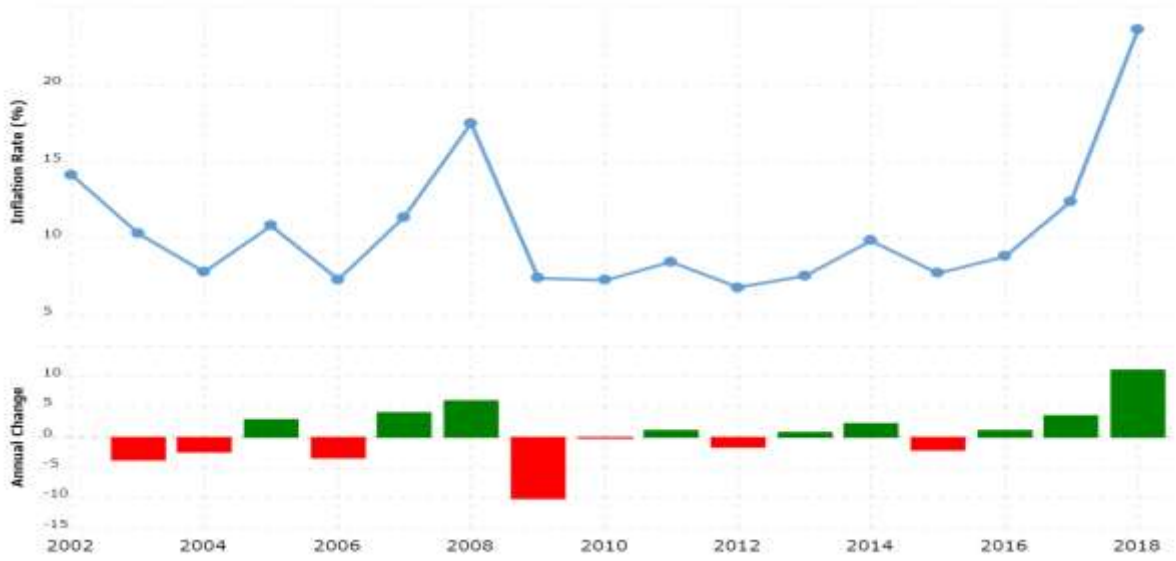
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Currently, there has been a dramatic increase in the Liberian youth population under the age of 35 according to the Liberia National Youth Policy (2012). Youth account for over 70 percent of its population and have a yearly growth rate of 2.6 percent (Blum et al., 2019). Amidst the population growth, World Bank (2018) report states that 71.6 percent of people resident in rural areas live below the poverty line and 31.5 percent of Liberians resident in urban areas are poor and spend below $2 a day. Of note from the data analysis, is that 68 percent (1.46 million people) of Liberian poor are residents in rural areas. Poverty and acute hunger are a major vulnerability of youthful populations in low-income countries around the world. According to the World Bank (2018) Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES), 54 percent of poor Liberians (2.1 million) live on below $2 a day out of which 18 percent live in extreme poverty and spend below $1 a day. Despite the high poverty indicators, only 2.03 percent of the labor force are actively looking for a job.

Figure 1: *Liberia's Inflation Rates over Ten Years' Period*



Note: Data Source from World Bank MPO, 2020

The above graph depicts the very high unpredictability of prices of goods and services in Liberia and an annual change of 11.14 percent. As of 2018, the inflation rate was 23.56 percent. This implies very low production capacity of goods and services in Liberia with substantially more imports than exports. World Bank MPO (2020) report states high inflation rates negatively affected purchasing power and welfare, due to year-on-year currency depreciation by 29.4 percent, weak supply-side, large fiscal deficit financed by government borrowing. Forecasted estimates of debt as a % of GDP for FY 2021 is at 68 percent with 35.9 percent increase in food prices because of poor harvest for FY2020. The authors estimate global conditions due to Covid-19 and delayed policy implementation by the Liberian government will result to a contracted real GDP by 2.2 percent with poverty increase from 44.5 percent in 2019 to 45.4 percent in 2020. A combination of this macroeconomic trends highlights the vulnerability of Liberian youths to internal and external economic shocks.

A large proportion of the youth population in Liberia are vulnerable females, work in the informal sector, fall below the poverty line, have a primary education or less and generally younger (Blum et al., 2019). Support data from (FHI360 Education Policy and Data Center, 2014) shows 51.0 percent of the population aged between 15 and 24 years old are illiterate and approximately 60.0 percent did not complete primary education. Another aspect of vulnerability is Liberia having one of the highest teenage pregnancy rates in the world, with 37.0% of young women between the ages of 20-24 giving birth before the age of 18 years old (FHI360 Education Policy and Data Center, 2014). The different studies suggest teenage pregnancy and a lack of family planning are two contributors to Liberia's high rates of maternal mortality.

Historically, the first contributory factor to youth vulnerability is the Liberian 14-year civil war that ended in 2003, which resulted in domestic strife that destroyed productive capacities, obliterated basic infrastructure, and weakened its institutions (Cuaresma et al., 2018). The UN Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (DDRR) program disarmed and demobilised more than 104,000 persons, with 24 percent being women and 11 percent children (Hanson, 2007). A second contributory factor is the Ebola virus epidemic that ravaged Liberia between 2014 and 2015. The total number of reported Ebola cases were 10,675 and 4,809 deaths as at 7th April 2015 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019). The weakened healthcare system was because of the civil war in Liberia.

Towards support for youth employment and empowerment, the Liberia National Youth Policy (LNYP) and Action Plan was developed in year 2015 with funding from United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) through the Ministry of Youth and Sports (Liberia National Youth Policy, 2015). United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) started operations in Liberia since 1979 with a focus on youth interventions focused on

sexual and reproductive healthcare services, protection against early child marriage and pregnancy among girls (UNFPA, 2012). The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) Liberia started operations in FY1990 with a focus on better welfare for children and women through increased access to education; better nutrition; access to clean water; protection against violence; and better hygiene and sanitation for Liberians (Unicef, 2018). The Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS) is the coordinator for all youth empowerment programs and was created by an act of the National Legislature in 1982 (Government of Liberia, 2020). MYS mission statement is the championing of youth empowerment, the provision of youth opportunity programs and sports development. Its core functions are development and monitoring of youth policies; develop and manage youth resource centres; and promotion of entrepreneurship and life skills training for Liberian youths.

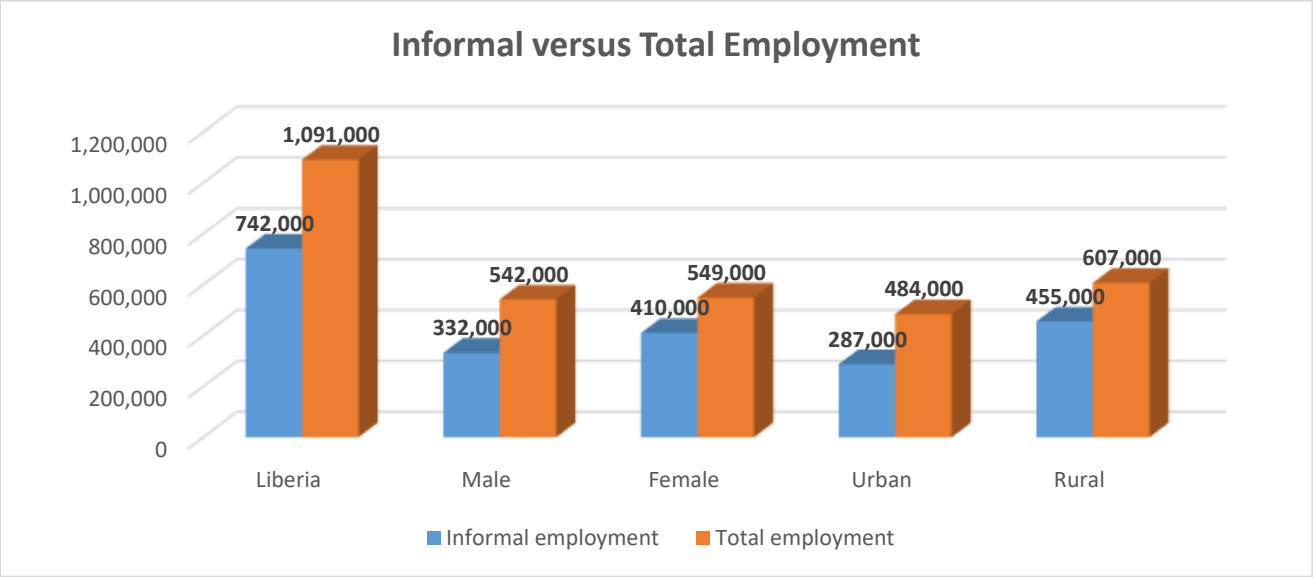
Most employment interventions that directly target unemployment have relied heavily on funds from international donors. The Sweden International Development Agency (SIDA) was established 1995 as a government agency of the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, with the goal of enabling people living in poverty and oppression to improve their lives in developing countries (SIDA, 2020). SIDA invested over $15 million dollars between 2013 and 2020 in apprenticeship placements, soft skills training, and grants for entrepreneurship, while the USAID sponsored nationally representative employment studies (PROSPECTS Midline Evaluation Report (2019). When local partners such as the Government of Liberia (GoL) do not financially own employment interventions and in consideration of donor fatigue, there is risk of youth restiveness, increased crime, poorer health of the populace and higher illiteracy levels (Cuaresma et al., 2018). This lack of funding by the Liberian government and local partners hinders the sustainability of employment interventions to operate at scale towards poverty alleviation.

Figure 2: *Unemployment Rate in Liberia*

Note: Data source from World Bank, 2020

Closer observation over a twenty years' period shows marginal decline of unemployment rate from about 2.7 percent in FY2000 to 2.03 percent in FY2020. Despite the lower unemployment rate, underemployed persons were excluded in the estimates for persons living below the poverty line and measure for unemployment rate (LISGIS, 2010). These poorly remunerated individuals excluded in the measurement of unemployment rate are persons employed in the agricultural sector; persons producing goods and services for household own use; persons referred to as technicians; and persons working in establishments with below five employees (LISGIS, 2010). According to the report, 68% of 1,091,000 employed persons are engaged in informal employment which this paper refers to as underemployed persons.

Figure 3: *Rate of Informal Unemployment in Liberia*



Note: Data source: LISGIS, 2010

Overview in Liberia shows the informal sector employs majority of youths with significantly more female (74.7%) compared to males (61.3%) informally employed. The rural areas in Liberia informally employ majority of youths compared to urban settlements. Patterns show significantly more youths are informally employed (75%) and work in rural settlements compared to youths working in urban settlements (59.3%). Evidence from literature suggests poverty is strongly linked with informal work, low income compared to formal employment and reinforces exploitative working conditions (Williams, 2014).

The above highlights the dilemma of high real unemployment amidst other economic challenges. Creation of gainful employment for Liberians requires a better understanding of what soft skills promote employability skills for youths' resident in primarily informal economies. The emphasis is on how effective the different aspects of soft skills training for youths are to youth accepting job offers and maintaining paid employment.

Background of the Problem

Unemployment and underemployment as key drivers of poverty is a problem for Liberia. Of interest is the increase in estimates of Liberians that live below the poverty line from 18 percent (790,380) in year 2014 to 39.2 percent (2,244,873) in year 2018 (Cuaresma et al., 2018). Several studies that interviewed employers suggest soft and employability skills assist youth access employment (Rakesh, 2009; Viswanathan, 2009; Remedios, 2012). The major effect of unemployment is lower disposable income in the economy as people either lose jobs or have no access to employment. This results in low demand for goods and lower living standards for the unemployed. According to Perschler (2017), unemployment rate in Liberia decreased from 2.78 percent in FY1999 to 2.03 percent in FY2019. Further analysis shows inflation rate increased from 3.56 percent in 2004 to 13.5 percent projected for 2024 with high variance. Interestingly, GDP for Liberia has been on steady positive increase from 0.9 percent in 2004 to projections of 3.73 percent for FY2024.

In context, the available data shows despite the slow GDP growth, price change of goods and services varied greatly due to high inflation rates, there are 39.2 percent of the Liberian population living on below $2 a day (Perschler, 2017). Therefore, high unemployment rate is not the sole problem rather it is the quality of available jobs that provide gainful employment. This implies that access to employment only reduces unemployment rate and reflects on a slow GDP growth. Lower unemployment rate at 2.03 percent had no effect on reduction of extreme poverty rate in Liberia. From an evidence base, there is need for better targeted interventions focused of youth access to gainful employment will lead to higher confidence in economic future of Liberians.

Interventions by the Liberian Government have been heavily subsidised by international donors, with one flagship SIDA funded program named Promoting Sustainable Partnership for

Economic Transformation (PROSPECTS). One of the reasons for the choice of PROSPECTS employment intervention in Liberia is youth below 35 years of age are the majority in the demographics and major stakeholders that will sustain peace-time gains after a prolonged civil war that lasted over 14 years. The Ebola epidemic in Liberia negatively contributed to majority of youth with little or no education, unemployment, and an underemployed population. The Liberia National Census of 2011 reported 84 percent of Liberians were employed in the informal sector and without formal employment contracts. According to Mel et al. (2018), majority (79 percent) of Liberians were underemployed and fall within the category of 'underutilised labor', and 78 percent are considered in 'vulnerable employment', characterised by low wages, periodic or seasonal work, and insecure working conditions.

PROSPECTS III is the third SIDA funded intervention in Liberia and the PROSPECTS abbreviation stands for Promoting Sustainable Partnership in Liberia for Economic Transformation. The program objective is to help Liberian youth become gainfully employed through skill acquisition, improved market opportunities, and higher self-confidence (PROSPECTS III Set-up Report, 2017). Funded by the Swedish Embassy, the program contributes to the Government of Liberia's youth development objectives and the agenda 2030 Liberia Rising Country strategy. PROSPECTS III is building on the findings of PROSPECTS I, which ran from 2013-2014, and results of PROSPECTS II implemented from 2014-2017. PROSPECTS III is currently on-going from Sept 1, 2017, to Aug 31, 2020 with a budget of USD 5,841,533.

The program worked TVETs, Ministries of Commerce, Youth and Sports and the private sector to provide opportunities for employment and self-employment for approximately 19,182 youth in Bong, Montserrado and Nimba counties over the life of the program. PROSPECTS is made up of two sub-programs: Employment & Entrepreneurship and Social Business

Development. Employment & Entrepreneurship covers most PROSPECTS activities, from business and life skills training to apprenticeship placements, to seed funding for micro-enterprises. The Social Business component provides business mentoring, coaching and finance to Small and Medium Enterprises towards job creation (PROSPECTS III Set-up Report, 2017).

The intended results of the program was to reduce poverty in Liberia through the provision of skill acquisition centres meant to provide youth with information about available jobs, facilitate apprenticeship placement, and seed capital for business start-ups. Young people that participated in the program were expected to find sustainable jobs or create jobs that contribute to the Liberian economy. The program carried out awareness activities at community centres spread across Grand Bassa, Nimba, Bong, and Montserrado counties. The program intervention leaders engaged local businesses to ascertain job vacancies, organized orientation workshops for young job applicants, and supported employers with job interviews and supervision of apprentices.

The curriculum for the PROSPECTS intervention covered themes on business skills, capital, work-readiness skills, and networking skills that enable youth find viable businesses opportunities. Finding market opportunities for PROSPECTS meant linking employers, business owners, youth, banks and government stakeholders. PROSPECTS provided support to ecosystem actors engaged in social businesses and job placement businesses towards the enablement of youth employment. The projects focused on facilitating the supply of skilled young people and demand by employers for skilled youth. Government Youth Centres were supported with renovation of facilities to enable youth source job vacancies, get support with CV writing and grant application opportunities. PROSPECTS supported Government Facilitators with NGO coordination skills for the streamlining of interventions and scaling of support to Liberian youth.

As part of its' intervention, soft skills education and apprenticeship placement were provided to assist youths' access available jobs. Trained youths on soft skills curriculum were taught problem-solving skills, leadership, teamwork, effective communication, customer satisfaction and time management skills. The apprenticeship work placements provided youths an opportunity to practice learnt soft skills and gain hard skills. Between July 2014 and March 2017 intervention period, 701 Liberian youths received soft skills training and were placed as apprentices for three months with employers (PROSPECTS II Endline Report, 2017). After the completion of staggered work placements, 38 percent (266) youths gained employment and 62 percent (435) remained unemployed in the short run. Trained youths on soft skills curriculum were taught problem-solving skills, leadership, teamwork, effective communication, customer satisfaction and time management skills between year 2014 and 2017.

The apprenticeship work placements provided youths an opportunity to practice learnt soft skills and gain hard skills. After the completion of staggered three months' work placement for 701 youths, 38 percent (266) youths gained employment and 62 percent (435) remained unemployed in the short run (PROSPECTS II Endline Report, 2017). Access to employment has the benefits of increased income, high savings, better living standards and high labour productivity. The long-run outcomes from the intervention were not tracked and there is need to have a full picture of the sustained impact of soft and employability skills training.

There is also a lack of documentation of lessons learned implementing youth employment interventions, particularly as it affects those employed or unemployed. Only one published document is available and a Final External Evaluation of PROSPECTS II Program. The specific logical framework indicators were measured without testing the theory of change and the provision of attribution on how output relates to outcome and impact results. An example is whether the

ability to utilise soft and employability skills training to access available jobs is dependent on literacy levels, soft or hard skills.

Description of Stakeholder Groups

The Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS) manages soft and hard skills interventions through 16 Government Youth Centres (GYCs), Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions (Shaheen et al., 2020). The support provided by MOYS to Liberian youth are trainings on computer use, work-readiness training, apprenticeship placement, business skills training, life skills training and vocational skills training. Youth initiatives are managed through an MOYS management committee that comprises the Minister (political appointee) and Directors (civil servants).

Participants in the different youth initiatives are Liberian youths that receive work-readiness training, apprenticeship placement, business skills training, business grants, life skills training and vocational skills training. The trainees are supported with effective job applications, and some end up finding gainful employment. Participants are supported with three-month apprenticeship placement at local businesses to gain work experience. At the end of the three-months apprenticeship placement, some of the apprentices are retained as employees at the local business while those not retained search for jobs with other employers. Youths are also provided with business skills training, business start-up and expansion grants. Some of the youths supported with business grants are able to run operational businesses beyond six months.

International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOS) implement youth employment and entrepreneurial initiatives on behalf of international donors such as SIDA, AFD and USAID. This INGOs such as PROSPECTS, Action Against Hunger, Save the Children and others work in

collaboration with different government ministries to implement youth employment and empowerment initiatives. Other youth stakeholders that collaborate with INGOs to implement trainings for youth participants are Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are Federation of Liberian Youth (FLY), Liberia National Student Union (LINSU) and Messengers of Peace (MOP) who have large youth membership across Liberia. The activities implemented by CSOs include government advocacy for youth empowerment, trainings on work-readiness training, apprenticeship placement, business skills training, business grants, life skills training and vocational skills training.

Stakeholder Group for the Study

Youth participants that have received employment and empowerment support are the focus for the study. Participants provide an understanding of how the youth intervention can be improved; what knowledge gained during training helped the most with finding jobs. Perspectives from participants provide experience about access to training and apprenticeship placement, the experience during training and apprenticeship placement, and the learning from application of knowledge learnt towards search for available jobs. Rather than focus solely on stakeholders that implement youth programs, study of beneficiaries (participants) provides perspectives on learning about the impact of trainings and apprenticeship placement, which influences GoL advocacy for funding of youth development initiatives. The advocacy initiatives when based on learning about the impact of interventions, provides the evidence for government to prioritise and finance youth employment and empowerment initiatives. This provides a shift from the heavy reliance on donor funding to full government ownership of job creation and access to employment opportunities for youths. Targeted audience for funding is the Liberia Legislative Committee and civil servants from the Ministry of Finance and Planning involved in the national budget initiation.

Purpose of the Project and Questions

The purpose of the project is to address the problem of mass unemployment through the identification of key drivers that enable youth access available jobs. Study examines the contribution of work-readiness training, CV writing, on-the-job experience and effective job application influences on access to employment opportunities in a less developed country context. While a complete contribution analysis would focus on all stakeholders that contribute to employment, for practical purposes the stakeholder to focus on in this analysis is the participant youth that received training and apprenticeship placement. The analysis starts with a systematic identification and validation of possible influences that enable trained youths access available jobs. The study tests the following hypothetical statement:

1. If youths get soft and employability skills training, they will be gainfully employed rather than remain unemployed.

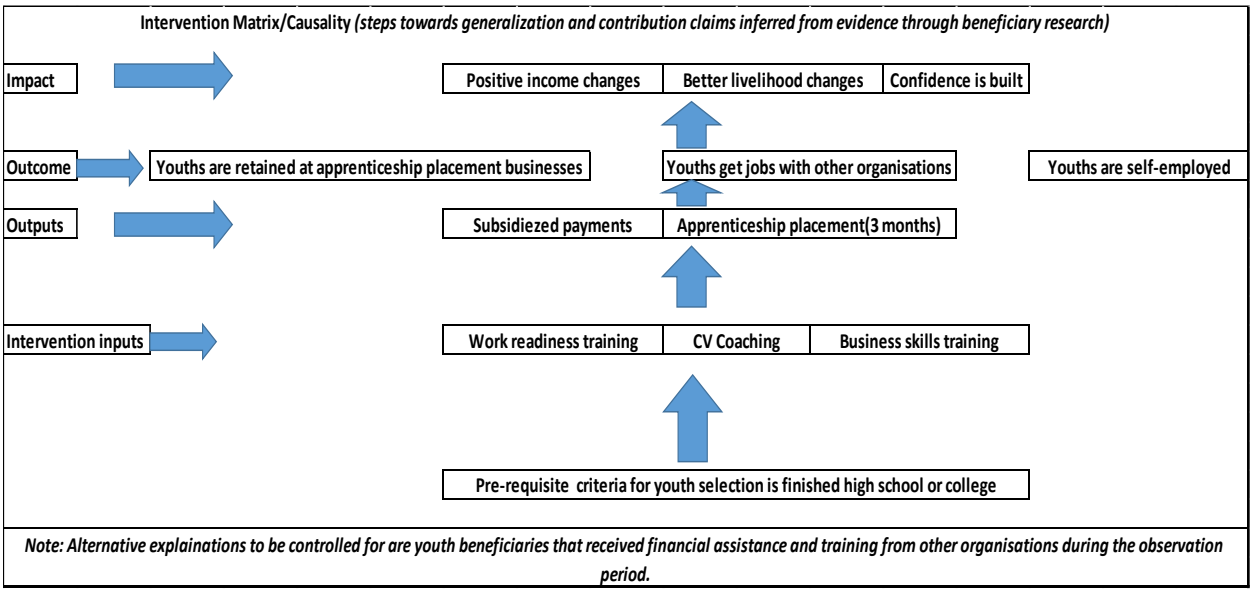
Therefore, the sub-questions that guide this study are the following:

1. What is the profile of youth who have successfully or not gained access to employment opportunities?
2. What is the interaction between actions taken by youth to access employment and how the constraint of unemployment is overcome?
3. What are the recommended knowledge and skills, motivation, and organisational solutions that lessen the effects of unemployment?

Conceptual and Methodological Framework

Conceptual framework for this study follows Wacker (2008) guidelines to 'good theory'', that emphasises internal consistency in the logically integrated sequence between variables under study; suggests relationship parsimony where the researcher explains more of the theory rather than the statistics; that a good theory sets out to state how substantially significant a finding is through detailed conceptualisation of events; and that a good theory has the prediction property of the more unlikely a predicted event will happen with different unpredictable results. Therefore, the question of whether unemployed individuals can access jobs or not after soft skills training depends on how plausible the different themes discussed within the study are and how related they are towards solving the unemployment challenges youths face in Liberia. The conceptual framework follows the field implementation impact logic set out below:

Figure 4: *Assumptions about Interventions*



(Note: Adapted from Perschler, 2017)

Above graph illustrates the assumptions about lifting youths out of poverty used by stakeholders (INGO, GoL, CSOs) involved in youth employment and empowerment initiatives. The impact

logic states that poverty alleviation is because of the provision of work-readiness training, Curriculum Vitae coaching, business skills training, business grants and apprenticeship training. The study contextualises the contribution of different support provided to youths and lessons learnt during the course of different interventions.

The methodological framework is a mixed methods research approach that follows Onwuegbuzie (2003) recommendation about the display of data, the transformation of data, the correlation of collected data, the consolidation of data, data comparison and integration. Soft skills knowledge, knowledge application, motivation of trainees, and organisational influences that contribute to access to employment will be developed based on field intervention experience in a less developed country context. These influences will be assessed through a combination of participant survey, key informant interviews, literature review and content analysis. Recommendations will be made based on research findings using an evaluative format.

Definitions

Activities: Initiatives in the work plan implemented by project managers that provide intervention outputs that are measured and assist treatment groups in an intervention.

Apprenticeship: a process individuals are trained as interns or new generation of trade practitioners with the expectation of gaining employment at the organisation at the end of placement. The training provides youth hands-on experience, work experience and salary.

Attribution: An assessment of the extent a measured change was as a result of initiatives implemented by the program and excluding external influences.

Baseline: The situation and state of a situation before an intervention starts for a target group. Prior to the start of an intervention, the current measured status of the indicators without influence of the intervention.

Business practice: The behaviour of an enterprise in terms of operating the business e.g. the way how a private school manages its functions as planning, organising, staffing (human resources), leading, controlling, accounting, financing, and marketing, etc.

Case studies: Documented papers that provide information about learning from interventions and share lessons learned from the field. Case studies profile successful interventions, lessons learned from failed interventions, and ways to scale interventions.

Competitiveness: The extent to which an enterprise can compete effectively in a sector. For youth programs, how businesses supported with grants compete, competitiveness is measured by cost of operation and quality of service (e.g., livelihood outcomes, infrastructure, faculty, etc.)

Copying: Organisations imitating implementers induced practice change.

Crowding-in: "System actors" e.g., business incubators, financial organisations, media houses, school improvement service providers, which were not targeted directly by the intervention, but have people copy the innovative aspects of interventions.

Contribution Analysis: An approach used for the assessment of casual questions and making casual inference in evaluations of field interventions. The objective is to either revise or confirm an existing theory of change for an intervention.

Employment: work that an individual is paid to do for a company, organisation, or employer. The paid work level of effort is classified as casual, full-time, or part-time employment. Employment contracts are described as either permanent (continuous) or temporary (seasonal).

Empowerment: Increasing the visibility of poor people's opinion on their affairs through decision making and access to relevant, life-saving, and valuable information.

Enterprise behaviour: Changes to the ways of doing business promoted by interventions to promote business sustainability and viability. The changes to business practices include how entrepreneurs' market themselves (e.g., proposals, innovative thinking, infrastructure, client management, etc.), how they manage their finance, how they manage (e.g., capacity development, supervision, etc.) the employees.

Estimated results: Estimated results achieved from an intervention that takes into consideration the baseline figures of an intervention and the projected targets for each indicator of the project. The achieved results could be attributed to the project using Difference-in Difference analysis or through Contribution analysis using one-time-point analysis of before and after changes.

Facilitator: Trained experts hired by the intervention to provide services that strengthen the targeted market. Facilitators intervene temporarily during the project funding period and are different from system actors that are driven solely by market incentives. The incentive for the participation of facilitators in an intervention is the provision of stipends by implementers.

Impact: The net benefits enjoyed by the project participants (beneficiaries) because of systemic change catalysed by implementers. The changes measured in the indicator plan must be plausible, attributable or the contribution was from project activities. Impact for interventions are directly contributed or attributed to intervention leaders or indirectly to partners or other actors.

Intervention: Program activities aimed at improving the market system for improved services that alleviate poverty and improve the livelihood of target groups.

Intervention area: This means the particular market constraint that implementers intend to change through training, grants, and incentives for market actors to participate productively.

Intervention guide: An internal monitoring document prepared for an intervention. It contains results chain, impact projections, detail measurement plan, assumptions, risks, and calculations etc. of the intervention.

Intervention report: Periodic project reports that document the achieved results for an intervention and shared with donors and stakeholders. The reports explain the context of the intervention, the quantitative results and lessons learned from the intervention.

Logframe: This stands for "Logical Framework", which is a table that briefs the indicators for a projects, provides the definitions for each indicator, depicting the results chain that links output to outcome and impact for a project.

Market system: The diverse actors within identified value chains involved in the exchange of goods and services with the involvement of government providing support functions.

Monitoring and results measurement (MRM): A system that provides stakeholders with understanding about project activities, output, outcome, impact, and the project changes linked (attributed or contributed) to the implementation team. The MRM system provides implementers with quantitative projections for planned activities and estimation of achievements for each indicator.

Outcomes: "Results" at the level of improved enterprise performance for "target beneficiaries".

Outputs: "Results" at the level of "systemic change" in the performance of targeted market systems.

Outreach: The number of enterprises and business development service providers (e.g., financial organisations, training organisations, etc.) reached both directly and indirectly by implementers' activities.

Projected impact: Plausible estimates of projected changes envisaged by project implementers for indicators. This projected impact for indicators are documented in results chain and indicator plans and monitored during the implementation period of interventions.

Projection: The estimated results that project implementers expect to achieve from an intervention and the related estimates are based on baseline figures and data.

Provider: A firm or agency that sustainably delivers a service to the target group.

Purpose: Outcome level of logical framework is reported at two levels in the intervention results chain. This level shows the overall benefit to enterprise, resulting from their changed (enterprise) behaviour. This level (i.e., the benefit to businesses) is the precondition of continued change in behaviour (sustainability issue), and improved benefit at individual level (impact issue).

Replication: When other program implementers, market actors or stakeholders copy and imitate innovative actions done by program implementers. This is also referred to as "crowding-in" in market development terminologies.

Results: The changes that benefit program participants which is attributed or contributed by actions of market system actors and programme implementers.

Results Chain: A hypothetical drawing that illustrates the logical relationship between activities and the impact of such activities on programme participants. It models the impact of work-streams as a chain of activities.

Rules: Guidelines used for the implementation of interventions and explains the expected performance of market actors through regulations, norms, policies and standards.

Scale: The "breadth" of outreach to individuals positively affected by an intervention.

Scale up: Actions and mechanism implemented by an intervention that is effective in reaching more participants and delivers relevant output through public and private sector partnerships.

Service market: The providers of business services, the users of such services and the transactions that occur as a result of the services supplied.

Support functions: A range of services and products that help core system actors to improve the transactions that happen during demand and supply interaction.

System actor (or market player): An organisation or individual that belongs to a class of organisations or individuals that forms a permanent feature of a market system (as opposed to a development agency or program that intervenes temporarily in market systems). Examples include banks, industry associations, policymakers, input suppliers, and enterprises.

Systemic change: Lasting and widespread change in the functioning of the market systems that increases inclusivity and beneficial outcomes for participants.

Sustainability: The extent to which gains from an intervention is sustained in the long-run for participants. Sustained gains from an intervention are enhanced and better functioning market systems and better livelihoods long after the end of an intervention.

Soft skills training: knowledge about personal attributes that allows youth discuss harmoniously and effectively with people in the workplace. The knowledge transfer focuses on leadership skills, adaptability in situations, interpersonal skills, work ethic, teamwork, problem-solving and communication skills.

Target beneficiaries: Intended beneficiaries of a program sometimes referred to as program participants. In a youth employment program, referred to as vulnerable youth that might be unemployed and without hard or soft skill. For media programs, referred to as journalists that are harassed by governments and working in difficult environments.

Technical skills training: refers to youths that received CV writing coaching, use of computers, effective job applications training and apprenticeship placements that enable hard skills development, etc.

Triangulation: The sourcing of relevant information from different data sources and arriving at conclusions drawn from all the data sources.

Unintended impact: Positive or negative impact attributed to the activities of implementers not projected and anticipated in the results chain for the project.

Youth: Young people between the ages of 15 and 35 years who are resident in Liberia.

Organisation of the Project

The study outline is broken into five chapters. Chapter 1 provided readers with concepts and impact logic terms associated with unemployment interventions. The implementing organisation mission is explained, roles played by stakeholders discussed and contributory factors that enable access to employment were introduced. Chapter 2 reviewed current literature related to unemployment, interventions, contribution analysis, government policy, and funding for youth initiatives. Chapter 3 elaborated on research methodology such as data collection method, study sample design and how data will be analysed. Chapter 4 presented the data and results from the study in a systemic manner for analysis. Chapter 5 provided findings from the study based on evidence from analysed data and reviewed literature. Recommendations in the form of solutions are offered to support management response for stakeholders involved in employment programs.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework – Soft and Employability Skills

Study reviewed academic theories on what type of soft skills enable vulnerable Liberians to gain employment, how effective soft skills thematic areas enable access to jobs and allow youth stay employed over a sustained period. The desk review follows the good theory concept advanced by Glaser (2007), where we first review the empirical theories behind skills trainings such as work-readiness, curriculum vitae coaching, business management, and apprenticeship placement. Here, discussions were focused on experiential learning within the context of communication, informal learning, and their contribution to *situational knowledge*. This section reviewed employment school of thoughts that followed Classical, Keynesian, and Post-Keynesian Economists assumptions and their relevance towards correcting labor market failures of mismatch between supply and demand for labor at both the firm and individual levels.

Some of the theories reviewed were Douglas McGregor theory X and Y, Maslow Hierarchy of Needs Theory, and Senarathne (2020) review of enterprise development needs. To provide understanding on intended labor market effects from government policies, the study examined the relativity of Active Labor Market Policies (ALMP) across the European Union and the relevance for poor developing countries towards the provision of market enabling conditions that utilise adaptive employment theories. Desk review examined the processes for interventions used by governments (GoL, EU), donor agencies (SIDA) and proffered learning based on logic for the advancement of innovative and adaptive job creation initiatives.

Good Theory Concept

This section builds the theoretical framework for the study of employability, soft skills and employment outcomes. The study reviews theories on what soft skills enable vulnerable Liberians gain employability skills. Researcher examined the theories that explain the extent of effectiveness the different soft skills thematic areas are to enabling vulnerable persons accept job offers and stay in employment over a period. The objective is to provide a theoretical framework that explains which employability interventions enable increased employment and income levels in primarily informal economies using Liberia as a case study.

Following the good theory concept, this study explores the empirical theories behind skills trainings such as work-readiness, curriculum vitae coaching, business management, and apprenticeship placement (Glaser, 2007). Secondly, a flow-based programming theory is applied to depict how identification of vulnerable youths translate to soft skill acquisition, the enabling role apprenticeship placement plays towards access to available jobs and increased income. Thirdly, process-based theories will explain the empirical relationships that exist between the dependent variable employment and independent variables such as soft skills training, apprenticeship placement and personal characteristics. Fourthly, impact-based perspective is used to examine contribution theory on the effect soft skills trainings and on-the-job experience have on access to jobs. Finally, the four theoretical perspectives of concept-based, flow-based, process-based and impact-based will be used to justify the methods to be used by the study.

Theoretical Concepts of Skill Acquisition

Requirements for conceptual definitions are conservative, unique, and simple (parsimony), this section explained the phenomenon of employability skills and intervention approaches that support access to jobs within the context of informal economies (Wacker, 2008). Mainstream

definition of soft skills focused on personal attributes that support workplace leadership skills, interpersonal skills, work ethic, problem-solving, teamwork and communication skills (Davidson et al., 2011). Davidson argues that soft skills implementation requires leadership theory because the caring leader exhibits compassion, equanimity, and kindness.

This interpersonal skill utilises critical thinking, reflection and wisdom through application of time management, job organisation and prioritisation of assigned tasks (Cukier et al., 2015). Other related studies (Mayer and Salovey, 1997) refer to soft skills as emotional intelligence as an internal process focused on an individual's ability to self-regulate. Therefore, soft skills combines both emotional intelligence and caring leadership to influence and make change.

Several authors relate soft skills to employability and in addition to interpersonal skills, also highlight the importance of listening skills, written and verbal communication skills (Finch et al., 2013). The authors add that employability skills require both soft and hard technical skills that enable students' conceptualise real-life scenarios. Employability skills gap in the literature is explained as teaching that lacks practical application in the workplace which limits the ability of students to apply taught courses to workplace scenarios (Lightweis, 2014).

Rather than focus only on formal learning processes, skills acquisition also requires informal learning that is unplanned and develops based on the situation faced by the apprentice or intern (Paisey and Paisey, 2010). The authors suggest informal learning generates situational, process and control type of knowledge. Situational knowledge allows the learner to adapt to workplace circumstances, process knowledge are techniques required to complete specific task, while control knowledge are personal and interpersonal skills such as time management, self-management, and problem-solving skills.

In the context of employability skills, we follow (Kraiger and Culbertson, 2013) definition of training as an activity that leads to knowledge acquisition, development of skills, and work ethics relevant to directing future work roles. For this study, researcher examined technical employability skills trainings such as CV writing, computer use, effective job application knowledge, and apprenticeship or intern placements which enable development of both hard and soft skills. The expectation that formal trainings when combined with informal trainings such as work placements enable students gain employment at the end of placement. Researcher's assumption is that work placements provide learners work experience, a salary and hands-on work experience. Gault et al. (2010) support our assumptions about employability trainings by stating that employers posit that job seekers with prior work experience were preferred during job interviews because they displayed better soft skills.

Most previous theoretical frameworks discussed the application of soft skills acquisition and teaching programs that use gamified training models and relationships with work placements (internships or apprenticeships), work motivation and competency (Williams-Buenzli, 2015). Yao and Tuliano (2019) further explored the contribution of a university to students gaining employability skills which they synonymously called soft skills. General pattern across the research papers is the soft skills acquisition enables learners acquire employability skills, which is referred to differently as independent skills, interpersonal relationships, critical thinking, communication, and cultural competence. The research gap from previous research papers is the none-existence of an employability theory which relates whether an amended soft skills acquisition results in employment over the long-run. While previous researchers attempted to differentiate between soft and hard skills, this research adds to existing theoretical frameworks that employability skills require a new theoretical concept that expands current soft skills definitions

focused on social competency, to include elements of hard skill such as CV writing, basic numeracy, and presentation skills. The researcher used contributory analysis and longitudinal assessment to confirm which factors in the employability theory establishes that an amended soft skills training results in sustainable employment. The case study investigated the welfare of individuals in the long-run that will eventually do paid contracted work either as casual, full-time, or part-time employment because of an amended soft skill acquisition.

Flow-based Employment Theory

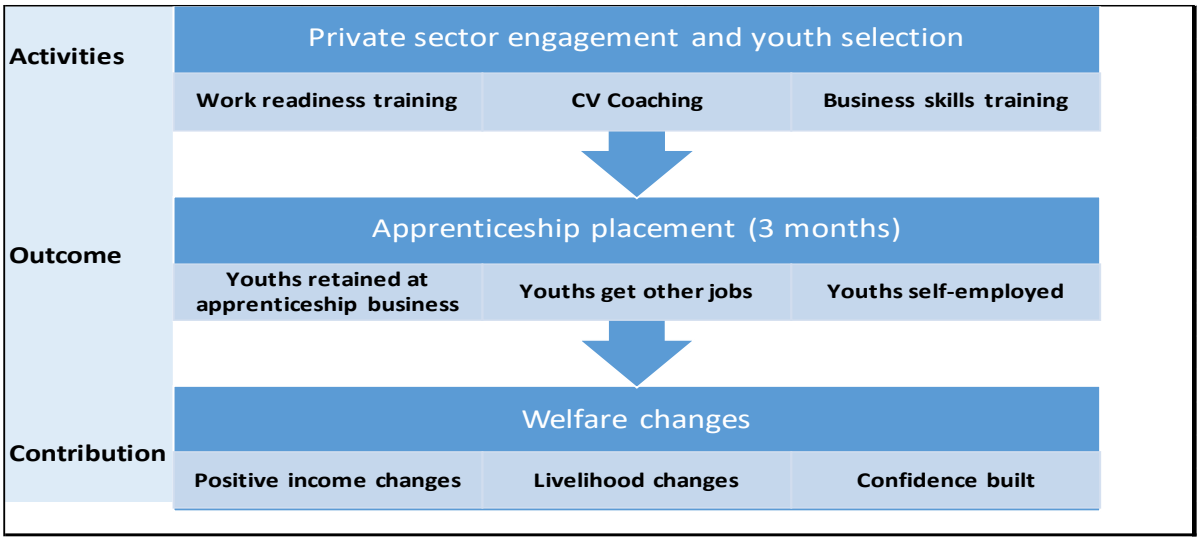
The activity flow described in this section is about a youth employment program in Liberia known as PROSPECTS. The intervention liaised with business owners to identify job placement opportunities that were available in the counties. These job vacancies were then advertised on job boards at PROSPECTS Youth Opportunity Centres (YOCs) for interested youths to apply for the job placement openings. Next, the recruitment process happens where the applicant youth is interviewed by the potential employer with PROSPECTS field staff present at the business location. If job applicant is accepted for three months job placement, PROSPECTS trains the apprentice or intern on soft skills and a pre-deployment orientation takes place.

A contract is signed by the employer, PROSPECTS and intern that stipulates conditions of job placement and a stipend of $70 monthly paid by PROSPECTS to the intern. During the three months apprenticeship job placement, spot check monitoring is done by the PROSPECTS staff to support the intern, reflection meetings are done monthly between the interns and PROSPECTS field staff monthly. At the end of the three months job placement, an outcome monitoring exercise is done to capture whether the placement business offered the intern a job. Interns who were not

offered a job after the three months job placement are further supported with access to computers for job application and encouraged to attend the Effective Job Application (EJA) training.

The study conceptualised flow-based employment theory as an amended soft skills training plays an enabling role for youths placed as interns or apprentices, as it assumes that access to jobs means increased income. In the below Figure, we provide an activity flow between theoretical trainings on an amended soft skills curriculum, experiential learning through on-the-job training, gaining employability skills that is reflected as employment and self-confidence.

Figure 5: *Employment Theory of Change*



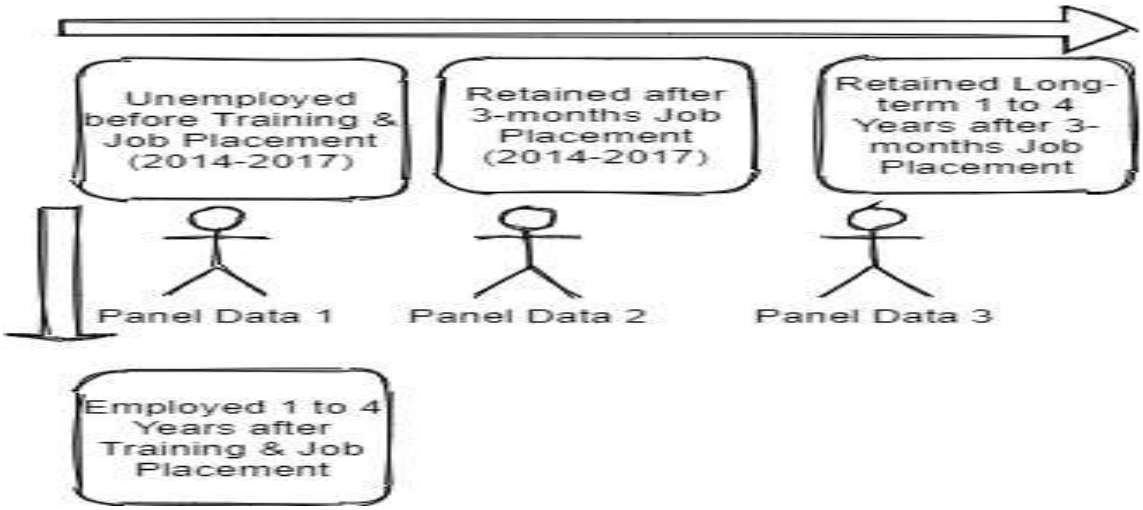
Note: Adapted from PROSPECTS 111 Set-up Document, 2017)

Process-based Employment Theory

The type of result expected due to amended soft skills training are explained through proxies. Phenomenon of access to jobs and contributory factors such as amended soft skills training are explained as process-based employment theory. The assumption behind the theory is that economic activities aimed at lifting vulnerable youths out of poverty requires both employment

and empowerment initiatives that depend on work-readiness training, curriculum vitae writing, business skills training, business grants and on-the-job placement for experiential learning. Study followed the results process for each outcome level to establish the extent of relationships between employment-related dependent variables and contributory dependent variables related to practice of behaviours learnt as part of the PROSPECTS intervention. Context is then provided on the contribution of different outcome level results to income generation and lessons learnt from the implementation of PROSPECTS employment interventions.

Figure 6: *The Relationships and Causal Effects of Employability Skills*:



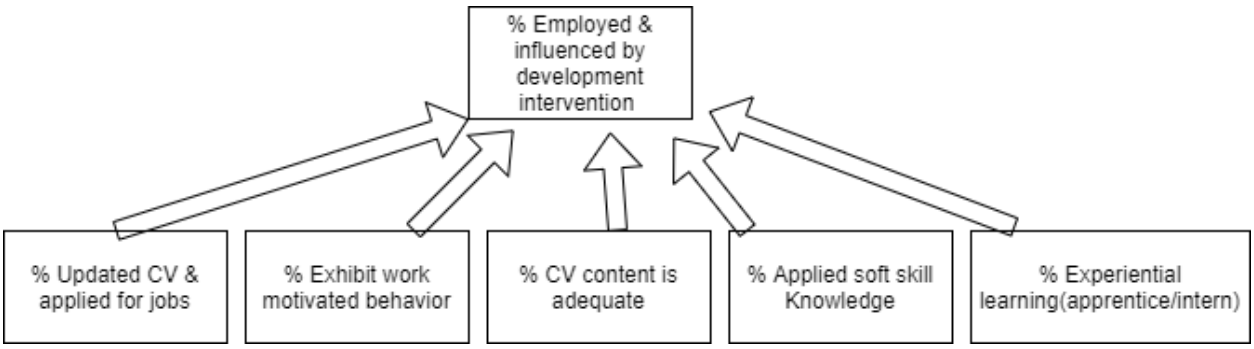
Note: Author's drawing 2020

Contribution-based Employment Theory

The study's theoretical contribution using employability skills is the practical testing of amended soft skills concepts to enhance employability interventions and validate the process-based employment theory. Study explained the how and why changes in access to employment is explained by market interventions that applied employability skills and experiential learning.

Study assumes that unemployed youth practice behaviours they learnt from PROSPECTS development intervention which is aimed at enabling access to jobs.

Figure 7: *Theoretical Framework about Contribution-based Employment*.



Note: Author's own drawing 2020

First expectation is that CV is written properly, contains accurate content, stated job experience matches advertised job, font size 12 is used for CV, there are no grammatical errors, two pages CV is submitted and specifically prepared for a potential employer. Secondly, the six expected learning behaviours from soft skills training are as follows; that youth add soft skills training to CV; travel outside immediate residence county in search of jobs; add reference names to CV; add knowledge from apprenticeship placement to CV; and reach out to personal networks when searching for a job. Thirdly, trained youth who are likely to transit between jobs always update their existing CVs and periodically apply for jobs.

Fourthly, exhibition of work motivation requires the following: communication skill; friendly work environment; supportive work environment; plan and share work among colleagues; polite and nice to customers; manage very difficult clients well; intervene to make peace when disagreements at work; have all support needed to do the job; have materials needed to do my job; task to do at my workplace is okay; do my best at work and employer helps; working yesterday or today was not boring; job more satisfying in last one year; really enjoyed working with my

employer; dress well to work despite no money; never late to work because no customers; and enjoy working hard and finishing task on time. Finally, we expect youth that gain experiential learning from work placements to be retained as employees at the placement business.

Following John Mayne contribution analysis of direct influence, study explains why and how youth get employed by discussing the gender pattern for self-employment, part-time employment, income changes and employment sectors (small businesses, construction, service sector, agriculture, technicians, and office work). The objective is to answer whether the development intervention contributed to employment level changes, we explain how and why this employment level changes occurred, the role PROSPECTS played in contributing to this employment level changes and market conditions needed to enable future employment scale (Mayne, 2012).

Role of Theoretical Framework in Study Methodology

Mixed methods research is the proposed technique that fully captures the four theoretical perspectives of concept-based, flow-based, process-based and impact based theoretical framework advanced by this dissertation. As part of the literature review, theories by different authors are reviewed which explain the study concepts such as soft skills knowledge, employability skills, motivational factors for interns, organisational influences on development interventions, and implications of access to employment. This concept-based theoretical framework assists the development research questions for the study taken from a logical review of the flow of development activities into outcome and goal level contributory changes. Desk review played a key role in the concept-based theoretical framework while qualitative data collection using Key

Informant Interviews would support the research validity for the flow-based theoretical framework for employment.

The proposed process-based employment theoretical framework requires an objective approach because of its explicit assumption that the result of soft and employability skills intervention is quantified changes in levels of employment in the society. Quantitative research supports the understanding of employment results, and we intend to carry out participant surveys. Implicit across the mixed method approach is the testing for contribution of PROSPECTS intervention to process-based employment results from the participant perspective. Therefore, rather than focus solely on rigorous quantitative impact analysis, we advance a systematic combination of quantitative contribution and a plausible logical background that explain the results from a qualitative perspective.

Theory and Concepts Conclusion

Following a pragmatic research paradigm, a combination of both subjective and objective technique is best suited for arriving at the ontological reality which soft and employability skills contribute to employment access (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2009). The study's epistemological approach to knowing what the reality of employment development interventions involved the use of both positivist and interpretivist paradigms to explain theoretical perspectives we intend to use to acquire knowledge about what works for employment interventions. For methodology, desk review will be used to explain concepts, Key Informant Interviews supports the flow-based framework, while participant surveys substantiate both the process and contribution theoretical framework.

Soft and Employability Skills Acquisition

Klaus (2010) stated that majority (75%) of successful long-term jobs depend on people skills when compared to few (25%) job success rates that depend on knowledge of domain areas. According to Sharma (2018), the people skills also called soft skills that majority of researchers discuss comprise of empathetic behavior, positive attitude, assertive communication, proper dressing, and customer service. They suggest recruiters and employers stress the importance of non-technical workforce skills such as business etiquette, interpersonal and social skills. An expanded concept of soft skill is the employability skill which tries to match organisation job profiles with required human skills. The puzzle is whether to design specific employability skills for each organisation profile as it matches required human skills.

Education as a tool to reduce unemployment has been found as very effective especially at a time of global recession and covid-19 effects (Pardo-Garcia and Maja, 2020). Cleary et al. (2006) defined general employability skills as a combination of hands-on ability, information processing and problem-solving, business skills, civic skills, interpersonal skills, team skills, responsible and resourceful skill. Study explored how innovative training itinerary and problem-solving can contribute to employment and entrepreneurship competencies that promotes sustainable development.

The Concept Soft Skills Training and Workplace Leadership

Soft skills are personal attributes that support workplace leadership skills, interpersonal skills, work ethic, problem-solving, teamwork and communication skills (Davidson et al., 2011). These workplace leadership skills provide employers an opportunity to grow their business turnover, profit and employ more people. Academics such as Remedious (2012) suggest that

personal attributes are learnt skills that provide individuals the capability to plan and work towards professional excellence with less effort and time. The study argues that personal attributes are not necessarily inherent but an acquired behavior gained from experiential training. That employers with employees that practice effective team coordination possess both soft and hard skills. So, the first group of skills are the soft skills needed to enable youth to become self-motivated, manage time effectively for effective team coordination. While the second group of skills are hard skills that are domain specific skillsets such as machine operations, accounting, technology-related activities done in the workplace.

In economies with predominantly formal employment sectors, youth access to experiential learning of soft and hard skills are easier and education levels higher than LDC with predominantly informal employment sectors. An assumption within current literature is that people vary to different degrees based on personality traits of friendliness, language use, social graces, positive nature, social traits, and personal habits (Davidson et al., 2011; Remedious, 2012). Little consideration was given to the wide personality traits gap between people resident in developed versus less developed countries. The assumption different current studies make is that recruiters will hire youth for attitude and train them for skill. This assumption might hold true for developed countries and not for developing countries due to low literacy levels, low access to the internet and difficulty of identifying people (trust). Training for soft skills is based on curriculum contents of: life-long learning and information management; entrepreneurship skill; communication skills; critical thinking and problem solving skills; leadership skills; ethics, moral and professional (Davidson et al., 2011; Remedious, 2012).

Davidsonet al., (2011) argues that soft skills implementation requires leadership theory because the caring leader exhibits compassion, equanimity, and kindness. These interpersonal

skills utilise critical thinking, reflection, and wisdom through application of time management, job organisation and prioritization of assigned tasks (Cukier et al., 2015). This supports the thesis position that formal and experiential learning in developing countries provide youth the ability to apply time management, job organisation and prioritization of assigned tasks. The theoretical gap is an evaluation of whether formal and experiential learning enable youth access decent jobs that allow for the practice of time management, job organisation and prioritization of assigned tasks.

Other related studies (Mayer and Salovey, 1997) refer to soft skills as emotional intelligence that depends on an internal process focused on an individual's ability to self-regulate. The thesis argues that emotional intelligence is a constant since development interventions includes capable youth and provides for physically challenged persons during training and placement. Soft skills combines both emotional intelligence and caring leadership to influence and make change. To influence societal change, Remedios (2012) suggests educational institutions and industry stakeholders promote awareness about soft skills and its potential to enhancing student employability. The thesis argues that an opportunity exists for evaluating the contribution of both emotional intelligence and caring leadership to influencing positive change for business owners and the livelihood of employees.

The Role of Soft Skills in Employability Skills Acquisition

Several authors suggest soft skills enable employment through interpersonal skills, listening skills, written and verbal communication skills (Finch et al., 2013). The authors add that employability skills require both soft and hard technical skills to enable student's technical concepts to real-life scenarios. Researchers' emphasise skills development through experiential learning rather than only lectures and memorising of taught courses. In a study about the gap

between accounting education and professional accreditations, Lightweis (2014, p.19) states that: *"If opportunities are not available for accounting students to use supplemental learning tools to develop or build on a professional skill set practitioners require, the gap between the accounting education and the profession will continue to be wide as ever"*.

The author points out relevance of communication during experiential learning exercises for accounting students exposed to workplace situations. Lightweis (2014, p.21) described employability skills gap as a situation where: *"Accounting educators who teach by lecture and accounting students who memorise information, but do not have the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and critical thinking, communication, and problem-solving skills through learning tools while attending school. The result has been accounting graduates who do not possess the necessary skill levels for the profession at the onset of their employment".*

Following this, we found an *employability skills gap* in the literature explained as teaching that lacks practical application in the workplace that limits the ability of students to apply taught courses to workplace scenarios. So rather than focus only on formal learning processes, skills acquisition also requires informal learning that is unplanned and develops based on the situation faced by the apprentice or intern (Paisey and Paisey, 2010). *The authors suggest informal learning generates situational, process and control type of knowledge.* Situational knowledge allows the learner to adapt to workplace circumstances, process knowledge are techniques required to complete specific task, while control knowledge are personal and interpersonal skills such as time management, self-management, and problem-solving skills.

Access to Jobs and Soft Skills Acquisition

A typical example provided in the literature suggests unemployed individuals who develop and utilise soft skills can secure high-paid job offers and successful employment (Lazarus, 2013).

The author states there are ten aspects of soft skills which comprise of work ethic, courtesy, teamwork, self-discipline and self-confidence, conformity to social norms, language proficiency, problem-solving ability, customer service orientation, and leadership. Illustrative examples of work ethic is an employed person working full-day diligently and following supervisor instructions. Applied courtesy at the workplace expects the employed person to use words such as 'thank you', 'please', 'how can I help you' and 'excuse me' when interacting with clients and colleagues. For teamwork, an employed person shares task responsibility with other team members, supports other team members' complete task and honors commitments. Individuals that display self-discipline and self-confidence prioritise task, request for assistance when needed, correct work errors, learns for experience, accept criticism, and takes instruction without feeling slighted, insulted or resentful.

Following Lazarus (2013) conformity to social norms, different workplaces expect employees to dress in a particular way, use a particular body language, tone of voice and a choice of vocabulary during conversations. Of importance is language proficiency, explained as the ability to speak, read and write in the language of the workplace in a professional manner. An employee's problem-solving ability depends on creativity, application of innovative ideas to addressing emerging workplace challenges aimed at solving technical and theoretical problems. Customer service orientation for employees imply a good understanding and appreciation of customer and teammate needs and satisfaction of those needs on time. Finally, leadership characteristic expects the employee to provide work-enabling environment that promote colleagues professional and personal growth, which enables people do their best in the organisations interest. An enabling environment would require training, induction and mentoring of new and existing team members.

During the search for relevant literature, none was found that provided evidence that soft skills acquisition led to youth employment. The definitions and theoretical concepts provided discussed soft skills in the context of expected workplace behaviors. While some researchers discuss soft skills as closely matched with interpersonal skills which can be inherent, others suggest it can be learnt through training in the form of apprenticeship or internship. *Study tested the assumption that soft skills acquisition when expanded as teachable employability skills becomes more relevant for vulnerable youths based in Less Developed Countries.*

Access to Jobs and Employability Skills

In the context of employability skills, we follow (Kraiger and Culbertson, 2013) definition of training as an activity that leads to knowledge acquisition, development of skills, and work ethics relevant to directing future work roles. For this study, we examine employability skills trainings such as CV writing, computer use, effective job application knowledge, and apprenticeship or intern placements which enable development of both hard and soft skills. The expectation that formal trainings when combined with informal trainings such as work placements enable students gain employment at the end of placement. Study assumed that work placements provide learners work experience, a salary and hands-on work experience. Gault et al. (2010) support the thesis assumptions about employability trainings by stating that employers posit job seekers with prior work experience were preferred during job interviews because they displayed better soft skills.

Most previous theoretical frameworks discussed the application of soft skills acquisition and teaching programs that use gamified training models and relationships with work placements (internships or apprenticeships), work motivation and competency (Williams-Buenzli, 2015). Yao

and Tuliano (2019) further explore the contribution of a university to students gaining employability skills which they synonymously called soft skills. General pattern across the research papers is the soft skills acquisition enables learners acquire employability skills, which is referred to differently as interpersonal relationships, independent skills, critical thinking, communication, and cultural competence. *The research gap from previous research papers is the non-existence of an employability theory which relates whether an 'amended soft skills acquisition' results in employment over the long run.*

While previous researchers attempted to differentiate between soft and hard skills, this paper adds to existing theoretical frameworks that employability skills require a new theoretical concept that expands current soft skills definitions centred on social competency, to include elements of hard skill such as CV writing, basic numeracy, and presentation skills. Study explored the use of contributory analysis to confirm which factors of employment theory confirm that an amended soft skills training results in decent employment. The study participants are individuals that eventually do paid contracted work either as casual, full-time, or part-time employment because of an amended soft skill training.

Argument for Targeted-Employability Curriculum in Schools

Current theoretical mechanisms for teaching employability skills are either through higher education institutions or sponsored youth employment initiatives. Pardo-Garcia and Maja (2020) posit trainings are done by institutions through the improvement of existing curriculum by invloving employers and the use of ICT to enable students gain variety of knowledge. Second approach used by institutions for improved employability of students is the teaching of business skills which invlove elements of soft skills such as interpersonal attributes, teamwork,

entrepreneurship, and creation of business plans. Some higher education institutions improve student employability through use of job matching mechanisms such as job search groups, internship placements, and provision of work experience for students. Finally, university alumni sometimes also provide opportunities for students to visit companies and observe technicalities behind different occupations.

The bigger picture we need to provide is the 'how' student employability skills is implemented in practice. For this, we discuss three employability skills initiative about the practical implementation of employability skills that capture the processes involved during implementation. First employability skills initiative is from Pardo-Garcia and Maja (2020) presentation of the University of Valencia and ADEIT University competition for students called MOTIVEM team ideas initiative. Second employability skills is that of Institute of Development Studies, University of Nigeria where students carry out a Field Practicum initiative. The third employability initiative discussed is sponsored by Sweden in Liberia called PROSPECTS.

MOTIVEM team ideas competition as a University of Valencia initiative allowed student teams present innovative ideas for entrepreneurship with the objective of enhancing creativity, risk-taking and develop full-blown robust business ideas for students' employability skills (Pardo-Garcia and Maja, 2020). The authors argue that students on the path to learning about creativity, students reflect and improve learning ability, act, adapt to changes and problem solve at the same time. The process involved collaboration within teams to identify opportunities and innovative solutions that lead to sustainable development. The social need is not subject specific, multidisciplinary in nature and aimed at addressing sustainable development goals of the United Nations. A mix of students from different academic years (Degree, Masters, and Doctorate) are

allowed to form teams and learn by doing problem solving, innovative thinking, relationship building, communication of ideas, thinking innovatively, and teamwork on practical projects.

Another similar employability skills initiative called Development Practicum initiative of University of Nigeria is similar but different in some ways to the MOTIVEM team ideas competition and one of the reports is documented in Udenka and Iwuamadi (2013). The authors mission was to allow student teams to identify social issues and brainstorm on innovative solutions. An opportunity is presented during the development practicum for student teams to review literature, discuss emerging development issues, carry out field visits of identified stakeholders and articulate on paper collective and innovative solutions based on logical inference from sector based role-plays of field problems by student actors. *Unlike the MOTIVEM team ideas competition, the DEVELOPMENT PRACTICUM did not have as an objective to foster employability skills but implicitly had aspects of soft skills as a component for student learning by doing.*

Udenka and Iwuamadi (2013) provided students an opportunity to work in teams towards unraveling corrupt practices in the Nigeria education sector and proffered ways to address challenges using indigenous ideas. Students were allowed to think outside the box by not just identifying corruption as a problem, but reviewing the direct impact on primary, secondary and universities from different student perspectives. They also had an opportunity to review the role of institutions in addressing corruption in the education sector such as Federal Ministry of Education (FME), State Ministries of Education (SMOEs), Local Government Education Authorities (LGEAs).

Finally, PROSPECTS Liberia provided employablity skills training for youth through different routes of entry for youths. Youths are allowed to attend any of the following trainings:

career planing for career success; effective job application; work-readiness soft skills for employment; business skills training; apprenticeship placement; and mentoring for bussiness grantees .

Based on the literature review of employability skills practice in institutions, the study states the following: 1) that awareness about the importance of soft skills are explicitly stated in curriculas so students improve skills; 2) lecturers when facilitating employability skills training actively practice soft skills with students; 3) and soft skills training (called work-readiness training under PROSPECTS) is integrated into the teaching of hard skills such as career planing, effective job application and business skills training. *Study argued that employability skills training require a strong literacy training to enable effective communication for vulnerable youths(with emphasis for female inclusion) in poor developing countries, with a merger of curriculas that inculcate practical business experiences (informal learning, field exposure) and academic learning (formal learning and enterpreneurship knowledge).* The practical business experience revolve around enterpreneurship, a process for identifying opprtunities that create or add value through innovative thinking.

This thesis argument differs from Remedios (2012) position where the latter suggest employability skills is very relevant in curriculum vitaes for graduates to professional practice. *Researcher opines that a structured and simplified employability skills curricula is far more relevant in curriculum vitaes for school drop-outs, uneducated persons, poor and marginalised populations.* The researcher's argument is that graduates are in a better position to be more literate and access employment related information that strengthen self-development options. *The current gap is the non-provision of employability skills training and the inaccessibility for illiterate and vulnerable youths in primarily informal economies.* Sustainable employability is the ability of both

educated and non-educated youth to remain employable throughout life through career development grounded in enterpreneurship, experiential learning, work experience and scientific education.

Review of Employment Theory

In this sub-chapter, we start with a historical discussion of employment theories such as Classicalist, Keynesian, and Post-Keynesian school of thought (Section 2.4.1. and 2.4.2). The ideas are discussed within the context of its implication for less developed countries. Next, we review recent economics literature on emerging employment theories that take into context recent global challenges and how they offer innovative development approaches (Section 2.4.3). A discussant approach is used to simulate how realistic and practical these new 20th century employment theories are to developing countries. Finally, a review of literature is done to capture the implications of mismatch between labour demand and supply at the firm and individual level (Section 2.4.4). The conclusion section provides a brief on new re-thinking of employment theory that enables innovation and productivity growth for less developed countries (Section 2.4.5).

Classical versus Keynesian General Theory of Employment

Keynes general theory of employment states that the level of employment in a macro economy is determined by the level of aggregate demand (Keynes, 1936). This position differs from classical economists such as Adam Smith who suggest that the level of employment is determined by the price of labour and depends on equilibrium in a competitive free market (Smith, 1776). While the classical economists posit that interest rate adjusts the equilibrium between savings and investments which allows for full employment, in contrast Keynes asserts that interest

rate solely plays a role for demand and supply of money and emphasise the additional role of income changes and its effect on levels of employment. The theoretical assumption by Keynes is that economies contract when total demand for goods and services at full employment is less than the supply of goods and services vice versa. Keynes refuted the classical economic theory which states full employment occurs naturally because of competitive markets and equilibrium conditions of supply equating demand.

Economic theory as advanced by both classical and Keynesian school of thoughts are based on the relationships that exist between people saving, investments and liquidity within an economy. While ideally savings equals investment, Keynesian employment theory recognises that different factors affect decisions to save or invest. Keynes assumption is that savings is a function of investment, and that more income increases the willingness to save money. That profitable investments are driven by marginal returns on capital invested and interest rates offered by banks. Weak demand led to accumulation of stock which reduces production and income and increases unemployment. While strong demand reduces stock of inventories, led to increased production, employment, and income. Classical economist focused on interest rate adjustments which Keynes argued only affects the monetary economy, Keynes argued that a combination of the theory of money and employment allows for relationships between interest, liquidity, production, investment, and consumption in a real economy.

Post-Keynesian General Theory of Employment

More recent post-Keynesian economics is based on the principle of effective demand, and they argue the competitive market economy does not automatically lead to full employment but that other influential factors are demand for money that affects income distribution, trade,

economic growth, and development (Eichner and Kregel, 1975). Rather than focus solely on Keynes suggestion that market failure is because of rigid price of labour or the position of classical economist that market failure is because of rigid or controlled interest rates, post-Keynesian economists posit that money supply responds to demand for money through bank loans and credit.

They argue that Central Banks adjust interest rate by managing quantity of monetary reserves in a country. *Researcher argues that market failure could be because of self-employed persons informally employed in predominantly informal economies who are unable to access bank loans and credit. That job creation in predominantly informal economies will depend on policies that enable equitable access to microfinance that lead to full employment with influential factors formal identity cards, business registrations, Know Your Customer (KYC) requirements for Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs) and Employability Skills Training.*

The employment theories proposed by Classical, Keynesians and post-Keynesian economists all assume that production capacity exists within economies, that interest rates affect decisions by market participants to either save or invest, and that Central Banks have ability to manage bank reserves. *Study expanded this argument by stating that higher interest rates of other countries affect price hike for imported goods which cause hyperinflation, thereby reduces incentive to save for market participants in low-income countries. This could be a major factor that affects 'effective demand' for low-income households.* Researcher argues that Less Developed Countries experience far more external shocks from the global economy which affect Central Bank foreign exchange reserves, that interest rate adjustment has very little effect on the price of goods and services due to the externally induced hyper- inflation, low productivity levels and high import dependence. The high dependence on foreign aid, imports and loans by low-income countries exposes them to external shocks due to the unpredictability of such transfers.

To cushion the effect of external shocks from the global economy, Less Developed Countries will require internal capacity to produce basic needs and reduce the demand for foreign currency for imports. In addition, increased productive capacity will increase potential for exports and generation of foreign currency that supports the Central Bank foreign reserve used to manage forex exchange rate. Therefore, the focus for Less Developed Country governments is to increase productivity to achieve increased employment levels. With more people employed in an economy due to higher productivity levels that utilise more of labour, the resulting income expansion in an economy enables lower inflation and a stable exchange rate system. A strengthened microfinance ecosystem, entrepreneurship with a robust apprenticeship system, and trade credit system would play a key role in the achievement of full employment in poor countries.

In contrast to Keynesian school of thought on reduced level of employment because income contracts because of low demand and relatively higher supply of goods and services, we are of the opinion that reduced level of employment in underdeveloped countries is because of income expansion propelled by currency devaluations. The devalued currency is due to the following: hyperinflation; import dependence; high aggregate expenditure on consumption rather than investment; low ‘effective demand’; and low supply of goods, services, and products. The low productivity levels are strongly tied to a weak effective demand that goes beyond desire to spend to the actual amount of transaction by consumers on products and services.

A typical example will be in Country A with low effective demand, their products are relatively more expensive to Country B with higher effective demand. Which means Country B has higher productivity levels than Country A, this implies rejigging the assumptions behind the traditional focus by economist on healthy debt to GDP ratios of 30%. Drive for increased productivity will result higher revenue generation capacity for an economy which is explained as

generation of savings from different profitable investments. These investments will depend on private-public sources of funding which include private and public debt. While policy makers at microeconomic level will focus on access to microcredit, at macroeconomic level the focus will be debt for investment purposes. *Researcher argue that rather than focus on short-term gains from debt-to-GDP ratio, poor countries will create sustainable jobs from prioritising income per capital growth dependent on net earnings from monitoring debt-to-revenue ratios.*

20th Century Re-Thinking of General Theory of Employment

More recent articles written in the millennium focused on the prevalence of informal employment and an evaluation of relevant competing theories. This informal employment is described as a proportion of total employment and a proportion of persons employed informally in an informal enterprise. Williams (2018) in his journal article followed ILO (2013) classification of persons engaged in informal employment as follows:

"(a) own-account workers self-employed in their own informal sector enterprises; (b) employers self-employed in their own informal sector enterprises; (c) contributing family workers; (d) members of informal producers' cooperatives; (e) employees with informal jobs in formal sector enterprises, informal sector enterprises, and paid domestic workers employed in households; (f) own-account workers engaged in self-provisioning, if considered employed in the sense that the production makes an important contribution to household consumption."

Analysis from the article show substantial proportion of employed persons in 112 countries were engaged in informal employment and that differences between countries were related to differences in the level of development, corruption, poverty rates, size of government and tax rates (Williams, 2018). *They found the prevalence of informal employment is due to: economic under-*

*development (*neo-modernisation*); obsolete governance structures (modernisation theory), excessive state control (neo-liberal theory) or not enough state intervention to alleviate poverty of workers (political economy theory).* Following Williams (2018) assertion, we address two of the independent factors that promote prevalence of informal employment which are economic under-development and obsolete governance structures.

Insightful findings show high prevalence of informal employment of 94.6 percent of total employment in Burkina Faso is strongly associated with the "neo-modernisation" theory described as, economic under-development, high corruption in the public sector, very little government intervention to alleviate worker poverty and small government sizes relative to the population. Based on Williams (2018) paper, we learn political economy theory (poverty alleviation) rather than the neo-liberal theory (excessive state control) validates informal employment as strongly associated with corruption and underdevelopment. Above findings allow us to induce that for Liberia, there is need to address obsolete governance structures[1] and economic underdevelopment. The objective of poverty alleviation is at the heart of reducing the prevalence of informal employment to address social and economic conditions that enable higher per capital income through access to microfinance and skill acquisition.

Examining Economic Mismatch between Labour Demand and Supply

To closely examine broader unemployment in an economy, we review an article focused on South Africa manufacturing sector from a macroeconomic perspective by Habanabakize and Muzindutsi (2018). The study tested the effect of Keynesian theory of employment on South

[1] Innovative governance ideas on how to improve employment ecosystems presented in section 2.5.2 and 2.5.3

African manufacturing sector and found government spending on production subsidies created jobs in the manufacturing sector while consumption spending had a negative effect on job creation. Of note in the trend analysis is that net exports had no impact on job creation, which implies that government spending to support producers in the manufacturing sector supports mainly production outputs for domestic consumption. *Therefore, stimulation of productive capacity focused on domestic consumption creates jobs and has a multiplier effect on increased income per capital that alleviates poverty.*

The focus for this debate is how investment spending by government is strategically structured to drive private consumption in a way that poor country economies produce sufficient goods and services for domestic consumption. Higher recurrent expenditure by governments increases the 'effective demand' in an economy which is assumed to create jobs in the Keynesian general theory of employment. *In practice for developing countries, high levels of corruption and currency devaluation reduce the expected creation of jobs from higher government spending on public consumption.* Fiscal policy entails government spending on public consumption, private consumption, and investment spending. Public consumption refers to government recurrent overhead and workers' wages, while private consumption is effective demand of domestic goods, services, and imports. While investment spending is government spending to reduce production cost for private sector participants through infrastructure construction, and support for an enabling business environment for businesses to thrive.

Hameed and Quddus (2020) better explained the importance of effective demand towards the balance of labour demand and supply in their paper that studied economic growth. *Findings from their econometric analysis show that capital formation in an economy depends on internal revenue generation capacity and public debt profile. Borrowing to finance capital needs of an*

economy only results in capital formation when the return on investment can service the loan. The journal article argues that economic growth in the form of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is stimulated positively by Public Investment to GDP ratio (PBIGDP), Terms of Trade (TOT), and Private Investment to GDP ratio (PRIGDP). They also suggest factors that negatively affect economic growth such as public debt as a ratio of GDP, population growth rate (POPGR).

The assumption is that public debt reduces GDP growth rate through increased budget deficits, hyperinflation, increased interest rate, and crowds out private investment and promotes capital flight. New adaptive learning is the positive and long-run impact that fiscal policy tool of debt servicing as a ratio of exports earnings (DSEXP) has on the economic growth performance of an economy when used as a measure of productivity for debt-related investments. *A diversified earnings capacity in an economy requires both private and public investment, for which a low public debt management plays a key role. It is therefore plausible that supply for labour will match demand for labour based on earnings and productive capacity of an economy.*

Recent literature provides counter arguments on the effect Keynes theory have on different government efforts to increase employment through equilibrium in the demand and supply for labour. Galí et al. (2005) argue that European government spending had no strong impact on private consumption but had an impact on reduced production cost. In the contrary, USA government spending had a strong effect on private consumption, increased wages, and employment in alignment with Keynes theory. Another learning from China reports that increased labour productivity (includes use of machinery) when combined with an equal increase in foreign demand (export growth) leaves employment unchanged (Timmer et al., 2015). On China exports and employment, they report possibility of increased export without corresponding increase in employment levels due to higher machine intensive use relative to labour intensive production.

They argue that when domestic labour productivity increases with increased foreign demand, that export growth will have no impact on employment levels.

Across the reviewed literature, they all suggest different governments spend to subsidise production costs and enable consumption creates jobs. The jobs created allows for production of products for domestic consumption. *For developed and developing countries, employment levels are sustained in the long-run due to improved capacity of local producers to produce first for local consumption before export of goods, with the assumption that products produced use sustainable labour-intensive methods of production.* Unemployment rate reduces when government spends on infrastructure development and during sluggish economic conditions. The assumption that job creation has a positive relationship with investment spending is supported by (Psaltopoulos et al., 2011). The authors found that European Union rural areas private investment spending created more jobs.

Major concern about investment spending in the short run might lead to job losses due to technology improvement and lower demand for labour. Key learning is that in the short-run, consumption, exports and government spending (aggregate expenditure) creates employment. While in the long-run, investment spending enables job creation. *Contrary to Keynes emphasis that job creation depends on government spending which increases individual demand, there is a possibility that job creation in primarily informal economies depend on profitable business enterprise that is knowledge-based driven.* We argue that market development requires empowerment of market actors with knowledge and market linkages that address the information asymmetry that exist about available jobs, eligibility criteria needed by unemployed persons to access available jobs, towards improved access to employment. In the absence of adequate

governance, government spending is rarely felt in underdeveloped countries which mean very little provision of social services.

In situations of poor governance, citizens provide necessities and require knowledge to identify and meet market opportunities. Here, the emphasis will be for interventions that develop effective and efficient eco-systems that enable value-chains across different sectors to work smoothly. *Recent literature suggest collaboration between private sector and government expenditure is what positively affects investment spending, consumption, and exports.* This aligns with Keynesian theory of employment that short-run and long-run jobs are created by aggregate expenditure. The recent literature contribution is that investment spending sustains existing jobs in the long-run while consumptions create new jobs in the short-run. *In summary, investment spending that is focused on improved productive capacity that increases private consumption, internally generated revenue and sustainable labour-intensive methods of production will create access to jobs for poor developing countries.*

Active Labour Market Policies (ALMP)

Here, we review practical assumptions that hold true for enabling market conditions in predominantly informal economies. Like the experience apprentices get from a combination of formal and informal training in the workplace, the author explained *experiential learning theory as a learning cycle that combines abstract conceptualisation, concrete experience, reflective observation, and active experimentation* (Kolb, 2015).. The major criticism of Kolb's experiential learning is the theory's lack of context for participants learning experience and the reflection of that experience *without the power dynamics that occur in social environments* (Merriam and Laura , 2014).

A recent study in India by Garimella et al. (2018) looked at how structured education contributes to sustained employment and highlighted the importance of targeted skills training for students to meet specific skill requirement needs of employers. *The authors argue that flexible and multidimensional choice of vocational education that students currently pursue hardly meets the specific skill requirement of employers.* Current economics literature that discusses the alignment of unemployed person skills vis-a-vis available employment opportunities categorise unemployment into spatial, structural, and cyclical. Spatial unemployment refers to differences in employment rates between regions in a country or geographical area which can be attributed to different factors. Structural unemployment is unemployment because of industrial technological changes and a mismatch of supply and demand for specific skills in the labour market. Cyclical unemployment is described by economists as lower production or Gross Domestic Products (GDP) in an economy due to reduced effective demand by citizens which result in loss of jobs.

The authors suggest significant talent gap in India can be addressed through job training of students that provides mentor feedback for student improvement. Other criteria for improving teacher effectiveness in addition to student scores are utilised such as monitoring of student attendance, teacher promotion and others are considered. *Authors opine that longer periods of on-the-job vocational education provide better access to employment opportunities (Garimella et al., 2018)*. Focus for education in Universities should be to improve course curriculum and pedagogy to include lifelong learning that aligns with latest technology, social issues that concern businesses and science. *Lessons drawn from the study in India is that employment opportunities depend on education focused on adaptive and innovative knowledge for business and science development. Following Garimella et al. (2018) findings from an India study, Liberia will benefit*

from targeted skill training based on employer needs for entrepreneurship and scientific development for local production capabilities.

Cronert (2019) studied Active Labour Market Policy (ALMP) of government employment subsidies in the European Union that involves a supply-and-demand-side government support for employment initiatives. Supply-side ALMP are situations in which government support job search activities for the unemployed. Demand-side ALMP are government programs that provide incentives to motivate employers increase job offers and earning of the unemployed. From available literature, employment subsidies are in two forms, first is the economic incentives provided to employers to increase employment of vulnerable persons referred to as demand-side labour market intervention. Second aspect of employment subsidies is supply-side subsidies where vulnerable persons job search behaviour is influenced through support with re-employment bonuses, allowances for childcare, work mobility grants.

The authors posit that recent scholarly research should not only investigate the type of ALMP programs by countries, but they should categorise it based on the intended labour market effect. *Hence for intended labour market effects, there is difference between employment subsidies, training programs meant to improve workforce skills, job search programs aimed towards increased job applications for the unemployed, and direct job creation programs focused on direct non-market jobs in public sector or non-profit sector for community benefit.* The literature also describes two forms of general form subsidy as general employment subsidy and recruitment subsidy. The general employment subsidy supports a share of time worked or wages for disadvantaged workers, while recruitment subsidy supports a share of wages of working time for recently recruited workers (Cronert, 2019). Subsidy payments are made in the form of direct

transfers to employers, tax reduction, and contribution to social security or liquidity provision to employers.

Key learning is that employers' hiring decisions in the European Union are affected by subsidies that have longer duration. Policymakers set the eligibility criteria based on efficiency or equity grounds through targeting of what type of jobs, criteria for job qualification, a description of the type of employers and qualification required for subsidisation.

Currently flexible and multidimensional choice of vocational education is used in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVETS), Government Youth Centres (GYC), Universities in Liberia. There is a lack of local research of skills needed by different categories of employers across the different regions in Liberia. This makes it difficult for the current flexible and multidimensional choice of vocational education to provide youth workforce skills that enable access to employment. From a development practice experience, apprenticeship, or internship placement of three months currently in practice and combined with multidimensional vocational skills training will be unable to develop sustainable businesses that create jobs. The researcher's argument is centred on the lack of local ownership of both training curriculum content and employment stipends paid for three months to trainees, apprentices, and interns. GoL ALMP currently depends on donor aid without intended labour market effects clearly stated as an objective to alleviate poverty through access to sustainable jobs. *Researcher suggests the need for a structured and targeted skills training that develops entrepreneurship and the science of production through longer periods of on-the-job vocational education.*

Understanding the peculiarities of cyclical, spatial or structural unemployment in poor developing economies will enable better government planning capabilities based on the use of learning from development interventions. The lack of reliable data from poor developing countries

such as Liberia allows us to review the applicability of cyclical, spatial or structural unemployment in the context of market enabling conditions for promoting exponential access to jobs for vulnerable youths. For poor developing countries, enabling market conditions will require a logical discussion of experiential learning outcomes that is based on the power dynamics at play in the social environment in Liberia. The review of available literature, scarce information was found on differences between regions in Liberia on employment rates (spatial unemployment). Similar experience of a lack of either datasets or publications were also found for explanation of targeted specific skills needed by employers due to technological needs of firms (structural employment).

Based on the learning from the SIDA funded PROSPECTS youth employment program, it is plausible that the unemployment prevalence in Liberia is as a result of cyclical unemployment. The prevalence of negative trend of production capability in the form of decreasing GDP over time and a very low effective demand trend over the years represented by hyperinflation and exchange rate depreciation of the Liberian dollars (Liberty) that affected poverty rates in the form of very low per capita income. Plausible that Liberia faces mainly cyclical unemployment, we ask what can be done differently to address policy intended labour market effects such as improve workforce skills, job search programs aimed towards increased job applications for the unemployed, and direct job creation programs. *For scaled sustainable employment, stakeholders in Liberia will benefit from setting national targets for what type of jobs need to be created or accessed by youth, what job qualifications are needed, the type of employers to target, and what qualifications from training institutions need to be subsidised.*

Precarious Employment and Enterprise Management

For sustainable job creation, this requires the collaboration between government and private sector for businesses to thrive. An eco-system market development approach requires an understanding of the situation faced by employees who are informally employed in the informal sector and the effect this has on the firm. This section discusses the implications of insecure type of jobs for government policy and the key theoretical factors for employee selection that enables firms thrive. Study reviewed a qualitative study of 15 employed respondents mostly doing hourly paid jobs in Sweden and their experience (Toivanen et al., 2020). The authors found that precarious employment affected mental health negatively, with affected persons blaming self for the precarious employment situation. *There inductive analysis showed an emergent coping process reported by respondents as not blaming self, use of individual resources and social capital.*

The article emphasis is on the importance of health policies that guarantee safe employment conditions such as permanent full-time employment. The authors argue that higher statistics of mental sickness among youth is due higher numbers of people engaged in precarious employment such as: "staff-for-hire" enterprises; involuntary part-time work; and short-term contracts. Paper identifies the following categories of experience for people engaged in precarious employment across different adulthood stages as: *"Facing reality," "Losing control," "Adapting," and "Fighting back."* People faced with precarious employment will either take blame themselves or the society for the lack of employment opportunities. Those who succeed in "fighting back" are better able to utilise social capital through group trust, a shared group identity and mutual relationships that reinforce employment opportunities. Facing reality meant respondents expressed frustration with uncertainty about income stream due to temporary contract employment. That this situation affects their social life and constant worry about not meeting personal and home needs.

Constant worry and stress about uncertainty of income stream over a long period the authors argue results in ‘losing balance’: described as passive nature to addressing emerging issues at the workplace, hopelessness, not seizing future employment growth opportunities. Adapting according to respondents in the article meant trying out new methods to find better employment such as building new social relationships. The learning from the study showed higher motivation for people engaged in precarious employment who had supportive family and friends when job applications are rejected. *A key avenue for meeting new people and groups suggested by respondent is social media. Another coping strategy is people replace work-related interactions with internet friendships as a means of relaxation and communication.*

The effort to remain hopeful by taking action through setting new goals that enable access to employment is what a group of respondents termed ‘reframing reality’. This “reframing reality’ underscores the relevance of respondent experiences in Sweden to that of youth in less developed countries who are predominantly informally employed in informal sectors. *The replicable action in developing countries for ‘reframing reality’ is the creation of access to the internet for young people to learn innovative ways of entrepreneurship, formation of social groups of entrepreneurs, access to knowledge about employability skills, and an ecosystem that supports financing of business initiatives.*

Key argument in Toivanen et al. (2020) is the strong link between temporary employment and increasing mental health over time due to poor healthy habits, very little engagement in recreational activities and not enough sleep. Safe employment conditions are important for designing health policies that address mental health interventions. Wellbeing of the employee contributes positively to the growth of the enterprise, which implies more employment opportunities and better working conditions. Therefore, the inference for developing countries is

that poor wages, job insecurity and high financial dependence is due to insufficient employment opportunity and a high poverty rate. *The argument is a probable link between informal employment and increased sexually transmitted diseases due to irrational decisions such as illicit drug use, prostitution, stealing and an increased incidence of 'school dropouts.* This means policy-oriented decisions across an economy to improve enterprise performance would provide an opportunity for large numbers of youth engaged in precarious employment to transit from informal to formal type of employment and gain the related benefits.

Initial academics that examined enterprise development were Douglas McGregor's popular theory X and Y and Maslow hierarchy of needs theory. More recent 20th century research paper by Senarathne (2020) focused on enterprise development in Sweden expanded on Douglas McGregor theory X and Y by arguing that motivation of an employee alone is not sufficient to distinguish between theory X and Y type of employees. They studied the real-life applicability of Douglas McGregor theory of enterprise management to human decisions made by theory X and theory Y workers. Paper argues that definition of theory X and Y needs to include the behavioural characteristics of the employee within the context of decisions made towards capital structure decisions in a firm. Therefore, understanding the behaviour of employees that face precarious types of informal employment as expounded by Toivanen et al. (2020) will provide better informed understanding of decisions made by entities to access finance for business start-ups or expansion.

We first examine the original Douglas McGregor theory X and Y theory which states: theory X employees do not like work, they avoid work responsibilities, and are only productive when work task agrees with personal interest, while theory Y employees like to work without expecting immediate direct benefits. Douglas McGregor also suggests that theory X employees require authoritarian management style that entail strict supervision and monitoring, in contrast

Theory Y employees require less supervision from managers, should be encouraged to take risk and learn from mistakes and free-management style. The argument is the non-provision of the contextual environment in which workers in either theory X or Y are employed. The perspectives of what the nature of employment is, how it affects the individual decisions within the firm, and the relationship with firm decisions regards access to finance. *Researcher states that successful enterprises will depend on the formal nature of employment that satisfies theory Y (motivated) type of employee needs of job security, better welfare, and a servant type of leadership rather than an authoritarian type of leadership.*

McGregor's theory X and Y closely relates with Maslow (1943) hierarchy of needs theory that states peoples five needs are physiological, safety, social belongingness, self-esteem, and self-actualisation needs. More current literature by Senarathne (2020) argue that both McGregor and Maslow theories do not explain the impact that human decisions in an organisation and how it affects the firm's management decisions on capital structure. Very recent literature suggests that employee attitude to work (theory X and Y) has serious impact on aspects of financial management for an organisation (Senarathne, 2020). They suggest employers can distinguish between theory X and Y employees from the following:

"Level of attainment of needs within the organisation, psychological state of mind and cultural dimension (i.e. individualism-collectivism) of the individual attached to the organisation."

They argue that the difficulty of identifying behavioural criteria for recognizing employees using theory X and theory Y is due to its only focus on motivation and absence of psychological states of employees and whether employees belong to either individualist or collectivist family school of thought. Recent literature by Senarathne (2020) discussed theory X and Y within the context of employees that exhibit individualistic or collectivist principles in their approach to the

workplace. First, they explain that the psychological state of the employee looks at the mental, emotional, intellectual, and cognitive state of the person. While the second behavioural criteria are of persons belonging to the individualist family prioritise individual objective and self-concept, or those in the collectivists' family who prioritise team goals, collective voice and show organisational citizenship behaviours.

Therefore, rather than depend solely on internal motivation as advanced by McGregor theory X or theory Y, they posit that theory X or theory Y depends on the extent an organisation achieves its needs, the mental state of the individual, and the culture of individualism or collectivism (Senarathne, 2020). The study line of thought differs slightly based on the practicality of applying of McGregor Theory X and Y and Maslow Hierarchy of Needs Theory. *Building on principles from theory Y type of employees, the individualistic and collectivist employee voice, we espouse the position that productive employees (with theory Y and collectivist voice) in predominantly informal economies will possess the following behavioural characteristics: employability skills; knowledgeable about ICT use; and formal employment.*

Researcher argues that enterprise development is centred on building sustainable businesses that are not only profitable, but able to lift youth out of poverty. For poor developing countries, this implies need for an ecosystem that supports business incubators for the facilitation of access to microfinance. The enterprise in identifying employees that are willing to work (McGregor Theory Y) and collectivist voice (Senarathne, 2020) will require practical knowledge of life skills, interpersonal skills, workplace exposure, ICT knowledge for self-development, and basic literacy for job applications. For employers, enterprise development will require sustainable ecosystems that support knowledge sharing among networks, all value-chain actors within a sector networking, and a financial system that supports the incentive for all actors within the enterprise value chain.

Context: Youth Employment in Liberia

Liberia is still attempting to recover from the impact of the recent Ebola epidemic on its already weakened post-civil war economy. The Liberian 14 years' civil war left youth with lower education level, unemployment and underemployment. Economic forecasts are not encouraging, as inflation remains very high (28.5% in December 2018) and economic growth was estimated to be a concerning 0.4% in 2019 (PROSPECTS III: Program Proposal, 2017).

Low school enrolment rates (47.9%) and a low adult literacy rate (42.94%), compounded by a decimated post-conflict economy, have resulted in very high levels of youth unemployment and a young labour force without the relevant skills best suited to the Liberian labour market (PROSPECTS III: Program Proposal, 2017). Gender is also a factor in Liberian youth access to sustainable employment. According to Sajith and Marc (2013), the unemployment rate for young women stands at 41.3% compared to 28.3% for young men. According to ILO (2013) study, researchers found that 79% of employed Liberian youth are engaged in 'underutilised labour' with 78% engaged in vulnerable employment. The authors described vulnerable employment as youth engaged in seasonal work, informal and not secure working conditions, and below living wages.

PROSPECTS Needs Assessment Report (2016) reported majority of working youth (68.7%) were engaged in multiple jobs combining agriculture, daily paid jobs, small retail trade and others, while 26.5 percent earned no income. Study highlighted the need for young people to have formal job experience as a route to finding sustainable employment.

Private sector employers employ the majority of the population Liberia, with most young people starting out as self-employed and owning small-and-medium sized enterprises (SMEs). A vast majority of these SMEs are vulnerable and marginalised people in Liberia, faced with market constraints of non-availability of credit, poor electricity supply, lack of business skills and

insecurity. PROSPECTS III: Program Proposal (2017) stated 70 percent of traders said major barrier to business expansion is the non-availability of credit and this prevent employers from proving young people with sustainable long-term employment. If young entrepreneurs had greater access to resources and capital, the private sector would be strengthened and this would multiply job opportunities for youth in Liberia.

Geographic: Building on the success of PROSPECTS II, PROSPECTS III continues to operate in Bong, and Montserrado counties. PROSPECTS III expanded to Nimba County in 2017, chosen for its growing population and status as a trade hub near the borders of Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea. Expanding to the cities of Ganta and Nimba County, provided PROSPECTS an opportunity to pilot new models of cost-efficient service delivery, including greater integration with partners, TVETs, and local government administrations. Services in Ganta are being administered from the PROSPECTS field office in Gbarnga in order to ensure the most efficient use of program resources.

Rural: PROSPECTS is attempting to extend its programming to rural areas in Bong, Montserrado, and Nimba counties, beyond the urban and peri-urban communities targeted in PROSPECTS II. This will occur through outreach programs that expand access to employment and self-employment services to youth who may not have the resources to engage with PROSPECTS services at PROSPECTS Youth Opportunity Centres or partner institutions. PROSPECTS is aiming for at least one third of beneficiaries to be reached through new community outreach programming (including in rural areas) such a radio and community message boards.

Vulnerable youth: PROSPECTS aims to target vulnerable youth so that equal opportunity is given to those youth that are often left out of employment training, such as disabled youth, illiterate youth, and young women. The goal of PROSPECTS is to help Liberian youth find

sustainable employment through higher self-confidence levels, employability skills and market-driven opportunities in Liberia. The intervention worked towards three outcomes as follows:

- Outcome 1: Youth in Liberia have the skills, confidence and opportunities to access sustainable employment.
- Outcome 2: The private sector in Liberia provides youth with sustainable employment and increases the demand for labour.
- Outcome 3: Public institutions in Liberia increase economic opportunities available to youth through new policies and information about employment options.

Table 1: *Summary of PROSPECTS III Goal and Related Indicators*

Goal	Indicators
Goal: Young Liberians find meaningful, market-driven employment or self-employment through increased self-confidence, skills, and opportunities.	% of individuals securing full-time (part time/short term/seasonal) employment
	% male and female youth reporting ability to economically support self and others
	% of individuals reporting increased confidence in economic future
	# of procedures drafted, laws, policies proposed during project implementation through PROSPECTS research and influence

Source: PROSPECTS III, 2017 Set-up Document, p.18.

Theory Building in Research

The basic definition of theory is a collection of ideas that explains a topic of interest, this could be a research phenomenon or facts (Corvellec, 2013). Holton (2007) defines theory as a process used to explain concepts within a phenomenon and the relationship between these concepts. Academics go beyond the basic definition of theory to explain what a 'good theory' means, how the detailed logic behind good theories makes an article to be considered as an important contribution to the academic field. Contrary to the definition of theory, Wacker (2008) stated theories defined conceptual relationships for studied research themes. The difference between the basic definition of theory and that of academics is that conceptual relationships require measures that are testable and follows a logic. Bendassolli (2013) sees theory as an imagination about how things should happen in real life.

Rather than simply a collection of ideas that explain a topic, scientific theories are based on observations and not just perceptions. Academic theory is based on accumulated knowledge, previous experience and perceptions that are based on expectations (how things should be). From an academic perspective, theory is seen as the relationship between data, with theory used to verify relationships and measures within a dataset. Therefore, theory can be defined as the foundation of consistent hypothetical relationships that constructs topics based on the researchers' pragmatic interests. This definition mirrors Bendassolli (2013) summary definition of theory as a device that organizes measures into systems and organizes people experiences into patterns of thought.

Table 2: *Description of Theoretical Properties*

Properties of all theory	Theory an explained set of conceptual relationships

Definitions	Who are we investigating and what phenomenon are we studying
Domain	When do we investigate this phenomenon and where are the subjects of investigation located
Relationships	How did the phenomenon happen and why did it happen
Predictions	Should/could/would phenomenon A/B/C happen if cause A/B/C are removed

Note: Adapted from Walker, 2008 p.12.

Theory is further broken down as having two components by Wacker (2008), as first the conceptualization of theory and the testing of theory using data. Depending on the research approach (qualitative, quantitative, inductive, deductive), theory is developed using multiple approaches which is further discussed in the paper. For the advancement of scientific theory building, Walker (2008) goes beyond basic theory definition to define the properties of general theory and that of a good theory.

Table 3: *General versus good theory*

General theory properties	**Good theory properties**
Definitions	Practice definitions, description of terms, measures, clear concept and short (Unique/Conservative/Parsimony).

Domain	Who and where is the investigation taking place. Can theory be generalised to a population and timelessly applied in different contexts.
Relationships	Clearer theories compared to previous theories (fecundity), logical sequence of ideas, and more of explanation than the use of statistics. An extract from good theory building is the substantively significant concepts within phenomenon found which validates statistically significant findings. The relationship between substantive and statistically significant finding are building blocks in the logical process of a good theory.
Predictions	The power of falsifiability in research is key to plausibility for good theory building. The less predictable a research finding is when building a theory, the better the theory.

Note: Adapted from Walker, 2008 p.11

General theories would have definitions, domain, relationships, and predictions. The good theory in its definitions would have short definitions, use known terminology rather than new terms that are poorly defined, and unique definitions apply singularly to the concept in the study. An interesting aspect of good definitions is that the measures are few, there must be reasons for using measures within a definition and which Walker (2008) calls the interpretive property. The characteristic of a good definition is the separation between 'abstract concept constructs' and

'theory relationship constructs.' While abstract constructs look at known general definitions of phenomenon, theory relationship construct examines unique relationship between measures within a concept.

For the domain under investigation, the theoretical concept should be generalizable to the population under study and if possible generalised to all populations and timeless. For a fully explained concept, good relationship theory must have fecundity, internal consistency, statistical parsimony, and substantive versus statistical significance. Theory provides contextual explanation to a phenomenon and validates statistical results through its logic. Good theory is known to explain existing phenomenon clearly and proffer new areas of investigation into phenomenon. Newer theories in scientific research are clearer than existing theories known as the relationship's fecundity property. It provides wider research areas to study in the theory building process. Fecundity relationship property of a good theory combines and integrates several existing theories into a new theory that offers a wider range of perspectives for investigation.

Internal consistency about theoretical relationships examine logical sequence between variables drawn from existing scientific studies. So, the focus is on logically integrated concepts that can be fully explained. Statistical relationships are meant to validate this logical conceptual development.

Relationship parsimony advocates researcher explain more of the theory rather than the statistics. Fully integrated theories would imply a complete explanation of the theoretical model, explain how empirical results of the theory explain the phenomenon under investigation. That way faulty conceptual analysis is avoided before statistical analysis.

Statistical versus substantive significance, they both go hand in hand since one cannot happen without the other. Forecasting of events are not possible without conceptualization of events. Statistical models only tests theory but does not explain theory. Therefore, it is only a detailed

conceptualization that explains how substantially significant a finding is in relation to abstract theory.

Finally, the **prediction property** of a good theory suggests the more unlikely a predicted event will happen, the better the theory. A good theory leaves the reader with more questions about what the findings would be and the different unpredictable results.

Scholarly Implication of Theory to Qualitative Research: Bendassolli (2013) states that inductive reasoning is the jump from singular statements within research to general theoretical statements. Validation of scientific theory and prediction properties depends on confirmation from empirical data. In contrast, qualitative researchers are focused on generating detailed explanation and understanding to a phenomenon rather than test of hypothesis. The big question in qualitative research is how findings can be termed as scientifically valid.

Losee (2001) mentions the process of validity for qualitative research highlights the use of observation also termed empirical reality as against theoretical statements. Generally qualitative researchers prioritise the logical patterns that emanate for peoples' experiences. To address the problem of how valid a theory is scientifically, researchers have used Grounded Theory Methodology (GTM). GTM is a hybrid combination of inductive and deductive methods in the theory building process. First aspect of the GTM is use of data to validate concepts (not inductive enough) and second aspect is the use of lots of codes to categorize data (not deductive enough) that it affects theory building process.

The two ways to justify knowledge in qualitative research is first by the relativity in the logic of ideas, and this approach is not scientific. But an added layer of knowing facts, like identifying causes and effect, or experiencing a phenomenon is taken to be scientific in the qualitative theory building process. Hume (1974) argues that the assumption that an experience and its repetition

does not guarantee it would happen same way again therefore putting doubt on how scientific qualitative research in the theory building process.

Qualitative inductive thinking faces the challenge of explaining unpredictable events, since experience does not mean current knowledge about a phenomenon due to the evolving nature of human knowledge. The takeaway from GTM is building of theory depends on observation which are subjective in nature when used alone. Theoretical statements require empirical content for it to better inform us about the world. *Therefore, GTM applies both inductive reasoning in the observation of phenomenon and deductive hypothetical methods in the falsifiability of statements*. While the logical positivists believe theory must have empirical content and the classical empiricists looked at the language of expression and logic within expressions.

There are three analytic cycles in qualitative research, which involve the direct observation of interviews and recording of impressions and insights from respondents. Then group emerging patterns and themes from the discussion. Finally identifying the pattern of logic and attached meanings from all respondents in the study. This could mean analysing repeated words across respondents and generally shared perceptions of the phenomenon under observation. Therefore, providing an understanding to the phenomenon under investigation. *GTM uses mixed methods research to develop theory through induction and grounded concepts in the data through deduction.*

Inductive versus Deductive Theory Building: Paradigms as defined by Holton (2007) as generally held views or way of thinking about phenomenon which show fundamental beliefs and assumptions. In this section we discuss the different assumptions researcher hold about the nature of phenomenon (ontology/what is studied), what the nature of knowledge is about the phenomenon under study (epistemology), and the ways implored in the study of phenomenon (methodology).

The different perspectives of research are organized based on how subjective or objective the approach is. The four paradigms present in the literature on building of theory are:

Table 4: *Multi-paradigm Perspectives of Theory Building*

Interpretivist	A subjectivist view of research focused on descriptions, insights, and explanation of events. Induction mostly used to extract findings. Theory generation is iterative, with no prior hypothetical questions to avoid bias. Findings that validate theory done through coding, categories, and emerging patterns.
Radical humanist	Subjectivist approach used to describe and critique existing theories to change existing views and political in nature. The theoretical flaws are what political interests the research serves or how neutral are the arguments. Theory building is based on a social construction of reality.
Radical structuralism	Political in nature, a subjectivist macro viewpoint that seeks to understand structures of power and identify dominant factors, persuade, and guide the reader towards liberal thoughts. The concerns are in the representativeness of viewpoints (alienation/domination/macro forces)
Functionalist	An objectivist view is held in the search for regularities (formal definitions/known theories) and relationships that help explain causal relationships. Original theory revised in the process of stating

	hypothesis, testing hypothesis for falsifiability and the generation of refined theories based on new knowledge.
Dublin Functionalist	Applies deductive theory building model where logical theory on real life concepts are developed without reference to data that validates it (as done in inductive approach), then hypothesis developed and tested, this leads to refinement of theory developed earlier to fit with findings from constructs.

Note: Adapted from Holton, 2007 pp18-21.

In Conclusion: The research process involved in theory building involves the researcher having a good understanding of the phenomenon through a thorough review of associated literature. A thorough review of literature would require an expanded review of studies to cover all aspects of the phenomenon under study. The product of this literature review should clearly explain the different concepts used in the studies and how they relate within the topic under study. Construct analysis within the theory building examines and discusses the identified relationships within the literatures reviewed. This now allows for the development of the initial theory which is evaluated by peers and further refined both in the context of either deductive or inductive research approaches. Below is a summary of good theory building and opportunities for further theory building research.

Table 5: *Gaps from Theory and Implications for Future Research*

There is a difference between basic theory buildings used by lots of researchers compared to a few that apply good theory building approach. This gap in the theory building requires future

studies to apply ‘good theory building’ approach to balance the act of ***substantive significance relative to use of statistically significant***.
In qualitative research, studies are yet to relate formal terms in the theory to observational terms in the data. Currently researchers differentiate between theoretical statements and observational statements which directly link to conclusions of findings. The quality of future qualitative research lies in the ability of refining existing theories through linking theoretical statements from formal definitions with observational statements from data; accept or reject hypothesis from existing theories; draft newer inductive theories from findings; explain the counterfactual (contrary to fact); and draw inferences on causal explanations. A gap between explaining and understanding the concepts of theory and role of empirical data in qualitative research exists.
Theory building is the induction that happens when coding data into concepts or themes in the data while abductive inference happens when categories are identified within the data that show logical relationships that are rational. The gap in the literature is while some academics argue inductive theory building is scientific, others argue deductive theory building plays a key role towards validation. The creativity of the researcher in linking extant theories from literature with features present in the data and ability to deduce meanings answers the scientific validity of a hypothesis.
The challenge with inductive methods is that qualitative approach does not ask questions initially in the research process, thereby more relevant to the participants of the study than the researcher. This makes it difficult to validate hypothesis through testing and thereby verify theory. Solution to this paradox is having a clear and precise definition of concepts in the theory and avoid ambiguity when writing the theoretical framework for a study.

Several studies have discussed qualitative and inductive approaches to building of theories. But there is a gap in the literature on how deductive approach is used in building a rigorous theory. The deductive theorists are faced with the challenge of how to justify extensions beyond what is known in theory. Particularly since there is less emphasis in previous literatures using grounded theoretical model. Therefore, the deductive theorists shows previous research were reviewed, present compelling rationale for going beyond known theories, and answer the question whether the hypothesis is reasonable.

Note: Authors Summary

Transactional and Transformational Leadership

Leadership as explained by Pearce et al. (2004) is the idea that a person leads while others follow termed vertical leadership. They also discuss shared leadership model between team leaders and team members which is based on team recognition and rewards. Effective leadership is when knowledge work is interdependent on followers, leaders provide room for creativity among followers and the organisational work can be described as complex. The team leader is responsible for designing how the team operates; establishes boundaries for the team; designs organisational strategy that supports professional training; provides incentives for performing workers; with follow-through on ethics and values.

Different leadership behaviours are required for vertical and shared leadership models to leverage knowledge work. Pearce et al. (2004) description of vertical leadership closely aligns with Northouse (2016) description of directive leadership behaviour, as the provision of guidance for the type of followers that only follow rules and regulations when faced with situations that are unclear and complex. *Therefore, directive, and vertical leadership are synonymous and one of the*

leadership tools for leaders. Another aspect of leadership behaviour discussed by Pearce et al. (2004) is the concept of shared leadership by setting team goals contingent on rewards, this is based on a supportive leadership that nurtures followers as posited by Northouse (2016). Leadership behaviours from existing literature are described as transactional and transformational (Bass, 1990; Bass et al., 2003; Chui et al., 1996; Hartog et al., 1997; Avolio and Bass, 2002). The papers reviewed the different definitions of transactional and transformational leadership, and critically examines its application to achievement of organisational objectives through a leader's engagement with teams and followers.

The Different Concepts of Transactional Leadership: Early publication by Bass (1990) simply referred to transactional leadership as an inferior model of leadership since it is solely based on exchange of reward when followers perform well and punishment for followers that underperform. They further describe the inferior model of transactional leadership as either as active or passive leadership. Passive leadership which means a leader avoids taking decisions, which is also referred to as Laissez Faire and termed as mediocre leadership by Bass (1990) paper. In addition, Hartog et al. (1997) supports Bass (1990) *definition of transactional leadership by stating it is an exchange between a leader and follower with the former giving directives and later receiving valued outcomes in the form of wages and prestige when they follow directives.*

Other publications by (Chui, H.S., Sharpe, F.G., McCormick, J., 1996) support Bass (1990) discussion by adding context to the concept of transactional leadership, by defining active transactional leadership as contingent reward and passive transactional leadership as management by exception. Chui et al. (1996) explains contingent reward as leaders being proactive in search of good performance and sharing incentives to followers in the form of higher wages or promotion. The researchers discuss management-by-exception as leaders who set performance criteria and

actively look-out for followers that underperform. Later publication by Bass et al. (2003) further refines the definition of transactional leadership to include contingent reward leadership. The group of researchers with Bass mention the need for a leader to clarify expectations from followers and provide rewards or recognitions for followers that achieve milestone expectations. They laid less emphasis on the punishment aspect of transformational leadership for underperforming followers and rather added the term use of corrective actions by leaders in situations of underperformance.

Researchers Critical Review of Transactional Leadership: The challenge of transactional leadership as defined is that followers do not identify with the organisational vision and mission. The exchange as described in the literature is based on achieving goals with the fear of underperforming. This reduces followers' ability to take self-initiative when faced with emerging situations and provides unforeseen risk to the organisation. Therefore, transactional leadership requires leaders to use praise, promotion, and financial rewards when followers achieve goals; and leaders apply punishment in the form of warnings, demotion, less financial payments when followers do not meet work expectations. More recent researchers like Pearce et al. (2004) promote the use of shared transactional leadership as an effective leadership style using team praise for individual contribution to organisational goals, follower rewards in the form of giving team members valued assignments, and financial rewards for teams rather than only individuals for milestone achievements.

This describes the different concepts of transformational leadership: One foundational paper from Bass (1990) referred to transformational leadership as a superior leadership style that

prioritises the interest of employees[2] by leaders' promotion of organisational values and their seeking for employee acceptance of this values, through leaders inspiring employees to achieve mission of an organisation. The four key dimensions used to describe a transformational leader were charisma, inspiration, individual consideration, and intellectual stimulation for followers.[3] Years later, Bass et al. (2003) further refines definition of transformational leadership as the drive for innovation by a leader to discard outdated organisational systems in search of creativity among employees.

The leaders provide an enabling environment for employees to proffer intellectual prepositions that improve on organisational systems through problem-solving and generation of ideas. This group of researchers together with Bass in 2003 added adaptive transformational leadership to the academic discourse. They posit that adaptive leadership constitutes a leaders' ability to quickly comprehend the nature of emerging problems from team leaders and followers and how to appropriately address challenges.

Other researchers like Pearce (2004) goes beyond leaders instilling organisational vision and mission on followers by searching for buy-in; rather they argue transformational leadership is about emotional engagement between the leader and followers, through leaders' ability to motivate followers to achieve more goals beyond requirements of the job. This emotional engagement requires followers and leaders' commitment to the organisational vision, with effective leaders' ability to inspire followers.

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[2] Bass (1990) refers to followers here as employees rather than followers, which showed the higher level of importance placed on followers' priorities by a transformational leader.

[3] Original questionnaire used was Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire in Bass (1990) that had the four dimensions of transformational leadership.

Chui et al. (1996) supports this emotional engagement towards inspiring followers by leaders[4] when it posits that when leaders communicate visions which are compelling; visions that emotionally attracts followers towards them; visions that can build confidence of followers; this effective communication inspires and transforms mission statements of organisation into positive action. Hartog et al. (1997) further explains this emotional pull towards inspiration by stating transformational leadership is about followers that strongly identify personally with the leaders' vision of the future and would go an extra-mile to achieve ground-breaking results, not minding self-interest of rewards.

Critical Review of Transformational Leadership: The gap with definition of transactional leadership is the absence of clear use of authority to achieve set-goals. This makes it difficult to use transformational leadership theory as a stand-alone approach for management in organisations. Prior researchers only focused on the clear communication of vision and missions of an organisation with followers. It ignores the importance of authority-based relationships which are goal oriented. The theories of transformational leadership only provide recognition and professional development, which might not necessarily motivate followers. The dependence on followers' willingness to achieve organisational change as proposed by transactional leadership theory is inadequate with reward-based Leader-Follower authority.

The reviewed papers on transformational leadership agree it is about organisational change that relies on followers' willingness to support the vision and mission of the organisation (Bass, 2003; Pearce, 2004; Chui et al. 1996; Hartog et al., 1997). The view of the various research papers differ slightly from Bass (1990) paper, Bass that states transformational leadership that is

[4] See Pearce (2004) which similarly follows Chui et al. (1996) description of transformational leadership.

leadership that prioritises followers interest through the alignment of organisational objectives with interests of the follower, while other research papers provide detailed explanation of what characteristics a leader must possess to align organisational vision and mission with followers interests (Bass, 2003; Pearce, 2004; Chui et al. 1996; Hartog et al. 1997). *The characteristics discussed are the willingness a leader shows towards encouraging followers to share new ideas, leaders' ability to personalize attention for different followers and clearly communicate his vision for the organisation.* The followers of a leader practicing transactional leadership style would expect integrity from the leader and follow-through when decisions are made.

Difference Transactional and Transformational Leadership: Researchers all posit that transformational leadership style requires a leader to influence followers through the application of charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration to achieve organisational vision and mission (Avolio and Bass, 2002; Bass, 1990; Xenijou, 2017). The change transformational leaders seek is that followers not only achieve clarified goals but represent the organisational values outside the workplace. This would imply going beyond expectations by identifying personal with the organisational values and mission. While transactional leadership seeks to achieve change by setting clear procedures that when followers do what is asked, they are rewarded and punished when they underperform. Bass (1990) explains transactional as an exchange of reward for good performance, reward for following instructions (active management by exception), punishment for not following instructions (passive management by exception) and when leaders avoid decision making (laissez-faire). The requirement for transactional leadership to happen is that role and task are clear to followers, and they understand the performance criteria with which work would be judged and the size of rewards to expect when milestones are achieved.

Major difference is transformational leadership relies on followers' personal identification with the leader while transactional leadership depends on authority and compliance rules. According to Xenijou (2017), transformational leadership highlights the need for innovative ideas within teams, while transactional contingent reward leadership promotes the achievement of goals. *Therefore, this study sees a relationship between innovation (transformation) contributing the achievement of goals, and value orientation by a transformational leader (communicating visions) as leading to personal identification of the follower with leadership.* Transactional contingent reward leadership according to Bass 1985 includes implicit contracts and recognition, compared to the general definition of transactional leadership as having both implicit and explicit contracts.

The Implication of Leadership Behaviours on Organisational Change: Dutton et al. (1994) discussed the effect leadership styles have on driving organisational change in their definition of organisational identification and the affective component of emotional engagement between leaders and followers. Followers that support an organisations vision and mission tend to identify positively with the organisation brand (identify self as a key member that contributes to the whole organisation), while the affective component is about a follower feeling about the employer. In the article, they confirm a strong relationship exists between leadership characteristics of transformational and transactional contingent leadership with positive effects on organisational outcomes. Xenijou (2017) strengthens the linkage between transformational and transactional from two perspectives; first is the 'positive activation' of transformational leadership when followers endeavour to accomplish set-goals; and second is the 'positive affect' where followers feel positive towards the employer, are enthusiastic about task implementation, excited about belonging to an organisation with pride.

The key implication of leadership styles on organisational change is the positive relationship transactional contingent reward has on affective identification by followers. This affective identification goes beyond the traditional definitions of transformation leadership behaviours and requires a varied combination of elements in transactional and transformational leadership styles. Following Xenijou (2017) combination of leadership styles, the researchers argued that organisations bond with employees when leaders have clarity about each individuals' responsibility, and have adequate support mechanism for staff.

Support research from Bass et al. (2003) stated that high performance of soldiers depended greatly on the ability to combine transformational leadership with contingent transactional reward for followers. The authors argued that leaders that recognise the achievement of results by followers, agree performance standards with followers, and have an established working protocol for all members of staff. The strategy for achieving high organizational performance would require leadership training programmes for both leaders and followers for stronger collaboration to achieve both in-role and extra-role job descriptions. Bass et al. (2003) described the fulfilment of in-role job description as strongly related to transactional leadership outcomes, and the extra-role job description supporting transformational leadership behaviours.

Review found that *clarity of roles* following transactional leadership path limits the efforts followers put into tasks (in-role), while leadership training programs provides motivation for followers to perform extra-roles during task implementation. The learning is that follower satisfaction leads to better job performance and dependent on a transformational type of leader (Bass, 1990). That a charismatic leader is likely to be flamboyant and instils a sense of mission for followers, the intellectually stimulating leader easily articulates and communicates a shared vision of possibilities for and with followers.

In Conclusion: Leaders need to define their vision, share the vision, develop a shared vision with others, and translate the vision into reality. The development of a shared organisational vision requires elements of transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is the based on the leaders' ability to get buy-in from followers to identify personally with the organisations vision and mission statement. This is dependent on the followers clear understanding of what the vision of the leader is, professional development through training, the leader's ability to inspire and motivate toward ethical values. Study finds a combination of both transformational and transactional leadership results in effective teams in organisations, particularly when shared transactional leadership is based on clearly spelt out processes for individuals and teams, the transformational leader then effectively communicates vision and values to followers. In terms of implementation of leadership styles, shared transactional leadership entails team-based reward and recognition systems that promotes knowledge-based work environments, while transactional-contingent reward leadership is goal oriented and corrective than punitive for followers.

Servant Leadership and Employment Programs

The purpose of this section is to study the leadership component involved in the management of the PROSPECTS entrepreneurship program and lessons learned from a theoretical perspective. Researcher reviewed current literature on leadership and used the knowledge to understudy the PROSPECTS leadership approach to the management of apprentices and program implementers. The objective of this section is to provide an up-to-date leadership strategy that supports access to jobs in an effective and efficient manner. A clear organisation mission and vision statement that is cascaded down from senior management teams to field implementers and partners provides high motivation for stakeholders, scale interventions and sustain positive employment gains. Vital to

align the needs of organisations, program implementers and partners to influence followership that achieves sustainable results.

Researcher discussed the value of authentic and strong servant leadership approach as a best fit for a leadership strategy that cuts-across different organisational competencies. That this provides for a shared leadership desire that catalyses future positive change. The originality and value of documented leadership experiences from implementers of apprenticeship programs will contribute to existing leadership theories. The knowledge provides future implementers an updated and practical leadership theories that thorough reviewed organisational competencies for an effective organisational change.

Leadership can be assigned as a position of authority (assigned leadership) or to members of a team due to how team members respond positively to their views (emergent leadership). Emergent leadership is when a team identifies someone as the most influential in the group. Within the literature on leadership, early researchers discussed leadership as a genetic trait and more recent research see leaders as a process of interaction between leaders and followers. The path-goal theory further expands on process leadership by discussing different situations where leaders can apply different techniques to motivate followers and gain trust to accomplish designated goals. It emphasizes the relationship between the leader's style and the characteristics of the followers and the organisational setting. Northouse (2016) posits that leadership generates motivation when it increases the number and kinds of payoffs that followers receive from their work. The basic idea behind the path-goal theory is how it leads followers beyond obstacles and towards productive goals.

The leader behaviour is classified into directive, supportive, participative and achievement oriented. Follower behaviour focuses on the need for affiliation, preferences for structure, desires

for control, and self-perceived level of task ability. Task characteristics examines how ambiguous, complex, challenging, repetitive and mundane work deliverables are for the follower. Leadership use of motivation can be based on reward, coercive, expert, legitimate, and information power. Leadership as a process involves influence on followers, groups, and drawing attention of employees to common organisational goals. Since leadership is based on relationship between leaders and followers, there is need to examine the best forms of relationships that bring out full potential for employees and highest productive outcomes for organisations. An example from very recent studies is Greenleaf (2003) servant leadership theory.

The servant leadership is based on the philosophy of serving others in an ethical manner that is practical and meaningful to an organisation. Ethically, it means to serve people and not use people as leaders in the achievement of organisational goals. Practical leadership is about strong servant leaders committed to the achievement of results through setting-up of clear organisational processes. Meaningful servant leadership mentors and coaches' colleagues to grow in an organisation so followers are of greater service to organisational goals and contribute positively to the society at large. Greenlife (2003) coined the term servant leadership as a deep sense of responsibility that leaders have for people that they serve by investing in other people, providing the best available training and a cultivation of collaboration, trust, and relationship. Proponents of this approach argue it helps create a more just and creative society.

Greenleaf (2003) position aligns with Maslow's (1943) paper on five needs human beings attempt to satisfy are psychological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization. In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the goal of self-actualization cannot be achieved without achievement of the lower-level needs of safety, love esteem and psychological needs. At the top of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is self-actualization, espouses full-potential work that is important, challenging,

and provides creative satisfaction to the individual. While Maslow discussed individual needs, (McGregor, 1960) takes the theory further by merging individual needs to organisational needs.

McGregor states that significant rewards for individuals are those tied to products of efforts directed towards organisational objectives. They posit that satisfaction of basic needs leads people to seeking social relationships for a sense of belonging. This need for sense of belonging leads to esteem needed from a person's peers and self-confidence that provides work autonomy. McGregor (1960) states theory X type of people do not like to work and need to be controlled while theory Y are the kinds of people that like to work. While Greenleaf (2003) servant leadership builds on theory X and Y by suggesting leaders help people that are willing to grow professionally, so they achieve their individual full potential. That this achievement of full potential by followers enables people and organisations to achieve things beyond human imagination. Study enquires whether servant leadership when compared to the more traditional type of leadership is more effective and efficient and a critical analysis is needed to provide better understanding.

In this paragraph, researcher compares servant leadership with traditional leadership. This servant leadership approach is the opposite of traditional leadership with the later focused on a boss-servant relationship. Traditional leadership states people lower the cadre are meant to serve leaders above them in cadre, which implies a boss-centred approach were leaders are focused on amassing power. In the traditional approach, everything in the organisation works to serve the leader, while to the contrary, servant leaders pursue full satisfaction of employees so full-work potential is achieved by workers. Hans Finzel (2018) termed this traditional leadership approach as the 'top-down attitude' of leaders. Here the assumption is that traditional leaders assume they are the smartest, that everyone in the organisation is there to serve their self-interest, as leaders they control everything and make all the big decisions. In the contrary strong servant leaders

demonstrate personal humility, a passion for excellence, and a service-oriented leadership that demonstrates emotional intelligence. While authentic leader builds trust by asking the question about 'how to' rather than 'knowing to'. The traditional approach to leadership is synonymous with the top-down leadership model of directives.

Hans Finzel (2018) posits this top-down attitude leads to abuse of authority, dictatorship in decision-making, dirty types of delegation, a lack of listening by the leader, micro-management of followers, and an ego-centric type of leadership. The author suggests this is common in organisations, a traditional form of leadership that is ingrained historically in the literature. In support of Greenleaf (2013) servant leadership theory, Han Finzel (2018) expounds and coins the term 'strong servant leadership', were he states it is an attitude of both serving others, influencing followers and above all achieving set-goals. That strong servant leadership means good delegation to followers that allows them freedom to do their jobs; a situation where leaders view themselves as servants; leaders work as partners with followers in the process of organisational change; and followers know leaders have confidence in their ability to work independently. Very recent academic papers in the last 10 years support the shift from a boss-servant approach to ethical and authentic servant leaders. Researchers finds that Han Finzel (2018) supports Greenleaf (2003) servant leadership discussions, and the next section discusses the characteristics of an ethical and authentic servant leader from recent literature.

Servant leaders' focus on achievement of influence on employees while the traditional leader is after power over subordinates. In a TEDx speech by Peter Anderson, the manufacturer of Hobnobs chocolate, he argues leadership should not be about position (traditional leadership), but who you are as a leader. Who you are as a leader (behaviour) provides a perception of ethics and authenticity by followers. Therefore, actions of a leader answer the question about the quality of

service a leader provides to followers. The ethical leadership perspective of leadership is about provision of good and accountable service without concern for pride, authentic leadership is about uniqueness in sometimes trying and failing, rather embracing a learning curve for the team and people.

Authentic leaders are more about being ourselves, behaving in a transparent way and been their best selves. Ethical, authentic servant leadership is a shift from the top-down traditional leadership style. From reviewed literature, we observe a shift away from the objective of maintaining power by the leader; to optimizing the way people did their job; and to cultivating effective collaboration within teams and people to achieve full potential at work. Critical analysis shows traits of leaders (height and intelligence) contributes less to followers' contribution of full potential at work, rather leadership is about commitment towards confidence building of followers. This leadership commitment is supported by Hezberg et al. (1959) study, which found the key drivers of satisfaction at the workplace as sense of achievement, the type of work, recognition at work, sense of responsibility, career advancement and growth all lead workers to be more productive. Since the focus of leadership is on others, it relies heavily on interpersonal relationships, confidence building becomes about inspiring workers through the commitment that leaders make to followers and the organisation.

The researcher posits that if a leader wants to create sustainable change, it starts with the leader and based on Nelson Mandela's statement that 'I couldn't change others until I changed myself.' The focus then is commitment to self-first (authenticity and ethical conduct) and to others (followers) through quality service provision. (Maxwell, 2013) provides five levels of commitment by a leader shown by perceptions such as: Level 1- If you are the boss, followers have to do as told what to do ; Level 2) when followers like you, they follow you because of how they feel about

you as an individual ; Level 3) Leader delivers, followers follow the leader because of what leaders have achieved ; Level 4) followers follow leaders because of what they have done for them ; and Level 5) Followers follow a leader because of who the leader is and what the leader represents .

In a nutshell the paper suggest two rules for a transformational and strong servant leader, first is ‘it is not about me as the leader’ and second is ‘what kind of environment are we creating as an organisational team’. For emphasis, individualized consideration is at the heart of transformational leadership through the encouragement of participative forms of leadership. Beyond commitment, a leader must earn respect and trust through focus on: 1) influencing followers and not power and control; 2) inspiring followers rather than reliance on position and title; 3) highlighting strengths rather than weakness; 4) listen to followers more than giving out instructions; 5)more humility than pride; 6) achieving the big picture than on leader’s self-interest; 7)long-term benefits than short-term profits; 8) disrupt the status quo by creating a new collective future with an effective team.

Case Study of Problematic Organisational Leadership: PROSPECTS started interventions in youth employment in Liberia in 2013 in response to the humanitarian crisis brought on by the two Liberian civil wars which took place from 1989-1997and 1999-2003. The program has over 100 employees within its Liberia operations, a non-profit organisation and funded by Sweden. The organisation does humanitarian work that addresses Liberia high youth unemployment that is 35% according to the ILO (2013), with 41.3% of young women unemployed and only 4% of the population in formal employment. PROSPECTS organisational mission is to alleviate suffering, poverty, and oppression by helping people build secure, productive, and just communities. The organisational statement that operationalizes the mission statement states “we believe that secure, productive, and just communities emerge and endure when the private, public, and civil society

sectors interact with accountability, inclusive participation, and mechanisms for peaceful change". To achieve secure, productive, and just communities requires leaders that serve followers and lots of influence on communities PROSPECTS intervenes.

On leadership communication and relationship: There is a gap in the mission and operational statement since it does not highlight the importance of influence the organisation intends to have on communities where intervention happens, the importance of its employees representing the organisation both at work and in communities. The mission statement needs to be easily understood across the different levels of company operations of over 100 employees, it needs to clearly link reduction of suffering with the organisational objective of securing communities from danger and pain through interventions that create jobs for community members. Directly connect reduction of poverty prevalence with access to productive job opportunities that yield social and economic benefits for community members. In communities where people are oppressed unjustly, stakeholders (PROSPECTS and community members) create just systems that enable participation of everyone in decision-making that hold leaders accountable.

Therefore, unlike factory type of work, the organisation works alongside community members to build and sustain inclusive, secure, and resilient pathways out of poverty, poor governance, and economic hardship. *Working alongside community members requires leadership that shifts away from organisational rules to relationship building*. The challenge is that employees need to be motivated to build excellent relationships with community members and take initiative on behalf of the company during contingencies.

Current motivation levels for employees can be improved on from anecdotes. The issues mentioned bother on the need to review national wages upwards, the need to prioritise nationals' professional growth within the organisation, the general feeling among national staff is it is them

(expatriates) against us (locals), and somehow these feelings are transferred to community members. The feeling that management actively looks for staff that do not comply with rules and punish them, rather than looking out for possibilities and growing staff potential through recognition. Generally, staff are focused only on doing only what they are required to do and likely operating below full potential. A leadership style is required that motivates and inspires employees to contribute their full potential to create sustainable change in deprived communities where PROSPECTS works.

Academic theory and analysis of current leadership style: With reference to leadership theories, we find the organisation under study falls in (Likert, 1967) classification of management systems stage one - where supervisors refuse to delegate due to lack of trust. Likert (1967) described these four management systems as follows: system one is 'supervisors have no confidence and trust in subordinates', system two is 'subordinates are not involved in decisions related to their work, which leads to little or no motivation for the employees to implement the decision', system three is 'supervisors have complete confidence and trust in subordinates', and system four is substantial cooperative teamwork present throughout the organisation'.

Critical analysis of the leadership style during PROSPECTS III showed it had a vertical type of leadership model that operates presently in a work environment that is predominantly knowledge work and not machine type of work. Pearce (2004) description of vertical leadership closely aligns with Northouse (2016) description of directive leadership behaviour, as the provision of guidance for the type of followers that only follow rules and regulations when faced with situations that are unclear and complex.

The vision is to develop a shared leadership model by setting team goals contingent on rewards and based on a supportive leadership that nurtures followers (Bass, 1990; Bass et al.,

2003; Chui et al., 1996; Hartog et al., 1997; Avolio and Bass, 2002). Employees that work below full-potential would require strong servant leadership to operate at full-potential. The leadership approach had a mission and vision statement that translates to transactional leadership style, where followers clearly understand their job roles and follow laid down procedures when implementing task towards getting reward.

The organisational leadership relied heavily on a reward or punishment approach for measuring achievement of set goals. Compliance to organisational rules played a major role to how managers implemented organisational objectives, despite majority of the interventions were based on interpersonal relationships with community members aimed at influencing positive change. That these collective relationships require employees to contribute towards organisation objective both during work and outside work. There is currently no connection between affinity for the leaders and followers. Leaders are seen to be after power and control while followers follow directions and do as they are told. There is a lack of innovation (transformation) in the way human related interventions are implemented that contribute to achievement of goals, to unclear communication of the leaders' vision (value) as a motivational means of identifying followers that exhibit leadership potentials.

The current situation must change towards a new leadership that requires employees to exhibit a selfless attitude that servant leadership requires, and a commitment to lead by personal examples. To develop a leadership strategy with potential to drive organisational change, there is need to clearly state how the organisations' vision and mission statement is linked to individual and team influence strategy. In the next section we describe an individualized/team influence strategy and how current organisational competencies can be diagnosed to direct positive change.

A Strong Servant Leadership Approach of Seeking: Trust building is human and trusting teams to delegate requires leaders to trust that their team has their back. Organisational culture is strongly tied to effective leadership since teams believe what leaders believe and that people are allowed to try and fail. The assumption is that strong servant leaders develop and equip people to contribute their full potential. In this section, the researcher describes a future leadership style that seeks answers from teams and builds a culture of team empowerment. Effective and efficient leaders develop strategy for employee engagement. Leaders build and implement business cultures where staff feel valued by the organisation, engage actively, and feel empowered to participate towards achieving organisational vision.

The development and implementation of fair and just culture principle, the broad use of team-work training and communication, and tools like '*Walk Rounds'* that promote the alignment of leadership and frontline provider perspectives *through effective use of adverse event data and provider comments* (Frankel et al., 2006). The leadership gap to address is the provision of a clear pathway (leadership strategy) which diagnoses the organisational competencies towards promoting employee motivation, which provides for improved change management capacities among employees. The different organisational competencies that require diagnosis of current and future status within the organisation are:

- How involved (role) the senior management theme plays to the administration of field offices? The higher degree of delegation assists confidence building across the organisation.
- How effective the organisational structure is towards serving program participants in communities? This is a function of accountability of teams and individuals that requires an effective feedback mechanism that is honest.

- Does the layers and spans of control create proper checks and balances of power that enables team building? Compared to traditional leadership approaches (transactional/top-down), servant leadership across departments provides for transparency.
- Whether employees clearly understand their roles within the organisation? Clarity of roles and implementation guides is required as a component of transactional leadership. Are we enabling informal virtual networks that support influence for a wider audience? How are we managing performance of employees? Do we have adequate leadership pipelines that provide coaching and mentoring for employees? Are employees motivated to perform at full potential for the organisation? This a function of motivational levels within the organisation.
- How prepared are emergent leaders, followers, authoritative leaders, transformative leaders, strong servant leaders are for change management initiatives? Leadership pipeline might be required to replicate and reinforce positive behaviours. What role corporate culture plays in the daily activities of employees and awareness status? Are all potential leaders (emergent and followers) knowledgeable on the rudiments of project management?
- How is the organisation doing regarding business forecasts and information management? What the status of the organisation approach to an efficient cost optimization and service delivery processes? Are there processes in place to measure performance of leaders within the organisation? How adaptable and flexible are we as an organisation towards innovation?

The researcher argues for a leadership approach that first recognizes that change management requires emergent leaders that must not have authoritative powers and organisations to provide a pathway for the recognition of employees that attain high leadership performance. The proposed team building requires copying effect from emergent leaders within a team of followers and servant leaders. Recognition for achievements would be given to teams as a group

and individuals. Rather than rely solely on yearly wage increments based on objective work output and supervisor subjectivity that could disincentives individual teams, more emphasis would be made for achievement of team objectives. Participatory approach by leaders with authority allows for opportunity to get feedback from both employees and program participants through listening ability. A leader that seeks to know understands there is so much to learn and welcomes innovative approaches which inspire field employees to solve problems.

The facilitation of change process for the organisation requires employee motivation. Leadership will execute a gender, diversity, and inclusion strategy, and provide a roadmap that links this to strategic plan. There is need to update the national staff policies to include additional maternity leave benefits, ensure that staff on maternity leave are kept engaged by the senior management throughout the period, and provide for a process that recognizes and rewards performing teams. In this revision of the national staff policies, there is need to include emergent leaders in the senior management team that do not necessarily have authoritative powers or head departments. This authentic leadership objective of having emergent leaders serves to easily cascade down senior management decisions to middle management and followers. These emergent leaders that do not head departments will assist in the use of mobile technology to analyse data about the companies work in communities and feedback to senior management. Coaching and mentoring are needed for these emergent leaders to multiply the ethical practice of good practice across the company wide teams.

This transformational leadership change occurs through the combination of programmatic impact, the ability to influence change makers at local and global levels; and a restlessness to innovate in search of better solutions. Programmatic impact at community level is made possible through clearly stating the process of PROSPECTS engagement with government, private sector

and civil society. The transformational leadership style required is a leader with ability to influence followers through the application of charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration to achieve organisational vision and mission (Bass et al., 2003). The five strategic priorities are the promotion of good governance, youth employment and entrepreneurship, economic growth and development, nutrition, and health. The two activities that should be mainstreamed into SMT strategic priorities are institutional capacity building, monitoring and evaluation (technology).

Concluding leadership thoughts: Leadership is about a person's ability to influence followers through quality service that is ethical and authentic. The leadership style advocated by this paper follows Maxwell (2013) paper on five levels of leadership and follows his theory about level two type of leaders. The level two type of leaders are those with ability to grow beyond their position of authority through gaining permission of followers to lead them, leaders create credibility in the eyes of followers through the leaders' productive results and people development to increase their capacity. That strong servant leadership focuses narrowly on people within and outside the organisation, the organisational culture which needs constant cultivation, people engagement which requires relationship building and influence. Achievement of goals depend on identification of activities that is codified into individual actions and tracked fanatically.

This allows teams to score their progress towards achieving set objectives and motivates individuals to have a winning attitude. This scoreboard allows teams to know when performing below expectation and provides for a course-correction mechanism that is positive, frequent, and self-directed. The organisation must create a cadence of accountability that creates the ultimate performance-management system. Study follows Frankel et al. (2006) definition of accountability where the authors posit leaders are held accountable for ensuring employees understand the task

to perform, what is expected from the task, and how the product of task would be evaluated. Therefore, effective team performances depend on the accountability mechanisms in place and risk mitigation that prevent unaccountable teams, and require open discussions and transparency which enable team spirit, mediation, and resolution

Corporate Recommendations: As a priority, leadership must build the internal capacity of employees on four key pillars, first is leadership, second is people, third is culture and engagement, and fourth is change management. A leadership behavioural framework is needed to point out characters that exemplify effective leadership across the agency. The capacity development framework would map the different levels of leaders to targeted development activities. During on boarding of newly hired staff, it is important we immerse new employees quickly into the organisational culture. There is an urgent need for a clear and concise internal promotion standard that must be met before consideration for staff promotions.

On People: There is need for a talent pipeline that equips future leaders with skills that match future needs of PROSPECTS. The motivational component to people development will include divisional rotations within Liberia and nominations of identified leaders for short-term assignments in other PROSPECTS Countries to promote internal professional growth. An employee recognition toolkit that aligns with a new incentive structure that rewards performance. The recognition toolkit managed by communications department provides an avenue for staff to gain company-wide recognition, specifically monthly awards schemes for team members who have demonstrated outstanding work ethic and exemplary leadership will be carried out. Motivation for teams would require an annual retreat to foster collaboration and reflection

On culture and engagement: Instilling PROSPECTS culture would start during the recruitment stages with a criterion for selection. This would require employees receive proper,

positive, and constructive communication that is consistent with culture, brand, and values. This would be done by setting up a dedicated team for internal communications. Staff will be supported to form an inclusive association where they can meet to discuss issues affecting them and propose solutions to management through this association.

There is need to promote employee health and well-being by introducing group fitness challenges to promote teamwork, camaraderie, and bonding. A future office space should aspire to provide spaces for rest, lactation and reading. Additionally, there is need to install an achievement board in the lounge area to recognize achievers. Mechanisms should be built to track the impact and implementation of new initiatives across PROSPECTS Liberia's offices. Managers need to be empowered to anticipate better and adapt to changes and unforeseen contingencies through strong servant leadership trainings.

Ethical Approach to Research

The Research Ethics Committee: Different countries department of health and universities require that researchers secure ethics approval before embarking on social science research. Ethical principle in research refers to the guidelines and conduct expected from researchers when implementing research. Implementation of research would imply the ethical considerations made by the researcher when designing questionnaire, how information of research participants is secured, and the protocols followed to ensure that research does not harm respondents (Greene, 2007). For scientific study, the ethical conduct in the study of human subjects to reflect fairness and weighing overall benefit of the experiment against the adverse psychological effects on the research participants (Creswell et al., 2003).

Different events have happened in history that affected research subjects negatively, this made governments to review the process for approval of research by review boards and set guidelines. The prominent cases about performing medical experiments without consent from research subjects happened during the Second World War. Karl Brandt a medical doctor and others were involved in medical experiments that involved the use of carbon monoxide to carry out euthanasia program on prisoners of war in Germany. The Nuremberg code extracted from proceedings of the trial in Germany discusses ten areas under the "permissible medical experiments", which underscores informed consent for participants of a study (Nuremberg Code, 1946).

The sections from verdict of the Nuremberg code states, the researcher explains the research purpose; methods the research intends to use; the time required to complete the research; what the potential risk and benefit is for participants of the study; and the research participant informed they can quit participating in the research at any time of their choice. The five ethical principles of research are informed consent, debrief, protection, avoidance of deception, confidentiality, and withdrawal from interviews.

Different researchers have studied emerging patterns in the practice of ethics with regards to research and this paper summarizes findings from seven peer reviewed articles. The studies on ethics have examined the expected protocols for researchers applying for ethics approval, what ethics means to researchers, the implications of researchers failing to practice ethical requirements, and the challenges faced by researchers in the universal application of research ethics. In this section below, we highlight the key findings from seven journal articles reviewed.

Mamotte and Wassenaar (2009) in the study of ethics review in developing countries conclude that majority (46.6%) of researchers interviewed mention negative experience when they

applied to ethics review board. The key issues suggested by researchers interviewed were slowness of review, inadequate review, and challenges due to centralized review and inadequate information by the researcher about the ethics process. The paper recommends Research Ethics Board (REB) clearly communicate timelines, identify the sources of delay, clarify the requirements for expedited review, and assist researchers with protocol development and submission.

That REB members are familiar with multiple disciplines and varied methods of research that helps the ethics review submissions from researchers. Posits the need for common guidelines between REBs working in similar research areas and within proximity through partnership. These guidelines would aid a robust ethics review process for researchers. The study recommends future research to go beyond studying perception of researchers about REB and study the knowledge researchers have about ethics review. Future research to describe the operations of REBs. This answers whether the issue is with researchers lack education or incompetent review associated with negative experiences.

Haggerty (2004) in the study on ethics creep takes the discussion a step further by highlighting how research ethics committee scope of work has broadened in recent times. First the study discusses how in the past ethics committee assumed researchers had professional competence to be ethically responsible in the implementation of research. Then provides examples of recent changes that show institutionalized distrust of researchers and additional oversight of researchers to make sure they act ethically. The study refers to ethical creep as the potential for bureaucratic structures like REBs to take on so many roles at once. The paper argues the need for REB to publicize decisions about requests for ethics approval to allow opportunity for learning about the roles REBs take on as a regulatory agency. The study notes a gap in REBs only focused

on activities prior to embarking on research and not on what happens in the process of implementing research.

Therefore, research ethics boards are unable to strike a balance between reducing potential harms for participants and increasing the benefits of research. There are discussions within REBs to broaden ethics approval of research to cover researchers not affiliated to university ethics board of health ministries. Ethics creep also relates to the types of research conducted, which REBs have expanded scope to cover opinion polls that do not advance scholarship. The types of research now covered by REBs are natural and social science research. There is a mixed view on the full expansion of oversight from natural to social science research. That the risk with natural sciences research is higher than social sciences. Except for Stanley Milligrams study on obedience to authority which harmed the research participant in a social science research.

Regards informed consent, researchers question the formality associated with written consent for internet information via social media and social science study on ethnography. On anonymity, some researchers allow the respondents to decide whether they want to remain anonymous or not, while other researchers decide to anonymise participant information from the beginning of the research. The decision to anonymise participant information is due to emerging risks from courts for information and the increasing demand for REBs to protect researchers from disclosing participant information once research is approved.

Benatar (2002) study on the universal application of research ethics in the health sector makes some surprising findings on informed consent. The debate in the research centres on the premise that informed consent contextually means different things to participants from wealthy countries versus poor countries. The research lays a background for discussion on the relationship between poverty and diseases, that researchers must provide for this contextual need for research

participants from poor countries. Study notes that universal standards on ethics of informed consent does not apply accurately if context of poor countries are not taken into consideration. Informed consent applies differently for research participants from different geographies.

The context that poverty and wealth have a relationship with research issues under investigations. For this reason, researchers from wealthy countries must understand the context in developing countries. When interviewing a vulnerable person, it matters that researchers endeavour to answers all questions the participant might have. An example from the paper illustrates a hypothetical participant called Ntombi with the following questions: who these researchers are, what is their real intention, is it for my benefit or theirs, can she rely on all explanation given by the researchers, etc. The focus REBs should be the extent researchers try to comprehend the situation or thoughts of research participants and the available resource allocation for the research.

The review found research ethical boards emphasise that researchers must balance scientific and ethical merit for the achievement of moral obligations. Benatar (2002) states that research designs that achieve scientific merit state false hypothesis or try to provide possible answers through research statements for testing. The focus on ethical merit is that researchers respect and provide research participants with dignity during data collection. The concept of respecting the dignity of respondents requires ensuring informed consent, research privacy, integrity, human rights and safety. The protection of respondent dignity also requires the researcher to reduce the risk for participants to the barest minimum, ensure that the benefits of the research far outweigh the risks, compensate participants for the time spent on interviews, protect the identity of participants, and researcher to provide compensation to participants harmed in the course of conducting research.

Benatar (2002) argued that REBs need to pay more attention to how research is done and how the results affect the whole population of study. Most ethical approval processes only focus on the sampled population informed consent. Argues for an extension beyond the linear process of ethics approval process and include the best interest of the whole population understudy rather than solely focused on interpersonal level of informed consent. Proposes the concept of "moral economy of interdependence" which extends the ethics debate to the macro level.

Benatar and Singer (2000) in their study of international research ethics also discusses the importance of context in the moral conduct of research. The authors argue there is a strong link between budget provisions in different countries and the application of ethics in different countries. That the ability to properly fund research in healthcare fully implements the quality of informed consent secured in the conduct of research. That for poorer countries this might affect moral obligations of researchers to participants in a study, who might not fully understand the implications of partaking in a study. Study concludes that universal principles on ethics is faulty and cannot be applied generally without considerations for context.

Brunger and Burgess (2005) discuss cultural understanding of research ethics in their publication. They suggest there are external influences outside REBs that influence the decisions of ethics board to approve research. The influence could be positive or negative and study goes ahead to outline the range of possible influencers of research ethics that shape the decisions of REBs. The external cultural influences on research are industry, funding agencies, partners of health care funding, community-based groups, and disease-based groups. A cultural model proposed by the researchers to better understand the external web of influences on goals of research ethics.

Surmiak (2018) studied confidentiality as relates qualitative research on vulnerable populations. Like previous studies concludes that ethical decisions should always be contextual and socially situated to achieve moral obligation of do no harm. Discusses the need for REBs to know how researchers manage ethical issues from research. With respect to anonymity, the study revealed researchers who let their participants decide on whether and to what extent they wanted to remain anonymous, some other researchers decided in advance to anonymise identity of participants. There were differing opinions from research participants on which research information should be shared.

Emerging findings show that universal application of research ethics is insufficient and requires a contextual approach that caters for needs of vulnerable populations. That informed consent reduces deception on the part of researchers to the barest minimum, but that far more risk exists for research in the natural sciences than social sciences. That Research Ethics Board needs to restrict the scope of work to research that expands knowledge and scholarship, open to more scrutiny through collaboration and publication of protocols for getting research approvals.

Better oversight needed for collaborative research between international researchers from wealthy countries and national researchers from poorer countries to avoid deception in securing informed consent. Four out of the seven studies reviewed agree that the moral question about beneficial research is resolved by balancing scientific merit with ethical merit when designing a study for researchers and considerations by REBs. There is need for REBs to extend some oversight to the actual implementation of research rather than be limited to research plans.

In summary, the principal objective that guides ethical considerations in research are that the participants in research participate voluntarily and without coercion. That the objective of the research benefits the participants and stakeholders in the field of study. Implementation of the

research does not affect participants negatively. For example, that students do not lose learning time due to long interviews, that laboratory experiments do not affect participants overall health, and that no harm is done to human participants in a study. Ethical research should be inclusive, cover vulnerable populations and arguments for the study justifiable. Different research require approval from approved ethics committees in different countries. Example, for data collection that require students to answer questions, approval needed from the Ministry of Education in Nigeria.

The five ethical principles of research are informed consent, debrief of respondents, protection of respondents, and prevent deception, confidentiality of information shared by respondents and their freedom to withdraw from the interview at will. Below we discuss these ethical principles:

A. Informed consent discusses the relevance of asking research respondents to agree to answering research questions. The consent from respondents to participate in research ascertained by the researcher prior to commencement of data collection. For adults above 18 years, consent is in the form of either written or oral depending on the type of research discipline of the researcher. Youths below 18 years old require parental consent before participating in research. Informed consent requires the following:

- That the researcher clearly explains to the respondents the objective of the research and how beneficial the findings are to both the respondent and general society good.
- Researcher emphasizes that findings are confidential and private.
- The researcher informs the respondent that they can choose to end the interview at any time during the interview if they feel uncomfortable with the questions or research procedure.
- Respondents should know how long interviews would last.

- For scientific experiments, the researcher explains the advantages and disadvantages of respondents participating in the research. The researcher should also ensure minimal disadvantages to participants during the data collection period.
- The consent form provides contact detail of the researcher to the respondents in case there are further questions and clarifications.

B. Debrief of respondent after concluding research questionnaires is important. The researcher should answer all questions the respondent might ask relating to phrasing of questionnaire, and the true objective of the research. The importance of debriefing is to avoid researcher fatigue due to frequent researcher visits and questions about relevance of the activity. The objective to avoid negatively affecting the respondent due to the data collection activity.

C. Protection of participants is ensured by the researcher through confidentiality of information and that participants are not compelled directly or indirectly to participate in the research activity. Protection entails provision made for the different categories of people to participate in the interviews, for disabled persons that the location for interviews is convenient, for long interviews water provided.

D. Deception of participants through non-full disclosure about the methods used in implementing research that the respondent could object to after the interview process and unacceptable ethically. The research participants should know how the research is administered, the contents of the research to be administered and how the contents of the research would be administered. That way there are no adverse reactions after the data collection is concluded. Misleading information is when false statements is given about the objective of the research and the ownership of the research data. Deception by omission is when relevant information is not included and statements about the research are phrased in an ambiguous manner that is difficult to understand to a layman.

E. Confidentiality and Withdrawal from Interviews: Data collected from participants are presented anonymously and respondents should feel free to stop interviews at any time they feel uncomfortable. The researcher protects the information shared by the respondents and should not be used against him or her. Considerations for the good of the public weighed less to protection of confidentiality of respondents view in research.

In Conclusion: Ethical considerations is about do no harm to human beings or animals in research study. The researcher is obligated to use scientific methods, is responsible to the public that access the research findings, future researchers that might replicate the research methods from the study, and students that reference the research work.

Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan for Employment Programs

The MEL Plan is used to effectively manage the implementation of employment programs for development. It usually has five components in an excel sheet with tabs for the logical framework, indicator plan, yearly program work plan, results framework, and indicator questions. Logical framework is approved by the donor and specifies program goal, sets out cross-cutting indicators, outcome, and output statements.

Program results chain provides graphical linkages between goals, outcome, and outputs. The goal statement measures changes at national level, outcome level statements capture changes at institutional level, and output level statements measure changes at individual level. The intervention assumptions are that output activities such as apprenticeship trainings and grants for business start-ups would lead to outcome level results such as youth ability to earn money and be financially independent.

At outcome level, the assumption is that employed youth earn money and become more self-confident to seek out employment opportunities because of applied knowledge gained from apprenticeship trainings and grants used for setting-up businesses at output level in the results chain. The impact and goal are that program participants (Liberians) report ability to support self and others, and that market-driven opportunities support employability initiatives because of results achieved at outcome and output levels in the results chain.

Results chain enable development funders and implementers to know whether a program failed or succeeded. The defined results for a program should be specific, measurable, achievable, result oriented, and timely (SMART). Results chains are used to monitor the progress in the implementation of a program.

Intervention teams use the results chain during reflection meetings for discuss implemented activities, articulate lessons learned during implementation, document results along the results chain, and to capture unexpected results during program implementation. Program monitoring and evaluation requires that the MEL Plan disaggregates information collects sex and age disaggregated data (SADD). The indicator plan baseline figure, planned target, achieved, means data source verification, data collection method, frequency of data collection, and who is responsible for the data collection. Below the researcher provides a description of the employment indicators, indicator definitions used as a guide for designing evaluation questionnaires.

Table 6: *Indicators & Measurement Guide from PROSPECTS Midline Evaluation*

Performance Indicator	**Questions Baseline/Midline/End line**

Goal 1: % of individuals securing full-time (part time/short term/seasonal) employment	Before the trainings/apprenticeship, were you: •Employed/Unemployed/Self-employed (i.e. own or family business owner)/Prefer not to say. • Which sector were you employed in? • Currently, are you • Employed/Unemployed/Self-employed (i.e. own/family business owner) /Prefer not to say. • Which sector are you employed in? Were you able to get a job after completing your training/apprenticeship with PROSPECTS? (Yes/No). Are you still at this organisation? Yes/No. How long have you been working at this organisation? Are you working: Full time, Part time, Permanent, Temporary, Seasonal (e.g. agriculture/construction? For your job do you have/get: 1. Regular pay with signed contract? 2. Regular pay without a written contract. 3. Stipend or transportation costs. 4. Commission. 5. Cool water/ small things / appreciation
Goal 2: % of male and female youth reporting ability to economically support self and others	My current income can take care of household needs (household means for everyone you and others living with you). Responses: 1. Yes to a large extent. 2. Yes to some extent. 3. No. My earning can take care of hospital needs. (Do we mean for self and family?) Responses: 1. Yes to a large extent. 2. Yes to some extent. 3. No. My earnings can take care of education for my household. Responses: 1. Yes

	to a large extent. 2. Yes to some extent. 3. No. If you are unable to take care of your current household, hospital and education needs how do you fulfil these needs: a) help from family b) friends c) other sources if other say what.
Goal 3: % of individuals reporting increased confidence in economic future	In future, my household earnings can take care of education, hospital and house needs well. Responses: 1. Yes to a large extent. 2. Yes to some extent. 3. No. In the future if you are unable to take care of your household, hospital and education needs how will you fulfil these needs: a) help from family b) friends c) other sources - if other say what. How well do you think you are now prepared to get a job as a result of being trained/completing an apprenticeship? a)I feel very well prepared to get a job when an opportunity arises 2) I feel well prepared well prepared to get a job when an opportunity arises c) I do not feel prepared to get a job when an opportunity arises (aligns with column d definition)
Goal 4: Number Of laws, policies or procedures drafted, proposed or adopted during the project period,	How many research studies/papers has been conducted since PROSPECTS 3 started? Ask for copies of these and ask about themes and reason for conducting these. How many/which of the research studies have been used to influence laws/policies/procedures of the Government-

as a result of PROSPECTS research and influence	have any laws/polices/procedures been developed and/or adopted (if already existing) because of this influencing? Ask for names and copies of laws/policies/procedures. What has been the effect of adopting /developing these laws/policies etc.? Have there been any challenges in developing/adopting these?
Outcome. 1.1. % of women, men, youth girls and boys who earn cash	If employed, do you get paid? Y/N. If yes then what is your monthly salary? Do you get paid in a) cash b) cheque c) other if other say what? How do you get paid: 1. Regular pay with signed contract? 2. Regular pay without a written contract 3. Stipend or transportation costs. 4. Commission. 5. Cool water/ small things / appreciation
Outcome. 1.2. % of male and female youth reporting low self-esteem	Question: I am more likely to get hired if I have a personal connection with the employer: 1. Completely Agree. 2. Agree to some extent. 3. Disagree. Before participating in the training/apprenticeship program: • I really believed in myself and my abilities to get the job I applied for • At times I believed in myself and my abilities to get the job I applied for • I did not believe in myself and my abilities to get the job I applied for. After participating in the training/apprenticeship program: • I really believe in myself and my abilities to get the job I

	apply for • At times I believe in myself and my abilities to get the job I apply for • I do not believe in myself and my abilities to get the job I apply for
Outcome. 1.3. % male and female youth reporting using savings methods (disaggregated by formal, semi-formal and informal methods)	Do you save any of your salary? Y/N. If yes how much do you save? a) up to 25Percent b) 50Percent c) 75Percent d) 100Percent. Question: Where do you save that money? Response: 1. Bank account (such as Eco bank, LB bank, etc.) 2. Credit Union 3. BRAC 4. VSLA 5. Susu club 6. Mobil money 7. Cash box 8. Don't Know/ no response 9. Others
Outcome. 1.4. % of Male and female youth who believe they are primarily responsible for their welfare	Which of the following do you rely on for financial support? Response: 1. Parents 2. Other family member 3. Spouse 4. Boyfriend or girlfriend 5. Friends 6. I don't rely on anyone for financial support 7. Other. If you rely of others for financial help how much on average do you get?
Outcome. 1.5. % of Male and female youth reporting using loan instruments to start or expand a business	Have you ever taken out a loan? Yes/No What was the purpose of a loan - start business, expand business, other (state other) Who did you take out the loan from - (name of bank/provider). What did you use the loan for? What effect did it have on the business?

Outcome. 1.6. % Of women and girls participating in PROSPECTS activities programs reporting increased confidence at community and at home	Have you applied for a job in the last 3 months? Yes/No. If yes then how did you apply for the job? • By sharing a hard copy of CV • By emailing CV and cover letter. • By filling in application form. • Other if other please specify
Outcome. 1.7. % of men, women boys and girls who hold gender equitable attitudes- men and women should be treated equally	Before the trainings to what extent did you think men and women should be treated equally? Should be always treated equally, sometimes, not at all Since the trainings to what extent do you think men and women should be treated equally? At all times, sometimes, not at all. Before the training did you think it was right for a man to beat a woman? Y/sometime/N/ Don't Know since the trainings do you think it is right for a man to beat a woman? Y/sometime/N/ Don't Know
Outcome. 1.8. % of women satisfied with their level of control over their cash earnings	Before you participated in PROSPECTS to what extent were you able to decide on what to do/how to use your salary? • I could completely decide how I use/spend my salary/money. • I could sometimes decide how I spend/use some of my salary/money. • I could not at all decide how I spend/use my salary/money. If you don't decide how to spend/use your money then who decided? Family member, husband, wife, other? After participating in PROSPECTS

	to what extent do you think you are now able to decide on what to do/how to use your salary? • I can completely decide how I use/spend my salary/money. • I can sometimes decide how I spend/use some of my salary/money. • I do not decide how I spend/use my salary/money. If you don't decide how to spend/use your money then who decides? Family member, husband, wife, other?
Outcome. 2.1. Number of jobs created	What was number of people employed before the PROSPECTS grant? What is the number of people employed after the grant? (also ask businesses during interviews)
Outcome. 2.2. % increase in business profitability	What was profit before support from PROSPECTS, what is the profit after the support has been provided? Has this changed since being supported by PROSPECTS, how and what benefit has it had on the business/its employees? Before the support my business was profitable. Response: 1. Agree to a large extent. 2. Agree to a small extent. 3. Disagree. Since the support my business has become profitable. Response: 1. Agree to a large extent. 2. Agree to a small extent. 3. Disagree

Outcome. 3.1. Number of PROSPECTS practices/activities/interventions replicated by national and/or international stakeholders	Have you taken up any of the activities implemented by PROSPECTS via your own funds? If so which and where are these being implemented?
Outcome. 3.3. Number of laws, policies, or procedures drafted, proposed, or adopted to promote gender equality at the regional, national, or local level	Have any policies/laws/procedures been developed for promoting gender equality with support from PROSPECTS? To what extent are these being implemented? What effect is this having on reducing gender inequality and what challenges are being faced? Suggestions for improvements?
Output. 1.1.1. Number of male and female youth reached through program activities- define reach - E&E- monitoring data- trainings	Monitoring data for the trainees (all that registered to participate) Did you register to participate in the trainings/apprenticeships? Did you participate? (survey) Challenges in registering/participating? Suggestions for improvement?
Output. 1.1.2. Number of individuals reporting increased knowledge of market opportunities- trainees - look at	What life skills did you learn from the training program: (select as many) • Time management skills - to a large extent, some extent not at all • Communication skills - to a large extent, some extent not at all • Other (please specify) To what extent have these skills helped you to? • Get a job

prep post - then define if not found - suggest	• Lead an activity in the community • Help in family life • Deal with customers • Build respect for yourself with community leaders For each one choose- to large extent, some extent, not at all
Output. 1.1.3. Number of youth receiving sales and marketing training for renewable energy (solar and clean cook stove) product retail businesses	Monitoring data of trainees that have received sales and marketing training survey: Did you receive green energy training? Y/N Did you receive sales and marketing green energy training (for selling green energy products such as solar and clean cook stoves)?
Output. 1.1.4. Number of youth receiving technical training in renewable energy product (solar and clean cook stove) repair and maintenance	Monitoring data of trainees that have received training to repair and maintain solar and clean cook stoves. Survey: Did you receive green energy training? Yes/No Did you receive training to repair and maintain green energy products (for selling such as solar and clean cook stoves)?
Output. 1.2.1. Number of program participants (apprentices, interns) making transitions to full-time/part-time/seasonal and short-term employment	Were you offered a job after your apprenticeship? Y/N. Who offered you the job a) host organisation b) another organisation? Did you accept the job offer? Y/N
Output. 1.2.2. Number of apprenticeships completed	Did you complete your 3-month apprenticeship? Yes/No. If no why not. As part of your apprenticeship training. 1. Did

	you receive work readiness training (soft skills) Yes/No. 2. Did you receive job application training Yes/No
Output. 1.2.3. % of youth demonstrating increased soft skills	Did you learn any of these soft skills during your training with PROSPECTS? • Behaviour & work ethics • Problem-solving • Communication • Teamwork • Customer service. Choose for each- yes to a large extent, to some extent, not at all- to what extent do you think your skills in these areas have increased as a result of the training • behaviour & work ethics • Problem-solving • Communication • Teamwork • Customer service. Choose- greatly increased- increased to some extent, no change (same as before the training)
Output. 1.2.4. Number of businesses hosting apprentices	Monitoring data of number of businesses hosting apprentices/ any organisations that stopped hosting/dropped out of the program? Reasons. - Was this the first-time hosting apprentices- challenges faced/steps taken to overcome these? Suggestions for improvement? Support from PROSPECTS- how far was support aligned to their needs? Did they get the type of apprentices that were needed by their organisation? How did PROSPECTS find out what were needs of the hosting organisations?

	Survey- What is/was name of your hosting organisation. Did you complete the apprenticeship? If not, why not?
Output. 1.2.5. Number and % of businesses hiring apprentices after apprenticeship	Monitoring data of number of businesses accepting apprentices after hosting? Did you offer jobs to apprentices that you hosted? Why or why not? What were the challenges after taking them on and benefits to the apprentice as well as your organisation? have you taken on any apprentices without PROSPECTS support - Have there been any changes in your organisation because of participating in the apprenticeship program- i.e., changes in your practices, attitudes towards taking on apprentices/then hiring them? Survey- questions- were you offered a job after your apprenticeship at your host organisation? Why/why not- what were challenges in getting and doing job /benefits and suggestions for future improvement? Was the job offered according to your area of interest- i.e. the type of job you wanted to do?
Output. 1.2.6. Average number of hours per day women and men at all ages spend working	How many hours per day do you currently work? A) Below 8 hours b) 8 hours c) more than 8 hours. If you worked before PROSPECTS trainings how many hours a day did you work? A) Below 8 hours b)8 hours c) more than 8 hours

Output. 1.2.7. % of apprentices that are female	Monitoring data of apprentices: Number of female apprentices currently enrolled and undergoing training or number of apprentices that are female apprentices so far which would include those completing the apprenticeship. Also, from background information from survey - inconsistency between indicator and its definition
Output. 1.3.1. Number of youth achieving success in starting, maintaining, and growing a profitable business. - 1.3.1 to 1.3.3 same	Monitoring data - number of businesses operational after 3 months (i.e., beyond third monitoring and number of businesses making a profit. How has PROSPECTS supported projects after 3 months? What challenges have there been as the businesses have progressed? How have these been overcome? Suggestions for future improvements? Any businesses that were unable to start businesses or expand after receiving grant? Reasons for this? How did PROSPECTS support these businesses? What did businesses themselves do to overcome these challenges?
Output. 1.3.2. Number of new enterprises created or expanded	Monitoring data on number of new businesses given a) $250- to start business b) $750- to expand business - How many applicants applied for investment grants? Did you apply for business grant? Yes/No did you apply for basic - 250, advanced 750? What did you use the grant for? Were

	you able to start/expand your business with the amount given? Any issues in application or delays in receiving the grant? How were these challenges overcome? Suggestions for future improvements? Any other effects of the grants? Any issues that PROSPECTS could not overcome/beyond their control?
Output. 1.3.3. Number and % of youth businesses still in operation after 3 months, disaggregated by sex	Monitoring data- number of female businesses operational at third time of monitoring (by sex) (% can be worked out using 1.3.1) What challenges have been faced to keep the business operational? Any delays? How have these been overcome- support by PROSPECTS? How long has your business been operational for? - Below 1 month, 1 month, 3 months, more than 3 months-
Output. 1.3.4. % of female youth who own property or resources for production of goods, services, and/or income in their own name	How many females applied for investment grant? (Basic-$250 and advanced-$700)? How many received the basic and how many advanced? Is the business for which grant was applied in the female entrepreneur's name? Does the female entrepreneur own anything else that is in her name - land, bank account, house, others? How many were able to start businesses with grants? And what effect has that has on them/their business? Any challenges faced by PROSPECTS and the entrepreneurs and suggestions for

	improvements? Any female that was not able to start business and reasons for not being able to do so? steps taken by PROSPECTS to overcome these challenges
Output. 1.3.5. # of youth-led renewable energy retail businesses (solar or clean cook stove) started	How many youths have been provided with grants for renewable energy retail business (solar and clean stoves) - advanced and basic- do you know how many products they have sold and if their consumers are using these to generate income? (Similar to cross cutting indicator)
Output. 1.4.1. # of financial providers or market actors providing improved financial products	Are you working with any organisations to help youth open savings accounts with banks so that they don't use informal means such as cashbox etc.? How many organisations are you working with- (get names of these- types of accounts opened, any challenges faced?)
Output. 1.4.2. # of clients that use improved financial products	How many youths have been helped and have opened bank accounts? Are all using these accounts and for what purpose? Are these youth those that are part of the program- i.e., trainees, apprentices, YIF etc.-
Output. 2.1.1. Net additional, full time/part time/short term jobs created in target enterprises because of the program or	How many jobs created by the SMEs supported? (Full time, part time, seasonal?) What difference has having a job made to those that are now employed? How has increased jobs affected the business (i.e., improvements in terms of

intervention, per year and cumulatively.	more products/services offered, better quality of work done/services/products offered, more income/profit/challenges in recruiting and employment-)? How has any increase in business income/profit being used to expand business/improve workers conditions/welfare, expand/improve customer care?
Output. 2.1.2. # of renewable energy or agriculture businesses supported with business financing and advisory support	How many renewable energy or agriculture businesses supported? What support was provided? What were/are they able to do know because of this support? Challenges faced in using the support provided/suggestions for improvement
Output. 2.1.3. Development of a "Do No Harm" environmental assessment tool for private sector partners	Has PROSPECTS developed the 'Do No Harm' environmental assessment tool? If yes, has it been published, where, how and who has it been distributed to? What is the purpose of having this tool? Is it being used, any challenges/effects from its use? How was it developed and aligned to user needs? Who were/are the users? If no, then why has it not been developed?
Output. 2.2.1. # of business seminars	Have any business seminars been conducted by PROSPECTS? How many have been conducted? Have you participated in any? What is the title of this business

	seminars? Briefly describe the objective of each business seminar held. How many participants/who attended each of the business seminars? How were these designed to align with business's needs? Any challenges/improvements for future?
Output. 2.3.1. # of businesses utilizing the small business toolkit to support capacity building	Are you aware of a business toolkit? Do you have soft/hard copy of the business toolkit? Were you trained on how to use it /were businesses trained on how to use it? Are you/businesses using it? How many organisations have been trained to use it/has been distributed to? How has using the toolkit changed your/businesses practices? What have been the challenges of using it and any suggestions for the future (training, distribution, follow up/use)? What was covered in the toolkit? Anything that was missing/of not use? How was it designed to align with what the businesses needed?
Output. 3.1.1. # of research and policy analysis pieces published	How many research studies and policy papers/materials have been written and how many published/shared with external partners? How shared and with whom?

Output. 3.1.2. # of learning and sharing workshops/meetings with relevant decision-makers	Have you attended any workshops/meetings for sharing/disseminating learning? Who organized these? How many have been attended and by who? What was the purpose of these and to what extent was the purpose achieved? Any challenges?
Output. 3.2.1. # of collaborative meetings attended by the private sector, civil society, and/or government	Has PROSPECTS organized any meetings (e.g., collaborative meetings) that were attended by private sector, civil society, and government partners? How many meetings have you had since start of PROSPECTS? What has been the purpose? How many/which organisations attended and to what extent has the purpose of improving youth sector coordination between youth stakeholders been achieved? Challenges in organizing and following up on these meetings and improving youth sector coordination amongst stakeholders?

Note: Extracted from (Udenka, 2020)

PROSPECTS Midline Evaluation Scope and Methodology

The PROSPECTS evaluation used a mixed methods approach, consisting of document review, survey, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and an analysis of secondary quantitative data collected by PROSPECTS staff. Therefore, it drew on both quantitative and qualitative data. This involved the review of the project proposal, results

framework and/or Theory of Change, outlining the project objectives, results and targets, which enabled the assessment of achievements against original targets. An indicative list of documents includes grant agreement; proposal modification/amendment; annual report; baseline survey and other research documents; and cash grant policy for youth entrepreneurs, apprentices.

The data was collected from December 2019 to January 2020. The evaluation team was led by Robina Shaheen and co-led by Arinze Udenka. The data was collected in Bong, Montserrado and Nimba counties. Overall, there were 36 FGDs/interviews and 993 survey responses. Survey results were used to inform indicator performance. Study triangulated monitoring dashboard data[5] from the field intervention with survey results to get an even more accurate picture of the experience of youth participants. The FGDs and interviews enabled the evaluation team to understand more deeply the views of beneficiaries and other stakeholders. This helped learning of any changes in knowledge, behaviours, and attitudes, as well as project results. This mixed-method approach allowed for the triangulation of findings and facilitated the deeper understanding of processes and approaches, perceptions and behaviours that may have contributed to the achievement and/or non-achievement of targets.

To select a sample for the qualitative data, the PROSPECTS midline evaluation used a purposive sampling method that will include key stakeholders and participants targeted by the project. This involved identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that were especially knowledgeable about or experienced about the topic under discussion. In addition to knowledge and experience, it also considered respondents availability at the time of the evaluation

[5] This was collected by field staff using Commcare case management application and used to inform programme implementation on a real-time basis throughout the PROSPECTS implementation period. Monitoring data was managed by the MEL team.

and willingness to participate. The analytical framework that guided the analysis process is based on the key evaluation questions. A coding framework based on the key evaluation questions was developed and data collected from desk review, interviews, FGDs, was coded and analysed. The coded data was then categorised, and the categories were determined by the codes. This coding framework helps to ensure consistency across the evaluation team providing greater reliability of results. The evaluation used methods triangulation, which means checking consistency of findings generated across different data collection methods (document review, interviews, FGDs, survey). For quantitative data, study conducted simple descriptive statistics and correlations on excel.

The evaluation rated performance using the red, amber, and green (RAG) rating to assess whether the program has achieved its objectives. For objectives with quantifiable targets, the program used a *% threshold approach*, as seen in the evaluation tables. If 100 per cent (or more) of the target has been reached, the objective will receive a green rating. Achievement of 99-75 per cent of the target is green-amber, 74-50 per cent is amber, 49-25 per cent is amber-red and 24-0 per cent is red.

General Midline Evaluation Findings from PROSPECTS Datasets

PROSPECTS employed a two-pronged approach to increase the confidence, skills and opportunities of young Liberians to seek out long-term employment or self-employment. The evaluation data suggests that only around 27% of youth are employed, either full time or part time. Before participating in PROSPECTS, 63.7% of youth relied on someone else (family, friends, spouses...etc.) for financial support. Firstly, PROSPECTS provided six different types of trainings in career planning and work readiness. Once young people have completed these trainings, they are placed as apprentices with host businesses (or government for the cadet program) for a period

of three months. By engaging youth in a formal work environment, young men and women should be in a better positioned to understand, seek out, and take advantage of formal employment opportunities that meaningfully contribute to their lives, livelihood, and well-being.

Secondly, PROSPECTS provided trainings on entrepreneurship and business-skills to encourage youth to formulate business ideas and develop plans for meaningful and long-term self-employment. PROSPECTS supplements this training through the provision of business mentoring and seed capital to youth with promising business ideas. Seed capital comes from the Youth Investment Fund and can be disbursed as a Basic Grant ($250) or an Advanced Grant ($750).

Targeting of beneficiaries:

Urban/rural: Low-income youth faced transportation issues to access the youth centres where trainings were being held and therefore drop out. The rural youth who were placed in apprenticeships/cadet placements also believed that stipends needed to increase to help them cover the cost of reaching their place of employment. In addition, in some cases apprentices reported that their stipend for transportation was delayed. While some program staff and participants found that rural youth had been adequately target via radio messaging, other participants said more efforts needed to be made to attract and retain rural youth.

Gender: Prospect III aimed to ensure greater female participation. Whilst the findings related to participation are encouraging it is important to differentiate between participation and gender equality. Women are still less likely to take the advanced business skills training and apply for the advanced grants. Therefore, although there are approximately the same number of female and male YIF grantees, the proportion of men receiving advanced grants is much higher. Participants perceived the long application writing process and the need to make an oral presentation as

potential barriers to the participation of women, who may lack in confidence or be less literate than their male counterparts. Indeed, surveyed women were more likely to have no schooling or only completed primary school than their male counterparts. Men were more likely to have a professional certificate or an undergraduate degree than women.

Disability: Staff in Ganta highlighted their efforts to include people with disabilities. While there were apprentices and cadets with disabilities in the program, most trainees, apprentices, and YIF grantees did not feel like there had been a specific effort to include people with disabilities in the program.

Education/literacy: Though the program aimed to broaden its pool of participants to include vulnerable people, many of those who participated had completed school or were enrolled in university. The application process for the YIF grants and small business grants required writing and oral presentation skills which was a challenge for some youth. For both apprenticeships and the National Cadet Program, it was reported that successful candidates often had pre-existing skills, such as nursing or mechanics, which were relevant to the positions they applied for.

Financial vulnerability: PROSPECTS targets the most vulnerable youth for its activities. Of those surveyed, 8.6% of youth report spending below $1.25 a day. Apprentices and cadets both reported issues with not receiving, or delays in, stipend for transport. In turn, this impacted retention on the program. Those who are the most financially insecure are likely to be the ones impacted by this.

Sustainability

PROSPECTS recognise the importance of sustainability. For this purpose, they are working with multiple stakeholders to ensure activities and outcomes are sustained once the program ends.

The next section will explore the efforts made so far in relation to sustainability, considering key themes emerging from the FGDs, namely, knowledge and skills, financial insecurity and government capacity.

Overall, evidence suggests that the knowledge and skills participants have gained is a key sustainable outcome of the program. Within the FGDs, YIF grantees, apprentices, and host businesses outlined that they believe the knowledge and skills youth have gained from the program is likely to have a lasting impact on themselves and their communities. YIF grantees feel they can continue to use the knowledge gained from the training to retain or expand their businesses. Similarly, apprenticeship hosts feel that youth can use the skills and knowledge they have gained through the apprenticeships to apply for jobs in the future. In addition, one apprentice outlined that they believe they can pass on the knowledge and skills to their family, to help them to expand or start-up a business.

Youth however suggest that more focus needs to be put on empowering youth to become volunteers in their communities and disseminate knowledge gained from the program to other community members. For example, one participant set up a youth-led organisation to share knowledge on business and life skills gained through the trainings, demonstrating that some youths were empowered through the program. Additional outcomes like this would have significantly driven the sustainability of the project, as it would ensure knowledge is passed on to additional people that PROSPECTS were unable to reach.

In terms of the private sector, PROSPECTS staff believe that their training of trainers with SMEs, as well as the development of the SME toolkit, will ensure that knowledge continues to be shared and utilised. So far, the toolkit has been distributed to 100 people.

Various stakeholders see lack of access to financial capital for young entrepreneurs as a hindrance to the sustainability of the program. YIF grantees believe they need further financial support to grow their businesses. The survey data shows that only 60.5% of YIF grantees thought the grant was sufficient to help them start or expand a business. In addition, only 58.4% of YIF businesses were still in operation three months after disbursement and only 30.5% of businesses were still operational and profitable. As a result, YIF grantees suggested that they need further grants from PROSPECTS, or for PROSPECTS to make them aware of other opportunities where they can access finance. Likewise, apprenticeship hosts and apprentices themselves feel further support is needed, either through finance or other means such as tailoring equipment, to enable participants to use their new skills to set up businesses. This is necessary given that currently only 46.7% of apprentices are gaining employment within host businesses after their 3-month placement.

PROSPECTS staff believe that Banks are best suited to provide financial support to young entrepreneurs. As a result, PROSPECTS are attempting to develop connections with banks to understand how they can support youth. At the end of November, staff invited Banks to the youth centres to host introduction sessions with youth and to highlight how young entrepreneurs might benefit from opening a formal bank account. SMEs supported this initiative, as they believe there is a need to connect MSMEs with financial service providers. To assist with this, PROSPECTS are in the process of hiring an institution, independent from the bank, to act as a business advisory unit to provide support to businesses accessing the Bank's services. In addition, CARE run a start-up centre and have tentatively agreed to work with PROSPECTS to assist with this. It is important for these processes to be finalised, to enable youth to overcome issues of financial insecurity and, in turn, increase the sustainability of PROSPECTS.

While some host businesses believe apprenticeships will continue regardless, others believe it is important for PROSPECTS to continue to support the host businesses. For those who believe apprenticeships will remain without further support, this is because they have hosted apprenticeships independent from the program in the past. However, others suggest that host businesses will face financial challenges, such as being unable to afford to reimburse youth for transport. As a result, host businesses outline that they need more support from PROSPECTS to continue to run apprenticeships in the future. One host business suggests PROSPECTS should source local NGOs that can help sustain the apprenticeship program. Another believes that PROSPECTS should partner with the Ministry of Youth and Sports to ensure successful implementation of apprenticeships in the future.

Youth emphasised that if PROSPECTS were to leave today, this would have a negative impact upon youth, which suggests aspects of the program are yet unsustainable. This is because youth believe there are many more young people to reach, yet they believe they are unable to depend on the government to takeover activities. Therefore, youth feel there is a need for PROSPECTS to partner with the government to ensure that activities can continue. Likewise, SIDA see the importance of having discussions and collaborating with various stakeholders, including the government, to ensure program activities are sustained.

By using existing structures and practises, PROSPECTS has increased the likelihood of the National Cadet Program continuing once PROSPECTS finishes. PROSPECTS has assisted with the development of a pre-existing Government program – the National Cadet Program – by introducing training sessions. However, moving forward, PROSPECTS needs to work closely with the Government to ensure the cadet program can be sustained in future years.

The government have put aside $600,000 in their national youth policy to continue funding the National Cadet Program. This can be attributed to efforts made by PROSPECTS. However, PROSPECTS staff suggest this is not sufficient funding to ensure that the activities will continue. Plans have been put in place for the Government to submit a proposal for the National Cadet Program to the cabinet meeting, as well as plans to hold a meeting with the finance committee. Given that the current budget set aside is insufficient, this meeting and proposal are key to ensuring that the National Cadet Program continues.

Numerous stakeholders, highlight the importance of building the capacity of government youth centres. Government Youth centre coordinators report that PROSPECTS did not utilise their volunteers, and their connections with youth sufficiently, when implementing program activities. In addition, they suggest that it would have been useful if both volunteers and staff at the youth centres could have undergone a training of trainers' session, so they are able to continue carrying out trainings with youth independently. However, currently, PROSPECTS staff believe that youth centres do not get enough government funding to take over activities. Both youth centre and National Cadet Program coordinators, see the National Youth Centre Coordination Meeting – a meeting to discuss youth issues, set up by the Government – as a step in the right direction to ensuring youth centres can continue activities. The meeting currently takes place in Bong and Nimba, however the ministry hopes to extend it into other counties.

The FGDs suggest that PROSPECTS need to continue to collaborate with the Government and TVET institutions to ensure that training sessions can be successfully utilised and mainstreamed within TVET institutions. At present, PROSPECTS staff are attempting to hand over the training curriculum to Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Education and TVET institutions. A technical working group was formed to discuss the curriculum and now, the

curriculum is gradually being rolled out to TVET institutions. To ensure this is successful, TVET staff feel they need training and financial support within the first months of roll out. Moving forward, these actions need to be prioritised to ensure training sessions continue in TVET institutions.

Additional Gender Considerations

Gender was considered throughout the evaluation. Research continued to be conducted on women in the workplace, and training was provided for youth taking part in the training on gender issues and rights in the workplace. A Community Accountability Reporting Mechanism has been established so that abuses can be reported to PROSPECTS through a "hotline".

The total number of YIF grants and apprenticeships by gender have remained consistent but there was a small increase in women who received advanced grants, and women who were participating in advanced and basic business training. Overall, there are 8565 female participants (55%) in training while a reported 7036 male counterparts have also undertaken training (45%).

Focus group discussions with trainees generated useful insights on the structure of training sessions on GBV. There was a consensus, broadly, that training was provided on this issue. However, there were discussions about how training on GBV and sexual harassment could provide more specific examples for participants to address the issue in the workplace. Gender participation is increasing, but more practical training may be required to make gender equality a priority over gender participation as there are perceptions that the latter is more important than the former. This has been reinforced by smaller grants being given to women,

while more men receive advanced grants. It must also be noted that some women found the YIF grant application process difficult, often due to the business plan needing to be written.

Addressing societal norms remains a key challenge, with women still having to work more flexibly to cover responsibilities outside of SMEs and apprenticeship hours including responsibilities of supporting their children. Nonetheless, it has been noted by female participants that empowerment is increasing, and programs are reaching vulnerable groups. Societal norms are still being challenged, and grants also enabling women to feed their families and work flexibly.

Summary of Findings from PROSPECTS Midline Evaluation Report and Data

Question 1. Were the project strategies, interventions, and areas appropriately targeted?

For the most part, the interventions contained in sub-programs properly targeted the needs of youth with the services being offered. Despite reporting not being asked what kind of trainings they needed, most participants found the trainings appropriate and useful. Of a sample of training participants, 96.2% said they were offered the trainings they were interested in/registered for.

The programmes aim to enable youth to increase their ability to find sustainable employment was an appropriate response to local needs. After participating in PROSPECTS, 49% of surveyed youth thought it was now much easier than before to get the job, and only 9% thought it was not easy at all to get a job. They felt the program had prepared them well to apply to new jobs and increased their confidence about future employment PROSPECTS. An impressive 82% of surveyed youth said they now “feel very well prepared to get a job when an opportunity arises” and 75.4% reported feeling that they “have all the necessary skills” and are “very confident” that they can apply for a job.

Enabling youth to find sustainable self-employment was also an appropriate way of targeting the needs of entrepreneurial young Liberian men and women. With a shrinking formal economy, youth must often find alternative means to earn a living. However, low access to credit and banking has inhibited sustainable solutions. With YIF and larger social business grants, young Liberian men and women were able to access the support they wanted, both in terms of training and finance. However, the program may not be able to sustain these efforts in the long run.

The program has not yet succeeded in consistently targeting the most vulnerable youth in the areas of intervention. Although PROSPECTS expanded its informational radio messaging to rural radio stations to encourage more rural youths to apply, they faced barriers to participate fully. In terms of geographical targeting, more efforts need to be made to ensure more participation of rural youth, perhaps by increasing transportation stipends and timely payment. Beyond the rural urban divide, many youth participants also highlighted that vulnerable youth "from the street" should also participate in PROSPECTS activities.

Although the PROSPECTS program staff has focused on increasing the participation of women in trainings and apprenticeships, women are continuing to apply for and receive smaller grants than men. Interviewed YIF grantees say that many women were motivated to participate but dropped out during the lengthy business plan/grant application process. Successful female grantees often appreciated PROSPECTS for the skills training which had enabled them to become stronger public speakers. Youth report that no specific efforts were made to target rural women. Current strategies being employed to increase female retention in the more advanced trainings are insufficient to correct the imbalance between types of grants received by female and male youth.

Although staff in Ganta highlighted their efforts to target and support youth with disabilities, most apprentices and YIF grantees reported disabled youth were not included in the program. Cadet programs seemed to include a greater proportion of disabled youth.

Moreover, certain aspects of the program (YIF/SME grants) were purposefully rigorous, in terms of the application process and therefore beyond reach of many vulnerable youth. Apprenticeship placements are competitive, and some seemed to require specific pre-existing skills such auto mechanical or electrical work. One of the difficulties of targeting vulnerable youth is that trainings will then include barely literate youth and youth currently enrolled in university, which makes it difficult to design content that is appropriate for all.

Question 2. To what extent has PROSPECTS achieved its results in increasing future employment and self-employment in sub programs?

Participants found trainings very appropriate and report using the range of business and life skills in their practice. From a sample of surveyed youth, 53.8% of those who participated in trainings and are now employed report they believe that the job offer was largely a result of participating in the program. Success in seeking out employment or self-employment can be observed in the proportion of youth who report earning cash and being satisfied with their level of control over cash earnings. By the end of 2019, 21.3% of surveyed youth reported earning cash.

Youth perceive they are now better able to respond to the needs of job market. The most significant outcome of the training for trainees, apprentices and grantees was customer service skills, with participants understanding how to attract customers and develop a rapport with them

to improve sales. Young people also developed skills in CV writing and job applications, which they believe better prepared them to search and apply for jobs. In addition, young entrepreneurs spoke highly about the skills gained in record keeping, business plan writing and marketing. Host businesses generally reported that they were very happy with the high calibre of PROSPECTS apprentices.

However, fewer than half of apprentices are securing job offers after the three-month placement and an even smaller proportion are getting full time offers, so there is still need for improvement to increase future employment.

Beneficiaries highlighted the positive effects that enhanced skills and apprenticeships experiences have had on their livelihoods. Enhanced skills contributed to increased confidence and optimism about future job PROSPECTS and future earnings, while apprenticeships gave youth a sense of purpose. Youth felt more highly regarded in their communities and report feeling less of a burden on their families.

After participating in PROSPECTS, 62.6% of youth reported not relying on anyone for financial support, up from 37.3% of youth before participating in the program. Many trainees, apprentices, and grantees credited the PROSPECTS program for their newfound sense of independence. Apprentices and YIF grantees often mentioned that they no longer depend on their parents for money and, instead, provide monetary support to their families. For instance, youth are now able to fund their sibling's or children's school fees. PROSPECTS staff reiterated that a benefit of the program was the impact it had on the families of the young people, describing it as a 'ripple effect'.

Question 3. What lessons can be learned from the cash grant approaches used?

PROSPECTS' cash grant approaches, both YIF grants and social business grants, provide several lessons learned for the future of youth employment programming. The most common challenge was delays in payments. While program staff attributed delayed payments to grantees not submitting necessary documents, many youths who say they submitted all their documents on time still have not received the majority of their approved payment. Some issues arose around using mobile money transfers and grantees often changing phone numbers or using a friend's number. These practices made it difficult for staff to track grantees and follow up on payment milestones. From an administrative point of view, staff who carry out payment processes report feeling overstretched and constrained by the stringent financial diligence processes.

The use of the words like "support" and "empowerment" in PROSPECTS messaging seem to create an expectation that young people will receive money from the program, even though not all that apply receive a grant. Staff should take care to manage expectation from the beginning of the training. When the program ended, many youths wanted more support, both in terms of training and financial pay out.

Gender continues to be a factor in grant distribution, with men consistently applying for and being awarded the advance YIF grant more than their female counterparts. One of the reasons given for this gender divide is that the business plan writing process is too challenging and that it discourages less literate and less confident women.

To address this challenge, staff have started leading small coaching sessions just for women, to give them further support as they apply for advance grants.

Staff have also trained up monitoring staff on record keeping so they can help businesses submit receipts on time, as they undertake monitoring checks.

Staff should build on these strategies to ensure a smooth third and final year of PROSPECTS III. PROSPECTS should offer advice out to YIF grantees about where they can access future loans – perhaps through a formalized agreement with a bank and specialized youth financial products.

Since payment delays due to administrative due diligence are unlikely to go away, staff should be more transparent about the grant payment schedule so that youth can plan ahead. For instance, youth report finding it difficult to commit to their business plans without a predictable cash inflow and many have already lost out on shop space due to delays in financing. A clear payment schedule could help alleviate this uncertainty.

The social business sub-program has faced its own particularly damaging set of challenged, as outlined in the findings of outcome 1. One proposed recommendation is to continue trainings for a longer period, particularly on topics such a grant compliance. Greater due diligence should be undertaken in the selection of grantees. PROSPECTS should continue striving to achieve gender parity in its advanced business grants. There has been very little progress made with banks to support vulnerable youth to date, but PROSPECTS should pursue these relationships and pass on lessons learned from cash approaches to banks who want to enter the microloan space.

Question 4. To what extent has PROSPECTS achieved its results relating to the private sector better responding to the needs of Liberian youth through Objective 3?

PROSPECTS has only just started to work towards its objective of involving the private sector through the collaborative meetings outlined in objective 3. The bulk of PROSPECTS involvement with the private sector has been through the SMEs it supports through the Social Businesses sub-program. Of the 25 targeted SMEs, PROSPECTS have only partnered with six as on end of 2019 and is not on track to meet its goal. Thus far, PROSPECTS has hosted seven

collaborative meetings aimed at improving youth sector coordination between youth stakeholders, including the private sector. Potential avenues for collaboration with banks on youth focused financial instruments are in the exploratory phase.

Partnerships with host businesses for apprenticeships appear to be sustainable as many businesses have now hosted two batches of PROSPECTS III apprentices. If PROSPECTS reaches its target of 300 businesses routinely taking on board apprentices, it could be setting a sustainable path towards increasing employment opportunities for youth. Partnerships discussions with banks are at a very early stage but could also contribute towards the sustainability of PROSPECTS efforts in creating greater opportunities for self-employment through the process of formal loans. In terms of job creation, it is unsure to what extent the gains in youth employment will be sustainable, as a large proportion of jobs created are temporary positions.

Question 5. To what extent has PROSPECTS achieved its results relating to research and learning about Liberian youth employment related to objective 3

PROSPECTS III staff have been proactive about conducting and publishing its research and learning papers in the first two years and has already met its target of three papers. However, the program staff need to focus on sharing these lessons learned with youth employment stakeholders in workshops and seminars in the last year of the project. Donors and local government entities alike report not receiving enough feedback from their partnership with PROSPECTS III. Part of these frustrations with feedback may be due to incomplete internal monitoring and evaluation processes.

There were substantial issues with the monitoring and evaluation systems deployed in PROSPECTS III. Overall, staff report that monitoring data is not being used to make the necessary

changes Trainees report that attendance was consistently taken during trainings but beyond that do not report any feedback being given. All interviewed apprentices, cadets, and YIF grantees said they were frequently monitored in their place of work by PROSPECTS. However, results from the visits and recommendations for improvements were reportedly not shared back with the participants. Apprenticeship host businesses also reported monitoring visits from PROSPECTS and said that routine performance questions were covered but that they never received feedback reports from these monitoring visits. The lack of feedback from monitoring visits was consistent across all components of PROSPECTS programming.

The lack of feedback likely stems from internal monitoring challenges. PROSPECTS staff report issues with communication around monitoring systems. From a logistics perspective, staff report having issues with monitoring including vehicles for field work, thereby causing irregular and delayed monitoring data. From an internal management perspective, the recent switch from a paper-based Monitoring and Evaluation system to Commcare Application has caused some confusion. While some staff report that the new system has allowed them to make better use of the data, for others it is not a popular choice. The new monitoring software is not well understood, and updates are not regular which is leading to issues of data accuracy. The current dashboard system cannot be manually edited, which is leading to lags and inconsistencies in the data when the software is not online. Another internal challenge is stemming from the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) department that conduct monitoring visits in apprenticeship sites, with staff reporting that they adopt a policing approach rather than one that is conducive to learning and improvements.

PROSPECTS staff have credited adaptive management techniques with helping them to remain flexible when issues arise. Currently, adaptive management techniques are reflected in the

"reflection sessions" held by staff with program participants one month after the end of apprenticeships to share experiences and contribute to learning. However, substantial improvements need to be made to ensure that learning is captured and shared back with the participants in a timely manner. One PROSPECTS staff member noted "Timely communication and changes in things is one of the serious challenges that we face" and another added that the "need to communicate possible improvements to businesses" was an urgently required management priority.

Question 6. To what extent are results achieved likely to be sustainable?

Currently, it is unlikely the key results achieved will be sustainable at the close of the grant period. Knowledge gained from the training will remain, this is seen to be a considerable asset for future employment or self-employment. Although the youth will likely retain these skills for the foreseeable future, their confidence and optimism will likely reduce if this doesn't translate into new economic opportunities. YIF grantees will not be able to maintain economic stability either, the small business grant amount is not enough for sustainable self-employment, many have already asked if they could re-enter into a second round of YIF funding. They also often requested PROSPECTS should not end the program so that other youth could also benefit.

The remaining six social business grantees are showing promising growth, though the number of youths currently employed by these SMEs is not sustainable with a high proportion of them only employed on short term contracts.

PROSPECTS has assisted with the development of a pre-existing Government program – the National Cadet Program – by contributing to the curriculum of training sessions. By using

existing structures and practises, PROSPECTS has increased the likelihood of the National Cadet Program continuing once PROSPECTS finishes. However, moving forward, PROSPECTS needs to work closely with the Government to ensure the cadet program is sustained in future years.

The government have allocated $600,000 in their national youth policy to continue funding the National Cadet Program. However, PROSPECTS staff suggest this is not sufficient to continue activities. The Government has planned to submit a proposal for the National Cadet Program to the cabinet meeting, as well as plans to hold a meeting with the finance committee. Given that the current budget set aside is insufficient, this meeting and proposal are key to ensuring that the National Cadet Program continues.

Numerous stakeholders highlighted the importance of building the capacity of government youth centres. When implementing program activities, Youth centre coordinators report that PROSPECTS did not utilise their volunteers, and their connections with youth enough. In addition, they suggest that it would have been useful if both volunteers and staff at the youth centres could have undergone a training of trainers' session by PROSPECTS, so they are able to independently continue carrying out trainings with youth. However, PROSPECTS staff believe that youth centres do not receive enough government funding to take over activities. Both youth centre and National Cadet Program coordinators, see the National Youth Centre Coordination Meeting – a meeting to discuss youth issues, set up by the government – as a step in the right direction to ensuring youth centres can continue activities.

The FGDs suggested that PROSPECTS needed to continue collaboration with the Government and TVET institutions to ensure that training sessions can be successfully utilized within TVET institutions. At present, PROSPECTS staff are attempting to hand over the training

curriculum to Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Education and TVET institutions. A technical working group was formed to discuss the curriculum and the curriculum is gradually being rolled out to TVET institutions. To ensure this is successful, TVET staff feel they need training and financial support within the first few of months. Moving forward, these actions need to be prioritised to ensure training sessions continue in TVET institutions

Overall, more coordination and participation of various stakeholders would have enhanced the sustainability of the project. *For PROSPECTS III to stay on track to achieving its objectives and goals in coordination with communities, the government and the donor community, PROSPECTS should take note of the following recommendations.*

Recommendations for Government: Coordinate with the Government on the future of the National Cadet Program – PROSPECTS should continue to coordinate with the Government to finalise policies and the budget for the National Cadet Program. This should include finalising how the cadet program can successfully incorporate the private sector. Build the capacity of the National Youth Centres – Coordinate with the National Youth Centres to understand what support they need to be able to undertake trainings in the future. This could include undergoing training of trainers with staff and volunteers at the youth centres, as well as discussing funding and other issues at the National Youth Centre Coordination Meeting. TVET curriculum – Ensure that the training curriculum for TVET institutions is successfully rolled out and TVET institutions are supported to incorporate the curriculum into their schedules. Training of Trainers with TVET staff – While the TVET training curriculum is being rolled out, PROSPECTS should undergo training of trainers' sessions with staff at TVET institutions so they can successfully undertake training sessions.

Recommendations for Grants: YIF grant payments – Refine processes involved in transferring money to YIF grantees to ensure that payments are received on time and grantees can follow their business plans. Consider improving the efficiency of administrative tasks to ensure this does not create delays. Support women and less educated youth with YIF grant applications – Continue to encourage and support women to apply for advanced business grants. Consider providing additional low literacy support sessions for youth who are less educated, to ensure vulnerable groups are not excluded.

Recommendations for SMEs: Offer further training to SMEs – Provide additional training sessions to SMEs to ensure they understand compliance requirements, such as milestone reports. In turn, this will hopefully reduce delays in grant payments. Adapt SMEs training sessions for start-ups and existing businesses – Ensure SME training sessions are appropriate for all businesses. Consider undertaking separate training sessions for start-ups and more advanced businesses to ensure appropriate information is given. One recommendation is to think realistically about the size of these Small Business grantees, and their corresponding capacity to deal with the compliance standards.

Recommendations for SME and Grantees: Additional support to grantees – Provide additional support to grantees after the grant is received to ensure it is used successfully and more businesses are operational and profitable. Consider doing further training of trainers' sessions with monitoring staff, like what was done for record keeping, so they can help grantees overcome issues during monitoring visits. Improve business plan writing training sessions – Consult participants on what could be improved about the business plan writing training and enact viable suggestions. This will hopefully overcome some of the challenges youth face when writing business plans. Offer advice on additional financial support for young entrepreneurs – Offer advice to youth about

where they can access future financial support. Coordinate with local NGOs to consider if they could replicate a similar grant scheme.

Recommendations for Apprenticeships: Provide support to apprentices after placement – Provide additional support (such as refreshers sessions on CV writing etc.) to those who complete apprenticeship placements after but remain unemployed. Ensure transportation stipend is paid on time – Coordinate with host businesses to overcome issues of payment delays for transport.

Recommendations for Training: Incorporate practical/trade-specific training – Consider incorporating practical training sessions that are relevant to the trades within the job market, such as catering. This should include apprentices undertaking placements in highly specialised fields. Training of trainers' sessions with youth – Create and undertake training of trainers' sessions for youth, to empower them to pass on their knowledge and skills to other young people in their communities. Provide certificates to youth who complete training – Give certificates to youth who complete training so they can prove their competencies to future employers.

Recommendations for PROSPECTS processes: Improve feedback mechanisms - Communicate information gathered during monitoring visits back to host businesses, apprentices, ministries, cadets and YIF grantees, to ensure that improvements can be made. Prioritise relationship with bank– PROSPECTS will need to dedicate a considerable amount of time and resources over the next year to set up a partnership with a bank and support the rollout of youth focused financial products. Prioritise rollout of 'Do No Harm' Environmental Assessment Tool – Priority needs to be given to this as no progress has been made so far. Internal monitoring systems – Retrain PROSPECTS staff on CommCare and other Monitoring and Evaluation processes to ensure monitoring systems are used effectively.

PROSPECTS 111 Logical Framework Target versus Achievement

This section discussed the results from a logical framework analysis that was based on a representative midline evaluation of the PROSPECTS III program for the learning purposes of this doctoral research. *This section is drawn from an evaluation paper by Shaheen et al. (2020) that assessed the short-term results of PROSPECTS intervention without tracking how sustainable the intervention was in the long-term.* In February 2020, Sweden commissioned a midline evaluation of PROSPECTS III program. PROSPECTS aims to ensure that youth find meaningful employment through improved skillsets, self-confidence, and market opportunities. The evaluation assessed the following outcomes:

Outcome 1: Youth display confidence, skillsets and access market opportunities when finding employment.

Outcome 2: Private businesses employ youth and provide learning opportunities for apprentices and interns.

Outcome 3: Public institutions provide youth with job opportunities by sharing information and favourable policies.

The section discussed the program's achievements across its objectives, effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability. Shaheen et al. (2020) used mixed methods approach, consisting of a document review, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), survey, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and analysed the available secondary quantitative data[6] collected by PROSPECTS staff. The evaluation team collected data from November 2019 to January2020 and below are the key findings.

[6] Monitoring data collected with Commcare Case Management tool relied on for the evaluation and validated with purposive samples.

Evaluation Findings

Outcome 1: PROSPECTS has reached 12,852 youth through its various sub-programs, of which 6005 are men and 6847 women. PROSPECTS is also improving employment outcomes for youth through information, on-the-job-training, and increased opportunities as evidenced by the 46.7% of apprentices and cadets making transitions to employment following their three-month placements. So far 718 entrepreneurial young Liberians have acquired business skills and seed funding to develop micro enterprises. PROSPECTS III is proving effective in increasing the self-esteem and confidence of their participants as only 10% of youth reported low self-esteem after trainings. *However, PROSPECTS III has not made tangible progress in enabling Micro-finance services provide sustainable access to credit for youth entrepreneurs.*

Outcome 2: PROSPECTS has experienced considerable challenges in the implementation of the social business grants, designed to provide start up or expansion capital to promising Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) led by Liberian youth. Of the twelve Social Business grantees, six businesses had to be eliminated from the program due to inconsistencies in financial reporting and financial non-compliance. Only six out of the target 25 private sector innovators have received financial and business advisory support, but they have managed to create 86 new jobs and are all reporting an increase in profits.

PROSPECTS will need to invest considerable time and resources into organizing capacity building seminars for SMEs to promote innovation in the private sector. Six seminars have been organized over the first two years of PROSPECTS III. A small business toolkit has been shared with over 100 Liberian SMEs, but its usage and usefulness have not yet been measured. PROSPECTS will need to start focusing on the disbursement of grants aimed at increasing the number of small businesses in renewable energy to meet its targets.

Outcome 3: PROSPECTS has published three research and policy analysis articles based on their experience of PROSPECTS. In the past year, PROSPECTS staff have prioritised greater engagement of youth stakeholders by hosting seven collaborative meetings to share findings and influence national level youth employment outcomes. Prospect III's activities have been replicated by national and international stakeholders in the form of the CADET curriculum and the LEAP program. Learnings from the gender component of PROSPECTS III have also been incorporated into the new nationally mandated TVET curriculum.

Relevance: PROSPECTS activities, strategies and sub-programs are considered very relevant by most youth, local host businesses, program staff and national youth stakeholders. Participants were enthusiastic about the relevance of the trainings, apprenticeships, and funding opportunities awarded. The findings suggest that youth perceive they are now better able to respond to the job market, through their new skills on CV writing, effective job applications and customer service skills specifically. Apprentices also believe the work placement was the right approach to take as they now feel more confident and able to apply for jobs.

Notwithstanding the challenges faced by the social business sub-program, the SME grantees did manage to create 86 meaningful employment opportunities for Liberian young men and women, and through this contribute to the correction of some market failures. The PROSPECTS team made considerable efforts to increase the number of learning meetings and workshops with government and civil society stakeholders, which is starting to have an impact at a policy level, as the government has allocated budget to the cadet apprenticeship scheme under its national youth employment policy for 2019-2023.

Sustainability: Overall, the knowledge and skills participants have gained is a key sustainable outcome of the program. YIF grantees, apprentices, and host businesses believe the

knowledge and skills youth have gained from the program is likely to have a lasting impact on themselves and their communities. YIF grantees believe they need further financial support to grow their businesses. The survey data shows that only 60.5% of YIF grantees thought the grant was sufficient to help them start or expand a business. In addition, only 58.4% of YIF businesses were still in operation three months after disbursement and only 30.5% of businesses were still operational and profitable. *Participants further emphasised that if PROSPECTS were to leave today, this would have a negative impact upon youth, which suggests aspects of the program are yet unsustainable and they have low confidence in the government's ability to takeover activities.*

Further collaboration with the government and other youth stakeholders is needed to ensure that activities continue. By working alongside and within the existing national structure, PROSPECTS has increased the likelihood of the National Cadet Program continuing once PROSPECTS III finishes. However, given that the current budget set aside for the National Cadet Program in 2019-2023 is insufficient to cover its cost, PROSPECTS will need to follow up on the upcoming meeting between national youth employment stakeholders and finance committee of the cabinet. Both Government Youth centre staff and TVET staff request additional Training of Trainers sessions to be able to carry out program activities post-PROSPECTS.

PROSPECTS III has been particularly successful in achieving its objectives in terms of increasing the confidence and skills of the young Liberian workforce, but work remains to be done in collaboration with the government and the private sector to create sustainable solutions to address labour market failures. Achievement at the midline for each objective is detailed in the report below and achievement on each overarching goal can be found in the Table 7 below.

Table 7: *Level of Achievement for Overall Goals*

Result level	Indicator	Baseline	Midline	End line target	Achievement[7]
Goal 1	% of individuals securing full-time (part time/short term/seasonal) employment	8.3% (47.5% part-time, 29.1% Short-term, 13.2%seasonal)	27.1% employed (14.7% full-time, 5.6% part-time, 3.7% short-term/seasonal)	BV[8]+10%	100%
Goal 2	% male and female youth reporting ability to economically support self and others	6.4% (male) 4.8%(female)	25.6% (male)[9] 14.5% (female)	BV+20%	100%

[7] Achievement scale: Green (Achieved), Amber (Partially Achieved), Red (Underachieved). Sources: Survey and Key Informant Interviews

[8] BV represents Baseline Value

[9] Calculated using a proxy indicator question in the survey: "Who do you rely on for financial support?"

Goal 3	% of individuals reporting increased confidence in economic future	16.6% (male) 13.11% (female)	29.9% (male) 31.25% (female)	BV+20%	100%
Goal 4	# of laws, policies or procedures drafted, proposed or adopted during the project period, as a result of PROSPECTS research and influence	0	1	3	33.33%

Note: Extracted from PROSPECTS III Midline Evaluation, 2020, p7.

Table 8: *Summary of PROSPECTS III Outcomes and Outputs Target*

Outcome	Outputs
Outcome 1: Youth display confidence, skillsets and access market opportunities when finding employment.	Output 1.1: 16,500 youth have the confidence and skills to seek out economic opportunity.
	Output 1.2: 1,302 youth experience improved employment outcomes through access to information, on-the-job training, and increased job opportunities.
	Output 1.3: 1,355 entrepreneurial young Liberians acquire business skills and seed funding to develop micro-enterprises.
	Output 1.4: **Micro-finance services provide sustainable access to credit for youth entrepreneurs.**
Outcome 2: The private sector in Liberia provides youth with sustainable employment and increases the demand for labour.	Output 2.1: **25 private sector innovators receive financial and business advisory support through an external business incubator to create youth employment or mitigate labour market failures.**

	Output 2.2: 15 business seminars targeted at SMEs build capacity and promote innovation within the private sector.
	Output 2.3: **A small business toolkit, publicly available to Liberian SMEs, will support capacity building internal to Liberian businesses.**
Outcome 3: Public institutions in Liberia increase economic opportunities available to youth through new policies and information about employment options.	Output 3.1: Research and policy analysis will equip decision-makers with information to positively affect youth employment outcomes.
	Output 3.2: Greater engagement of youth stakeholders will reduce information asymmetries between policymakers, government ministries and administrations, service providers, and the private sector.
	Output 3.3: PROSPECTS research and learning will positively influence youth livelihoods programming within Liberia and abroad.

Note: Sourced from PROSPECTS III Monitoring, Evaluation & Learning Plan, 2020.

Outcome 1: Youth in Liberia have the skills, confidence and opportunities to access sustainable employment.

Outcome summary

PROSPECTS has made considerable progress in achieving its targets set out under objective 1, particularly in terms of building the confidence and skills of young men and women. The proportion of youth reporting low self-esteem has dropped dramatically, from 41% in 2017 to 10% in 2019. After participating in PROSPECTS training, most youth report a heightened understanding of the job market and the skills they need to succeed. Conversations with youth participants and host businesses yielded some areas for improvement, such as the length and specificity of material covered. Overall, participants and host businesses praised PROSPECTS for their apprenticeship experiences.

To increase opportunities for youth to attain sustainable employment, PROSPECTS III will need to prioritise finding new host businesses to host apprentices/cadets. Currently the proportion of youth making transitions to formal employment is at 46% but not all of these are transitions to full time positions. When it comes to supporting opportunities for self- employment, there are questions around the sustainability of small grants from YIF, as many small businesses started from the YIF are not operational after 3 months.

Relevance

Participants were enthusiastic about the relevance of the trainings, apprenticeships, and funding opportunities awarded. Baseline and year 1 studies clearly outlined young people's lack of confidence in themselves and the job-market; the lack of knowledge about skills required for

the job market, or which sectors offered the most opportunities for youth.[10] PROSPECTS aimed to address these issues by a) providing youth with soft skills to prepare them for the job market; b) providing youth with business skills; c) linking youth to employers through apprenticeships; d) providing grants and assistance to start off and/or build on existing business; e) involving potential employers - the private sector and the MoYS.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with training participants reveal that youth were not directly consulted, nor asked what kind of trainings they needed. However, most young people reported they were satisfied with the training contents and found them relevant. Findings show that trainings contribute to a feeling of increased confidence in youth, both in themselves and in their ability to find a job. Participants also noted that the knowledge they gained from the training is unlike anything they learnt in high school, which they saw as a positive aspect of the program.

Overall, various stakeholders report that conducting trainings was the right approach for building capacity. The findings suggest that youth perceive they are now better able to respond to the job market. Training on CV writing and time management were particularly appreciated by participants. While the TVET training is not yet extensive, TVET institutions also believe that the students who did undertake the training believed it was useful for future job applications. YIF grantees found business plan training and record keeping helpful, as well as market research as a strategy to enter new markets. Likewise, SMEs outlined that marketing training was useful, particularly for new start-ups.

YIF grantees also outlined that they were not asked their needs and, instead, simply informed about the opportunity to apply for a grant. Despite this, the data demonstrates that *access to*

[10] Survey "before and after PROSPECTS" questions and indicator logframe.

financial capital is a significant need for young entrepreneurs, as it enables them to expand or start-up a business.

Apprentices, unlike other program participants, were asked through a form what help or assistance they needed. The majority of FGDs revealed that apprentices believe the work placement was the right approach to take as they now feel more confident and able to apply for jobs. However, one apprentice did highlight that it would have been useful if they had been asked what skills they wanted to develop through the training, as they could have expressed that they want to develop skills in video recording and editing for their chosen career path in journalism.

The National Cadet Program was formed by the government prior to the PROSPECTS III so baseline studies did not ask cadets if these trainings were relevant to their needs. Nonetheless, *the cadets outlined that they found the program useful for improving their skills relevant to the job market.*

Effectiveness

PROSPECT III's success in helping Liberian youth gain skills and the confidence to find jobs can be ascertained from the progress achieved against the planned results. These are discussed in the findings below.

Table 9: *Level of Achievement for Work-readiness Skills*

Result level	indicator	Baseline	Midline	End line target	Achievement[11]

[11] Achievement scale: Green (Achieved), Amber (Partially Achieved), Red (Underachieved). Sources: Survey

Outcome 1: Youth display confidence, skillsets and access market opportunities when finding employment.	% of women, men, youth girls and boys who earn cash	2% women, 5%men 0%girls, 0%boys	21.3% of youth (6.2% women. 9.6% men. 2.1%girls. 3.4%boys)	BV+10%	100%
	% of male and female youth reporting low self-esteem	40.85% (18.7%female, 22.16% male)	Survey: 10% (5.3% Female, 5% Male)	BV -20%	>100%
	% male and female youth reporting using savings methods (disaggregated by formal, semi-formal and informal methods)	40.6%male 59.4% female (22.8% formal, 6.6%semi-formal, 67.5% informal)	Of those who save 50% are men and 50% are women.(36.9% formal, 67%% semi-formal, 69.5% informal)	BV +20%	Formal>100% Semi: >100% Informal: 85.8%
					Total: >100%

	% male and female youth who believe they are primarily responsible for their welfare	12.8%male 5.9% female	Total 62.6% male 34.5% female 28.1%	BV +20%	Male: 89.8% Female: 397%
	% male and female youth reporting using loan instruments in order to start or expand a business	5.9% male 5.0% female	survey: 2.1% women and 2.2% of men using formal/informal loans to expand/start business	BV +5%	0%
	% of women and girls participating in programs reporting increased	43.7% (38.9% women, 4.8% girls)	37.5% of those who applied to jobs by sharing a hard copy of CV with employers were	BV +10%	0%

	confidence at community and at home		female (women 22.7%, girls14.8%)		
	% of men, women boys and girls who hold gender equitable attitudes-	90.4% (44.3% men, 39.6% women, 2.5% boys, 4.1% girls)	96.9% (44.6% men, 45.4%women, 4.1%girls, 2.8 %boys)	BV +10%	66%
	% of women satisfied with their level of control over their cash earnings	100% (ceiling effect)	before PROSPECTS 35% were very satisfied, after PROSPECTS 56% of women over 25 are very satisfied	BV +10%	>100%

Note: Extracted from PROSPECTS III Midline Evaluation Dataset, 2020.

Lack of confidence in their ability to apply or get a job has been a constant obstacle for young Liberians' formal labour participation. PROSPECTS III is proving effective in increasing the self-esteem and confidence of their participants. The PROSPECTS III Midline Evaluation Dataset (2020) showed Only 10% of youth (5.3% female and 5% male) reported low self-esteem, while the remaining 90% were confident that they could get a job, even without knowing someone in that business or organisation. Of those who had applied to a job in the last three months by sharing a hard copy of their CV, 38% were women. This encouraging trend reflects the number of female participants who report increased confidence in their community and at home, particularly in their ability for public speaking and perceptions of self-worth. FGDs with male and female youth indicate that they also noticed an increased level of respect from their family and communities because of their participation in the program.

Success in seeking out employment or self-employment can be observed in the proportion of youth who report earning cash and being satisfied with the control of their earnings. By the end of 2019, 21.3% of surveyed youth reported earning cash (6.2% women. 9.6% men. 2.1% girls 15-24. 3.4% boys 15-24), a significant increase from 7% in the 2017 baseline (2% women, 5% men 0% girls, 0% boys) (PROSPECTS III Midline Evaluation Dataset, 2020 and PROSPECTS Baseline Report, 2017). The PROSPECTS III Midline Evaluation Dataset (2020) showed 84 percent of women report being very satisfied with the control of their earnings, up from only 35% of women before the program intervention. Although 100% of women reported this same level of high satisfaction in the 2017 baseline, this was largely attributed to a ceiling effect because very few women earned cash to begin with. Furthermore, 62.6% of youth reported not relying on anyone for financial support after participating in PROSPECTS, up from 37.3% of youth before participating in the program.

However, study observed a decrease in the proportion of youth who save and who use formal loan instruments. The PROSPECTS III Midline Evaluation Dataset (2020) reported only 6% of those surveyed report having ever taken out a loan, and only 1.7% have taken a loan out from a bank. Just over half of respondents reported saving at least some of their income, 50% of those who saved were women and 50% were men. Of those who saved, 36.9% of youth reported using a formal saving mechanism such as a bank (Ecobank, LB Bank. Etc.), 67% of youth used semi-formal saving mechanisms such as mobile money and credit unions, 69.5% of youth used informal savings mechanism such as Susu club or cashboxes. While mobile money seems to be providing an increasingly popular semi-formal savings alternative, the general downward trend in use of formal financial institutions could be due to several factors from economic downturn to lack of youth-targeted bank products. Furthermore, only fewer than 5% of respondents (2.1%women and 2.2% men) report using formal loan instruments to start or expand a business.

PROSPECTS III is demonstrating encouraging results in terms of improved attitudes on gender-based violence with 97% of surveyed youth stating that it is never ok for men to beat their girlfriends even if they challenge them in public. The biggest changes in the perception of the dangers of violence against women have come from women over 25 and boys 15-24. After participating in PROSPECTS, 97% of surveyed youth believe that women have the same right as men to study and work outside the house, up from 80% before the program. However, some participants and TVET institutions reported that they did not receive any gender-based violence training. Other youth participants suggested that they received no specific training, but just some advice and words of encouragement on sexual harassment.

The Liberia Demographic and Health Survey (2020) reports that 60% of women aged 15-49 experienced physical abuse and 9% sexually violated. Alarming is that slightly fewer than half (42%) of abused women have sought help in Liberia. Communities thrive when people are included in development initiatives and empowered with knowledge. SIDA and Government of Liberia are committed to the protection of marginalised groups through the implementation of activities that close gender gaps for women and girls in development interventions. Women participation in politics is very limited and people with disability often live in extreme poverty.

The initial design phase of PROSPECTS 1 envisaged equal participation of male and female youth participants during the employability trainings, grant disbursements for business start-ups and apprenticeship placements. A real-time dashboard was set-up to monitor gender inclusion across the different intervention. Initial findings showed higher participation of women compared to men during trainings with shorter classroom time. More women relative to men applied for the basic grants that had lower literacy requirements for completing the grant application. Fewer women relative to men applied for the advanced grants. Higher demand by employers in the hospitality industry for females relative to males.

Some of the challenges females faced were difficulty attending a full-day training particularly for mothers. Female participants experienced difficulty completing CVs and business plans due to higher school drop-out rates and illiteracy. Feedback from the monitoring informed adaptations to the intervention, such as the provision of space for children' day-care, provision of computers and support staff to help females write CVs and apply for grants, and hand-holding exercises for aspiring female entrepreneurs. The intervention included inputs from the Ministry of

Gender, Children and Social Protection. Female participants were informed of focal persons in communities to report gender-based violence and how to mitigate the associated challenges.

For those who received gender-based violence training, the most significant message that participants took away from the training was the need for women to dress appropriately, to not attract attention. Few participants spoke of their increased understanding of women's issues, as well as women demonstrating they understood how to cope in situations that may occur with male bosses. PROSPECTS staff also reported that they improved the trainings recently by separating sessions by gender to allow for women to speak out and answer questions, which they often refrained from doing if men were present.

The proportion of youth who feel that they are primarily responsible for their own welfare, (do not rely on friends, family, parents, nor spouses for financial support), has considerably increased since 2017. From a survey of 917 PROSPECTS participants, 62.6% of respondents reported being primarily responsible for their own welfare, of which 45% were women and 55% were men. In FGDs, many young trainees, apprentices, and grantees credited the PROSPECTS program for their newfound sense of independence. Apprentices and YIF grantees often mentioned that they no longer depend on their parents for money and, instead, provide monetary support to their families. For instance, youth are now able to fund their sibling's or children's school fees. PROSPECTS staff reiterated that a benefit of the program was the impact it had on the families of the young people, describing it as a '*ripple effect*' (Interview, PROSPECTS staff).

Output 1.1: 16,500 youth have the confidence and skills to seek out economic opportunity.

PROSPECTS appears to be on track to reach 16,500 youth through program activities that increase confidence and skills for seeking economic opportunities. As of December 2019, the

program had reached 12,852 young people, 6005 men and 6847 women. The program has already achieved its target of a 20% increase from the baseline of individuals reporting increased knowledge of market opportunities. In 2019, significant progress was made in expanding training around renewable energy products. Table 10 below provides additional information on the achievement of Output 1.1 targets.

Table 10: *Level of Achievement for Youth Empowered with Knowledge*

Result level	Indicator	Baseline	Midline	End line target	Achievement[12]
Output 1.1: 16,500 youth have the confidence and skills to seek out economic opportunity.	Number of male and female youth reached through program activities- define reach	0	12,852	16,500	77.89%
	% of individuals reporting increased knowledge of	42.60%	61.3%	BV+20%	>100% (120%)

[12] Achievement scale: Green (Achieved), Amber (Partially Achieved), Red (Underachieved). Sources: PROSPECTS III Dashboard Jan 2020 and Midline Evaluation Survey

	market opportunities				
	# of youth receiving sales and marketing training for renewable energy (solar and clean cook stove) product retail businesses	0	144	150	96%
	# of youth receiving technical training in renewable energy product repair and maintenance	0	150	150	100%

Note: Sourced from PROSPECTS III Midline Evaluation, 2020.

From 2017 to 2019, 12,852 youth have been reached by the PROSPECTS program either through training, apprenticeships/cadets' placements, YIF grants or a combination of the three. Of these 12,852 youth, 46.7% were men and 53.3% were women. These numbers show an encouraging trend in women's participation.

For apprenticeships it was reported in the FGDs that some women missed days due the burden of care duties, such as cooking and looking after their children. However, this did not negatively impact completion rates of female apprentices or cadet placements. 77.6% of men and 76.7% of women completed their apprenticeships or cadet placements. This may be because host businesses tried to ensure women's attendance was high by introducing flexible working hours to account for women's additional responsibilities.

Of the six types of training offered, effective job application (59%) and soft skills for employment (58%) were the most attended according to the midline survey. After participating in PROSPECTS training, most of the youth reported increased knowledge of market opportunities: 67.4% of respondents reported a good understanding of the skills that employers wanted them to have; 61.8% of respondents say they have a good understanding of the jobs that are available; 54.5% said they were aware, to a large extent, of the sectors where there are business opportunities for youth (PROSPECTS Midline Report, 2019).

It is particularly encouraging to see a rise in the proportion of youth reporting increased awareness of the skills employers are looking for as this will help to address labour market failures in the long term. Before participating in PROSPECTS, only 3.9% of youth reported that they knew to a large extent which skills employers wanted them to have. After participating in PROSPECTS 67.4% now know which skills employers want them to have and they can now target the most appropriate trainings or courses to realign their skills with available jobs.

PROSPECTS have seized the opportunity to incorporate renewable energy into their technical and business trainings to increase environmentally sustainable youth-led businesses. In 2019, PROSPECTS conducted their first trainings on repair and marketing of renewable energy products, such as clean cook stoves and solar energy. As such, 144 youth received training on sales and marketing training for renewable energy product retail and 150 youth received technical training in renewable energy product repair and maintenance.

Building up young people's confidence was a key component of PROSPECTS' strategy to help them find sustainable employment. One of the main results of the trainings at all levels was increased self-esteem. A high proportion of surveyed youth report that they have gained confidence and can get a job anywhere. Before participating in PROSPECTS only 19.8% of youth said they strongly believed in themselves and in their ability to get the job. After participating in PROSPECTS, this increased to 88.3%. This was also reflected within the FGDs, as participants believed the training helped them gain the confidence, they need to get a job.

Overall, the training was seen to be beneficial. The most significant outcome of the training for trainees, apprentices and grantees was customer service skills, with participants understanding how to attract customers and develop a rapport with them to improve sales. Young people also developed skills in CV writing and job applications, which they believe better prepared them to search and apply for jobs. In addition, young entrepreneurs spoke highly about the skills gained in record keeping, business plan writing and marketing.

In some cases, stakeholders suggested some improvements to the content and length of the training. Some trainees outlined in the FGDs that they would have benefitted from the program by undergoing more practical training on specific trades. For instance, training sessions on catering skills, as this is seen to be desirable based upon the current job market. In some cases, the only

issue participants had with the trainings was its length, as they felt training sessions needed to be longer.

Within TVET institutions, the training is yet to be fully rolled out. *However, staff at the institutions said those who had attended the training were able to apply these skills in job applications after graduating.* Therefore, it is hopeful that now the curriculum has been approved by the Government, and once it has been rolled out into TVET institutions, many students will benefit.

PROSPECTS trainings have, in some cases, empowered youth to lead similar trainings of their own within their communities, such as in their local churches, as the quote below highlights.

> *'I sat for this training I went home and thought it wise to form an organization called Youth Educative Matter…We have been preaching lot of educative things around here on Hot FM and to the Red Cross. Of recent we hosted a workshop of over 40 persons, and I was one of the speakers for that workshop. I think with this idea have brought to us it is helping us to impact our brothers and sisters' life because these people are people that have come here to help to value our self, our life or our society.' (Youth Participant, Bong)*

Extracted from PROSPECTS III Midline Evaluation, 2020.

Output 1.2: 1,302 youth experience improved employment outcomes through access to information, on-the-job training, and increased job opportunities.

As of December 2019, 747 young people had completed their 3-month apprenticeship or cadet placements. As noted in the Table 11 below, this represents a 57% achievement of the 1302 target. PROSPECTS will need to considerably increase the number of apprenticeship/placements it is offering if it wants to reach its target within the year.

In the FGDs, some women reported missed days due to burden of care duties, such as cooking and looking after their children. However, this did not negatively impact completion rates of

female apprentices or cadet placements. 77.6% of men and 76.7% of women completed their apprenticeships or cadet placements. This may be because host businesses tried to ensure women's attendance was high by introducing flexible working hours to account for women's additional responsibilities. However, around 23% of youth are unable to complete their apprenticeships or cadet placement, which leads to reduced opportunities for sustainable employment in the long run.

Table 11: *Level of Achievement for Access to Apprenticeship Training*

Result level	indicator	Baseline	Midline	End line target	Achievement[13]
Output 1.2: 1,302 youth experience improved employment outcomes through access to information, on-the-job training, and	% of program participants (apprentices, interns) making transitions to full-time/part-time/seasonal and short-term employment	0	46.7%	45%	100%
	# of apprenticeships/cadet	0	747	1302	57.4%

[13] Achievement scale: Green (Achieved), Amber (Partially Achieved), Red (Underachieved). Sources: Dashboard Jan 2020 and Survey

increased job opportunities.	placements completed				
	% of youth demonstrating increased soft skills	(Year 1 68.6%)	79.2% after training. 5.8% soft skills before PROSPECTS	BV +20%	96.2%
	# of businesses hosting apprentices	0	209	300	69.7%
	# and % of businesses hiring apprentices after apprenticeship	0, 0	Not measured.	200,66%	-
	Average # of hours per day women and men at all ages spend working	3.9 hours (Women), 4.5 hours (Men)	23% more than 8hrs per day, 21% 8hrs, 12% below 8 hrs. Of the 44%	BV+5%	N/A

			who work at least 8 hours per day, 49.01% are women		
	% of apprentices that are female	0	49.9%	50%	100%

Note: Sourced from PROSPECTS III Midline Evaluation Report, 2020.

One of the most central premises of PROSPECTS III model is the transition from three-month apprenticeships/cadet placements to sustainable formal employment. As of the end of 2019, 46.7% of youth were making transitions from their apprenticeships and cadet internships into employment with their host businesses. Of those who were offered jobs, 74.9% were offered full time jobs, 1.3% irregular and 23.7% part time.

PROSPECTS appears to be on track to meet their target of 45% transitions into employment with host businesses by the end of 2020, however it may be interesting to look at some of the reasons why host businesses cannot or chose not to offer their apprentices a job. A key finding from year 1 and Year 2 monitoring reports from PROSPECTS was that the stipend that PROSPECTS paid apprentices ($70) was higher than what most host businesses could afford to offer young people after the 3-month placement had concluded. Rather than set a blanket stipend

amount for the whole program, PROSPECTS may want to conduct a rapid benchmarking in Nimba and Bong to ensure that the stipend provides an incentive to young people to participate without creating unrealistic expectations for future local salaries.

Likewise, FGDs demonstrate challenges with apprentice retention within host businesses, once placements finish. Most host businesses and apprentices suggested that many of the youth were unable to gain employment, within the host businesses after their placement. This was due to businesses having insufficient space and funds to retain the apprentices. It was also suggested a lack of retention was because apprenticeships were too short, leaving insufficient time for participants to gain sufficient experience. Therefore, an extension of apprenticeship placements should be considered.

Overall, there was a sense that the apprenticeships helped people gain the skills, experience and confidence they need to apply for jobs in the future, despite issues with host businesses retaining apprentices. While there is an overarching perception that apprentices struggled to gain employment within host businesses after completing the apprenticeship, some more positive stories did emerge. Success stories have been mentioned of apprentices gaining employment and then being promoted to store managers. In addition, host businesses report that previous apprentices now own businesses and host apprentices themselves.

> *'For me, I'm very confident that I can succeed in getting work because with all that I went through in the apprenticeship program, it helped me a lot... I am very confident that I'm able to get a job.' (Apprentice, Ganta)*

Extracted from PROSPECTS III Midline Evaluation, 2020.

For the National Cadet Program, ministries often do not have the capacity or budget to retain cadets after their placement. As a result, SIDA suggested that having ministries host cadets

is perhaps not the most suitable approach to adopt. National Cadet Program coordinators and PROSPECTS have already recognised this issue and in response they have incorporated the private sector into the program so that more participants will be retained after their placements. This development is in its initial stages and National Cadet Program coordinators are still striving for a policy to be put in place based on partnership with the private sector. However, it should be noted that the above analysis of the apprenticeship sub-program demonstrates that these issues are present in the private sector too, so similar challenges may emerge.

While FGDs showed there were issues with cadets gaining employment within the ministries, they did highlight other significant positive outcomes for youth. National Cadet Program coordinators and cadets report of people gaining employment elsewhere, many feeling confident in their ability to gain employment in the future, as well as some successfully gaining scholarships for higher education courses. It is these success stories that National Cadet Program coordinators believe motivates other youth to strive to achieve their own career goals.

PROSPECTS is on track to reach their target of 82.3% (BV+20%) by next year, with 79.2% of survey respondents currently reporting increased soft skills, particularly customer service skills. A total of 2729 youth have completed soft skills trainings such as work ethics, problem-solving, communication, teamwork, and customer service. Taking the year 1 value of 68.6% as the baseline.

More generally, host organisations report that they have benefitted from hosting apprentices, citing PROSPECTS' trainees as being better trained than other apprenticeship schemes or vocational schools. The majority of FGDs with host businesses report that apprentices come with good skills, particularly in customer service. In certain highly specialized fields, such as nursing, hosts complained that youth's lack experience in vocational areas. They requested that

trainees receive more training prior to their placements. Many host businesses also requested that PROSPECTS support their businesses financially as well, before placing apprentices.

The number of hours being worked appears higher than the baseline. The baseline study in 2017 showed that women spent on average 3.9hours per day working and men spent on average 4.5hrs working. While we cannot compare midline results directly in terms of hours per day, we can report that 44% of surveyed youth spent 8 or more hours working, with 23% of surveyed youth spending more than 8hrs per day working. About half (49%) of those who spend 8 or more hours per day working are women.

Output 1.3: 1,355 entrepreneurial young Liberians acquire business skills and seed funding to develop micro-enterprises.

The Youth Investment fund (YIF) seeks to address the lack of sustainable employment opportunities for youth by giving them small start-up capital to start or expand their own micro business. So far, 718 Liberians have acquired business skills and seed funding to develop their own micro-enterprises.

Table 12: *Level of Achievement for Business Skills & Funding*

Result level	indicator	Baseline	Midline	End line target	Achievement[14]

[14] Achievement scale: Green (Achieved), Amber (Partially Achieved), Red (Underachieved). Sources: PROSPECTS III Dashboard and Evaluation Survey

Output 1.3: 1,355 entrepreneurial young Liberians acquire business skills and seed funding to develop micro-enterprises.	# of youth achieving success in starting, maintaining, and growing a profitable business	0	219 out of 718 still operational and profitable	1100	19.9%
	# of new enterprises created or expanded	0	718 (basic 390, advanced 328)	1355	53%
	# # and % of youth businesses still in operation after 3 months, disaggregated by sex	0	419, 58.4% of all grants given	1100, 80%	73%

	% of female youth who own property or resources for production of goods, services, and/or income in their own name	0 (year 1: 1.3%)	413	BV+20%	>100%
	# of youth-led renewable energy retail businesses (solar or clean cook stove) started	0	0*	20	0%

Note: Extracted from PROSPECTS III Midline Evaluation Dataset, 2020.

Overall, the YIF grantees found the trainings and grants supported them to expand or start their own small businesses. Although most youth have yet to receive the full amount of the grant, grantees were generally pleased with the opportunity. One grantee managed to expand his business

so much that he was then able to hire two additional staff. The trainings taught them how to keep business records, communication, saving and management skill, to help keep their businesses. PROSPECTS staff also perceived that the training on writing the business plan was useful, as was training on strategies to bring in more business. The following quote demonstrates the significant changes the YIF grant has had on one young entrepreneur:

> *'As for me, I didn't have money at first to start. But after the training, I was able to get the first grant then I started the business. But before, I never knew anything about business. After the training, I know how to sell, how to talk to customers, how to encourage customers and now my business is moving on.' (YIF Grantee, Ganta)*

(Shaheen et al., 2019)

Due to the small amount of money given, there are issues around sustainability of the business models. Only 58.4% of businesses were still in operation three months after disbursement and only 30.5% (219/718) of businesses were still operational and profitable after three months. Of a sample of surveyed youth, 60% of youth reported the business was still operational after 6 months, further highlighting that it is difficult to maintain economic activities after three-months with such a small grant.

YIF grantees felt the need for more support from PROSPECTS either through further training or financially. In addition, youth centre coordinators believe further support needs to be given to grantees once they have received the grant, particularly advice on saving, record keeping and business plans. PROSPECTS staff recognized this issue, as they recently trained their monitoring staff in record keeping, so they could assist YIF grantees and answer questions when undergoing monitoring visits.

There were significant issues with YIF grantees receiving their payments. Seven FGDs with youth reported delays in YIF grantees receiving the money or that the payment had not yet been received. As a result, young entrepreneurs were unable to follow their business plans. PROSPECTS staff understand this issue to be partly due to a high level of administration, accompanied by an insufficient number of staff. PROSPECTS staff also highlighted that delays in payments were often because mobiles are used to transfer money – many participants change numbers or use someone else's phone to sign up, making tracking grantees difficult.

Youth found writing grant applications challenging, particularly the business plans. Yet, youth ultimately agreed that it was necessary to demonstrate their commitment to receiving a grant and helpful for managing their businesses. Moving forward, some youth suggested that improvements need to be made to the business writing plan trainings, to make the process less challenging for participants.

Youth also highlighted that the grant writing process could potentially be excluding young women or those with lower levels of literacy. PROSPECTS recognize that women are often receiving the smaller grants, and more men receive the advanced grants. To try and correct this trend, PROSPECTS staff have held coaching sessions with young women to offer additional support and encourage them to apply for the bigger grants. One recommendation to address the challenges for low literacy youth was to host separate trainings for youth who already had a micro enterprise and those with little or no prior business experience.

PROSPECTS has not yet started giving out grants specifically for youth to start a renewable energy business, so their progress against this indicator is 0%. However, the survey showed that three young people had started or already owned renewable energy businesses because of their own initiative. When asked if they had any green energy products in their households, such as

solar or cook stoves, 20.9% of surveyed youth said yes and 2.1% of respondents said they owned them and used them for commercial purposes. PROSPECTS has recently completed the training of 150 youth in the marketing of renewable energy products and will be monitoring how many do go on to apply these skills.

Output 1.4: Micro-finance services provide sustainable access to credit for youth entrepreneurs.

Noting that formal credit is hard to obtain for youth in Liberia, PROSPECTS aims to work with micro-finance services to provide sustainable access to credit to young entrepreneurs. High interest rates, lack of youth-targeted financial products, and weak trust in formal banking mechanisms all currently create barriers to credit for young people.

Formal banking penetration is low among Liberia's youth, the majority of which prefer to use mobile money or Susu club to save their earnings. Of 917 surveyed youth, 34.1% reported having a formal bank account in their name.

Table 13: *Level of Achievement for Access to Microfinance Opportunities*

Result level	indicator	Baseline	Midline	End line target	Achievement[15]
Output 1.4: Micro-finance	# of financial providers or market actors	0	0	1	0%

[15] Achievement scale: Green (Achieved), Amber (Partially Achieved), Red (Underachieved). Sources: FGD and key document review

services provide sustainable access to credit for youth entrepreneurs	providing improved financial products				
	# of clients that use improved financial products	0	0	100	0%

Note: Sourced from PROSPECTS III Midline Evaluation, 2020.

PROSPECTS has not made progress in achieving output 1.4.

PROSPECTS discussion with three banks in Liberia (UBA, Ecobank and GN Bank) to start building a relationship with youth entrepreneurs failed in the provision of improved financial products for young entrepreneurs. So far, the relationship with GN bank has evolved into financial literacy training for PROSPECTS trainees to "offer them the opportunity to understand the basics of banking and the need for savings, budgeting, planning…etc." However, when asked if more youth had come to open bank accounts because of the financial literacy training, the bank replied that it was still too early to tell if the trainings had any impact. Moreover, the low rate of formal banking penetration within the youth population could prove a barrier to the adoption of credit

products even if they were targeted to youth. PROSPECTS will need to dedicate a considerable amount of time and resources over the last year of PROSPECTS III to meet its target.

Outcome 2: Liberia's private sector creates meaningful employment for young women and men and corrects labor market failures.

Outcome summary: PROSPECTS' approach to supporting the private sector to create meaningful employment for youth has been centred on the Social Business sub-program. PROSPECTS has experienced considerable challenges in the implementation of the social business grants, designed to provide start up or expansion capital to promising Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) led by Liberian youth. Of the twelve Social Business grantees, six businesses had to be dropped from the program due to inconsistencies in financial reporting and financial non-compliance. These risk and compliance issues has also delayed the disbursement of the grants for the six remaining businesses. These obstacles have slowed the speed at which businesses are able to create more positions for young men and women.

Nevertheless, the six remaining social business have managed to create 86 jobs, the majority of which are for young men and women. All SME grantees are currently reporting an increase in profits since joining PROSPECTS.

Relevance

PROSPECTS' approach to tackling employment market failures in Liberia appears to be relevant, although implementation has not been as planned. Liberia is currently experiencing a dual market failure. On one hand, youth do not have the skills that are in demand within the Liberian labour market because the educational and vocational training curricula have not kept up

with the pace of change in the labour market. On the other hand, when youth do become qualified in a particular area, there are often a lack of viable businesses to employ them.

The small business grants tackle the latter, they fund the growth of small businesses with potential or motivated entrepreneurs with the idea that when these businesses grow, they will need to employ young people. Meanwhile, through its business skills training and apprenticeship placements, PROSPECTS is creating a qualified youth workforce to fill those jobs. Notwithstanding the challenges faced by the social business sub-program, the SME grantees did manage to create 86 meaningful employment opportunities for Liberian young men and women, and through this contribute to the correction of some market failures. PROSPECTS staff report conducting a baseline analysis and finding, for example, that more than 50% of SMEs had no financial management training. As a result of this they then designed the business seminar and workshops for SMEs. SMEs themselves reported not being asked what kind of training they needed and found the support to have varying degrees of relevance.

Effectiveness

Table 14: *Level of Achievement for Creation of Employment*

Result level	indicator	Baseline	Midline	End line target	Achievement[16]
Outcome 2: Liberia's private	# of jobs created-	0	86	100	86%

[16] Achievement scale: Green (Achieved), Amber (Partially Achieved), Red (Underachieved). Sources: SME interviews

sector creates meaningful employment for young women and men and corrects labour market failures					
	% increase in business profitability	67%	100%*	BV +10%	100%
	% male and female youth reporting confidence in labour market system	16.7%(Male), 0% (Female) (Dec 2018)	81% [17](53.4% women, 27.6% men)	BV +15%	100%

Note: Sourced from PROSPECTS III Monitoring Dataset, 2020.

The Social Business sub-program has encountered considerable setbacks in the past year. Out of the 12 SMEs chosen to receive grants, six have been withdrawn from the program due to non-compliance with financial and audit requirements. However, the six remaining SMEs have shown considerable progress since joining PROSPECTS. With the grants, the SMEs were able to expand their activities and take on new projects, which in turn allowed them to employ more young

[17]Forty six out of sixty surveyed youth currently employed in these social businesses report high confidence in the labour market. This does not include data from one of the SMEs, MIPRI.

people. These social businesses have created a total of 86 jobs so far, the majority of which are for young people. Moreover, two of these social businesses centre around training and placing youth as drivers, nannies, or other service staff, thus broadening the number of young people accessing meaningful employment and making inroads toward correcting labour market failures.

The young Liberians, both men and women) employed by these SMEs report increased levels of confidence in the labour market system, with 76.7% of those surveyed saying they are optimistic to a large extent about labour market opportunities. All the PROSPECTS Social Business grantees (6/6) reported increased profits at the end of 2019*. On average, businesses increased their profitability by 25%, with enterprise-specific profits increasing from 5% for start-ups, to 50% for more established SMEs. Not only have the SMEs increased their sales, half of them have also run successful marketing campaigns this year following PROSPECTS training and increased their portion of market share.

Output 2.1: 25 private sector innovators receive financial and business advisory support through an external business incubator to create youth employment or mitigate labor market failures.

PROSPECTS has faced substantial difficulties in achieving output 2.1. They initially disbursed grants to 12 small businesses but had to rescind 6 of them due to financial non-compliance with program reporting. The cancellation of these grants was a major hindrance by program staff. Even, if the Social Business sub program continues through year 3, it is very unlikely that PROSPECTS will reach its target of 25 small business grantees. However, the six SMEs who are still part of the program have demonstrated encouraging growth. They have created 86 jobs so far, mostly due to the short-term employment of 41 new employees by one of the SMEs.

Table 15: *Level of Achievement for Jobs Created Through Business Incubators*

Result level	Indicator	Baseline	Midline	End line target	Achievement[18]
Output 2.1 25 private sector innovators receive financial and business advisory support through an external business incubator to create youth employment or mitigate labour	25 private sector innovators receive financial and business advisory support	0	6	25	24%
	Net additional, jobs created in target enterprises as a result of the program or intervention, per year and cumulatively.	0	86	100	86%

[18] Achievement scale: Green (Achieved), Amber (Partially Achieved), Red (Underachieved). Sources: Key document review and interviews with program staff.

market failures.	# of renewable energy or agriculture businesses supported with business financing and advisory support	0	1*	5	20%
	Development of a "Do No Harm" environmental assessment tool for private sector partners	0	0	1	0%

Note: Sourced from PROSPECTS III Monitoring Dataset, 2020.

Social business grantees report delays in the payment of their grants. The grantees found the compliance requirements harder to meet than expected. Even after submitting the requisite milestone reports and receipts, there were often month-long delays on disbursement of funds. Therefore, many young entrepreneurs had to finance their businesses from their own sources. Of

the 12 businesses originally selected for social business grants, three were renewable energy or agriculture focused. Of the remaining 6 businesses, only one business, focuses on agriculture. No progress has been demonstrated on the development of a "Do No Harm" environmental assessment tool for private sector partners. The future of PROSPECTS' Social Enterprise sub-component is uncertain. The remaining time seems to be dedicated to increasing training rather than funding more social enterprises.

Output 2.2: 15 business seminars targeted at SMEs build capacity and promote innovation within the private sector.

PROSPECTS' staff used findings from their initial needs assessment of social business grantees to design and deliver six business seminars in 2019. The training sessions covered the following topics: financial management; sales and marketing; human resources management (HRM); and customer relationship management (CRM).

Table 16: *Level* of Achievement for Businesses with Strengthened Capacity

Result level	indicator	Baseline	Midline	End line target	Achievement[19]
Output 2.2. 15 business seminars	# of business seminars	0	6	15	40%

[19] Achievement scale: Green (Achieved), Amber (Partially Achieved), Red (Underachieved). Sources: Interviews

targeted at SMEs build capacity and promote innovation within the private sector					

Note: Sourced from PROSPECTS III Monitoring Dataset, 2020.

PROSPECT staff believe it would have been better if the grantees had received more continued support after the training. Some of the challenges faced by the Small Business grant program include lack of training for some grantees. For example, monitoring data showed that some grantees still could not provide adequate reporting on their sales, even after being trained. Interviews with other stakeholders, such as banks, also echoed the need for additional training for social business grantees, particularly the start-ups.

Small business grantees differed in their opinion of the business seminars. Pre-existing businesses found the trainings did not particularly suit their needs. They claim they were not asked what they needed and were required to attend workshops on subjects they were competent in, such as book-keeping. However, they found the trainings useful in terms of compliance with the PROSPECTS grant, highlighting that "the training actually helped … to follow these guidelines, understand exactly what they mean, just what do they mean that is a little bit different from … ordinary business running." Those who were just starting a new business found the trainings very

useful and credit the workshops with the growth of their business. For example, one small business reported a considerable increase in their client base following the adoption of marketing techniques learned during a business seminar.

Output 2.3: A small business toolkit, publicly available to Liberian SMEs, will support capacity building internal to Liberian businesses.

PROSPECTS has developed a small business toolkit with the help of a specialized business consultant. It aims to offer a "comprehensive business start-up guide" for local small and business enterprises and covers the following business fundamentals: development and planning of a new business; managing the business operations; managing business finances; managing a business' human resource; and sales and marketing. The small business toolkit has now been distributed to over one hundred Liberian small business owners, including PROSPECTS' small business grantees. A survey is planned in year 3 to track usage.

Table 17: *Level of Achievement for Business Access to Learning Materials*

Result level	Indicator	Baseline	Midline	End line target	Achievement[20]
Output 2.3 A small business toolkit,	# of business utilizing the small business	0	0	30	0%

[20] Achievement scale: Green (Achieved), Amber (Partially Achieved), Red (Underachieved). Sources: Interviews

publicly available to Liberian SMEs, will support capacity building internal to Liberian businesses.	toolkit to support capacity building				

Note: Sourced from PROSPECTS III Monitoring Dataset, 2020.

Outcome 3: Liberia's institutions promote economic opportunity for young Liberians through increased access to information and policy options

Outcome summary: To encourage the sustainability of its efforts by providing increased confidence, skills and employment opportunities for Liberian youth, PROSPECTS is collaborating with civil society and government actors. PROSPECTS has been working with the Liberian Ministry of Youth and Sports since PROSPECTS I in 2013-2014. According to both, PROSPECTS and the MoYS, the capacity of the Ministry to implement the program has increased over the implementation period, with almost all activities conducted by Ministry staff in government youth centres. These activities are verified by the PROSPECTS team.

The PROSPECTS team made considerable efforts to increase the number of learning meetings and workshops with government and civil society stakeholders. The years of

collaboration with MoYS are starting to have an impact at a policy level, as the government has allocated budget to the cadet apprenticeship scheme under its national youth employment policy for 2019-2023.

Effectiveness

Table 18: *Level of Achievement for Institutions Strengthened for Job Creation*

Result level	indicator	Baseline	Midline	End line target	Achievement[21]
Outcome 3: Liberia's institutions promote economic opportunity for young Liberians through increased access to information	# of PROSPECTS practices/activities/ interventions replicated by national and/or international stakeholders	0	2	3	66.7%
	# of laws, policies or procedures drafted, proposed or adopted during the project period,	0	1	3	33.3%

[21] Achievement scale: Green (Achieved), Amber (Partially Achieved), Red (Underachieved). Sources: document review

and policy options.	as a result of PROSPECTS research and influence increase in business profitability				
	# of laws, policies, or procedures drafted, proposed, or adopted to promote gender equality at the regional, national, or local level	0	1	1	100%

Note: Sourced from PROSPECTS III Monitoring Dataset, 2020.

The cadet program has evolved from a scheme designed to place young people in ministry jobs into a joint effort with PROSPECTS to provide the skills and confidence required to gain full time private sector employment. According to interviews with PROSPECTS staff, sustained engagement with government partners has resulted in two large-scale public workshops and several meetings, culminating in a 12-million-dollar investment into the 2019-2023 National

Youth Strategy. Of this multi-million-dollar government investment, $600,000 have been budgeted for the cadet program stipends in Monrovia, Montserrado. While PROSPECTS staff say that this will not be sufficient to support apprentices and cadets in other counties, the government investment would allow the cadet program to keep running for at least three months in Montserrado, should PROSPECTS withdraw entirely. Further meetings are planned between PROSPECTS and the Ministry of Finance to advocate for additional government buy in.

PROSPECTS is also working to influence government policies from a gender standpoint. The government is planning to expand their national cadet program for which PROSPECTS supplies cadets. PROSPECTS is learning from their experience in increasing female participation in the apprentice program and has started putting together guidelines on increasing gender balance for the Cadets program.

Output 3.1: Research and policy analysis will equip decision makers with information to positively affect youth employment outcomes.

Table 19: *Level of Achievement for Knowledge Sharing Initiatives*

Result level	Indicator	Baseline	Midline	End line target	Achievement[22]
Output 3.1: Research and policy	# of research and policy analysis pieces published	0	3	3	100%

[22] Achievement scale: Green (Achieved), Amber (Partially Achieved), Red (Underachieved). Sources: Key documents review

analysis will equip decision-makers with information to positively affect youth employment outcomes.	# of learning and sharing workshops/meetings with relevant decision-makers	0	7	9	77.8%

Note: Sourced from PROSPECTS III Monitoring Dataset, 2020.

PROSPECTS has published three learning papers to further equip decision makers with information to improve youth employment outcomes. Based on their experience with apprenticeship placements, they published a Wage Rate Study, An Assessment of PROSPECTS Causality and Quantitative Contributions, and an apprenticeship trajectory tracking paper to follow youth participants after their PROSPECT experience. The TVETs that host PROSPECTS trainings have found that they have been able to do an evaluation of their training program due to learning from PROSPECTS, which has contributed to program improvements. However, donors and government partners feel that PROSPECTS could be more proactive for sharing program learning or hosting workshops. The National Cadet Program reported that no research or policy papers had been shared with them to date.

Output 3.2 Greater engagement of youth stakeholders will reduce information asymmetries between policymakers, government ministries and administrations, service providers, and the private sector.

To address information asymmetries, PROSPECTS is bringing together youth stakeholders from the government ministries, administrative, service provision, and private sector spheres. These meetings provide a forum to share recent findings and discuss policy options.

Table 20: *Level of Achievement for Stakeholder Engagement*

Result level	indicator	Baseline	Midline	End line target	Achievement[23]
Output 3.2: Greater engagement of youth stakeholders will reduce information asymmetries	# of collaborative meetings attended by the private sector, civil society, and/or government	0	7	12	58.3%

Note: Sourced from PROSPECTS III Monitoring Dataset, 2020.

[23] Achievement scale: Green (Achieved), Amber (Partially Achieved), Red (Underachieved). Sources: Key document review

Since the beginning of PROSPECTS III, PROSPECTS has hosted 7 collaborative meetings or workshops attended by various Liberian youth employment stakeholders. Most meetings have been held in Monrovia, with government representatives, although there was an effort at the end of 2019 to hold consultations in Gbarnga and Ganta counties as well. The list of trainings is as follows:

1. Training of Trainers Workshop with government staff working on the National Cadet Apprenticeship Program (Nov 2018)
2. Youth stakeholder coordination meeting in January 2019 SKD Stadium Complex in Monrovia,
3. Apprentices Learning Workshop: 21st February 2019 at the Cape Hotel, UN Drive Mamba Point, Monrovia, Liberia. 44 persons attended the event.
4. How and Why to Support Apprenticeships: 18th September 2019 via a webinar with 25 persons in attendance.
5. Employment and Entrepreneurship Baseline Study: findings shared at Youth Sector Coordination Meeting in Monrovia (SKD Stadium Complex, MOYS). 47 persons attended the event, and this held 28th March 2019.
6. Apprentices Learning Workshop: 21st November 2019 at Gbarnga Red Cross Conference Hall, Liberia. 30 persons participated at the event.
7. Apprentices Learning Workshop: 22nd November 2019 at Parks Entertainment Hall Ganta County, Liberia. 37 persons participated at the event

Beyond hosting workshops and events, Liberian stakeholders also recommend that PROSPECTS spend more time engaging with the learning workshops and meetings of other stakeholders.

Output 3.3 PROSPECTS research and learning will positively influence youth livelihoods programming within Liberia and abroad.

Findings and learning Evidence generated by PROSPECTS has started to influence youth livelihoods programming in Liberia through the government as well as other international stakeholders.

Two primary aspects of PROSPECTS have been successfully replicated. The government has built on the success of PROSPECTS to review and revise its national Cadet program. The Government has agreed to include the cadet program in its "National Youth Strategy" for 2019-2023 and allocate funds for sustainability of the program. Learning from PROSPECT III's gender-based violence prevention trainings have also been included in the new government curriculum for Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges.

PROSPECTS has also influenced the French Development Agency (AFD) to fund a new employment and entrepreneurship program in Liberia. PROSPECTS has been involved since July 2019 to launch the new 'Liberian Employment and Entrepreneurship Program' (LEEP) replicating PROSPECTS' training, YIF grants to businesses, and apprenticeship placements. LEEP will be implemented in Montserrado, Margibi and Grand Bassa counties to reach a total of 11,000 youth aged between 18-35 years.

Table 21: *Level of Achievement for Replication in Other Contexts*

Result level	indicator	Baseline	Midline	End line target	Achievement[24]
Output 3.3: PROSPECTS research and	# of PROSPECTS practices,	0	2	3	66.7%

[24] Achievement scale: Green (Achieved), Amber (Partially Achieved), Red (Underachieved). Sources: Interviews with program staff

learning will positively influence youth livelihoods programming within Liberia and abroad.	systems, activities or learnings applied in other contexts				

Note: Sourced from PROSPECTS III Monitoring Dataset, 2020.

To reach their target for Output 3.3, PROSPECTS staff plan to continue working closely with the Ministry of Youth and Sports to explore additional areas of collaboration, including internship opportunities with larger private businesses to achieve higher job retention.

Conclusions on PROSPECTS Programming

Sustainable funding for youth employment in Liberia would require closer coordination of activities between donor agencies, implementing INGOs, private sector and the Liberian Government. This would require legislation that supports youth complete the National Cadet Programme and apprenticeship with private sector support. According to the evaluation by Shaheen et al. (2020), recommended that PROSPECTS programme coordinates more with the Government of Liberia on the future of the National Cadet Programme. PROSPECTS coordination with Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Youth and Sport, and Legislative Committee for Youth

Development to finalise policies and the budget for the National Cadet Programme. This should include finalising how the cadet programme can successfully incorporate the private sector.

Yearly budgetary allocation by the Liberian Government is required to support on-the-job experience for unemployed youth and for direct support to private sector employers that provide skills acquisition to youth. The high dependence on foreign donors by the Liberian Government for the funding of youth employment initiatives can be reduced through a profit-oriented management model of National Youth Centres. Implementers should consider the participation of the private sector and community members in the leadership of the National Youth Centres.

This suggestion aligns with Shaheen et al. (2020) recommendation that PROSPECTS improve the capacity of the National Youth Centres. PROSPECTS to understudy what support the National Youth Centres needed to undertake future trainings. Implementers should consider training of trainers, and the institutionalising of PROSPECTS employment curriculum within TVETS with the approval of the Ministry of Education. The National Youth Centre coordination meetings organized by the Ministry of Youth and Sports with the participation of stakeholders and NGOs is a platform to discuss the funding of TVETs and sustainability of youth employment initiatives.

One of the reasons for the inability of grantees to implement successful business proposals was due to late grant payments which meant proposed costs were negatively affected by inflation and sometimes changes in the market situation. According to program implementers, the payment delay was because of administrative payment processes required by the donor for accountability of funds. According to Shaheen et al. (2020), implementation teams require a Manual of Procedures that provide clear steps and processes for administrative processing of grants to avoid

internal delays due to compliance checks. The Manual of Procedures need to be understood by all staff, stakeholders and grantees so they plan their expenses effectively. The use of national identity cards, mobile money payments linked to banks for grant disbursement will fasten the compliance process required for grant disbursement. Since majority of grantees operate in the informal sector, PROSPECTS providing grantees an opportunity to build financial history through the use of mobile money linked to bank accounts and proper identifications, will help businesses access financial advisory services, trade credit and loans with low interest rates.

Improvements in compliance systems for grant disbursement should help reduce delays in grant payment to grantees. SMEs would benefit from additional training on compliance requirements that ensures grantees utilise grants for the planned purpose. Shaheen et al. (2020) suggested that women applying for larger business grants require more support with business proposal writing techniques and literacy support. The intervention leaders should explore using successful women entrepreneurs as mentors for new female participants. Implementers can explore creating a framework for previous successful SME grantees to coach new SMEs.

Sustainability of youth employment initiatives would depend on the willingness of stakeholders to replicate innovative ideas from successful interventions. Shaheen et al. (2020) suggests that PROSPECTS can work with financial institutions to develop innovative financial products that serves young entrepreneurs and such innovative interventions replicated by other NGOs. Implementation teams must avoid distorting market incentives when intervening in market situations. Shaheen et al (2020) suggested that stipend paid to apprentices' monthly if above the monthly wage paid by businesses could act as disincentive for employers to retain apprentices in employment after the apprenticeship placement period ends.

Humanitarian aid can avoid creating unrealistic expectations for youth in developing countries, participant businesses, and host governments. The grants should be conditional and based on counterpart funding with partners, shared risk, and inform recipients that grant support is short-term. Unrealistic expectations are in the form of government not allocating funds for youth employment initiatives due to expectations of foreign aid, and business owners not recruiting apprentices because they expect donors to provide stipend payments.

Sustainability of employability skills trainings and efforts towards job creation would depend greatly on aid programmes insisting on practical trade-specific trainings. These would be based on findings from a Needs Assessment Study about the relevant trade skills required in the Liberian employment market. The trade-specific skills would require implementers to identify specialised fields and facilitate youth complete placements in these specialties. PROSPECTS to consider creating a platform that allows gainfully employed youth to pass on their knowledge and skills to other young people in their communities. This would require long-term tracking of youth after the completion of apprenticeship placement.

Research Concept & Measuring Change for MEL

This section extensively discussed the relationship between research and the role it plays in the monitoring and evaluation of development programmes. For MEL capacity building purposes, the researcher reviewed the concept of research within the context of monitoring for change for interventions focused on improving access to sustainable employment.

According to Cambridge dictionary, research is a detailed study of a subject to discover (new) information or reach a (new) understanding. For MEL of development programs, research means the interpretation and analysis of data, documentation and use of the data collected for adaptation of the intervention. Research ideally is a one-time activity in academia that involves data collection, analysis and reporting; while measuring change in interventions involves the continuous iteration of the intervention based on the data collected in the field and continuous reporting of lessons learned from implementation.

The researcher discusses the common approaches and methods for turning data into useful information and knowledge for development professionals. Research in academics would involve an introduction, literature review, methodology, findings, conclusion and recommendations. MEL collects data mostly during the active implementation of humanitarian interventions, the data collected are in the form of open or closed-ended answers from field participants in the intervention and back-to-office reports. The MEL department reflects and analyses the field information for project managers to learn and adapt the interventions. The deliverables MEL staff share with the project implementation teams are in the form of weekly dashboard reports, monitoring reports, quarterly and annual reports.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) builds on research by ensuring that interventions are effective and efficient for both donors and intervention participants. Measuring change for interventions requires an in-depth knowledge of evaluation techniques and involves data analysis, documentation, early warning checks, estimating attribution and measuring systemic change. Research processes involve the production of ‘facts and data’ without clear analysis. The programmes interpretation and analyses of data helped ensure that results management generated

useful information for evidence-based decision-making. Useful information enabled intervention managers to respond in a dynamic way to market conditions. Project teams were able to use information from datasets based on the below data quality assurance (DQA) steps.

Effective programming required that the MEL team provided capacity building for intervention teams to analyse research in support of innovation and adaptation. This involved training field officers on the use of server integrated dashboards on excel. The automatic quantitative analysis allowed for early learning about the trend of preliminary results during an active intervention to allow for early correction or scaling of positive actions with that highest multiplier effect. The dashboards allowed project managers know about the progress of the intervention on a real-time basis. The dashboards used case management to ascertain the depth and breadth of the treatment provided by the PROSPECTS team. Pivot table analysis on Microsoft Excel was used to develop the dashboard, which relied on Commcare Application for the mobile data collection and case management.

MEL team structured the data analysis against the key changes the programme wanted to see as the basis for DQA that supported relevant and useful information that informed the adaptation of interventions. The programme objectives were defined and structured into themes that explained the key changes envisaged for the programme and helped the collection of relevant information. The MEL framework provided the Outcomes, Outputs and Activities for the intervention and had quantitative indicators that measured change for the intervention. Below we provide a sample description for designing a typical MEL framework that used Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Result-oriented and Timely (SMART) principles for the design.

The analytical designs for MEL framework required that research questions do not only elicit responses about problems but identified the potential solutions. The intervention's analytical process allowed for consultation with stakeholders on the exhaustive list of problems and shortened the identified problems to only those with practical solutions. PROSPECTS MEL unit ensured enough "facts and data" underpinned the analysis and reporting of information. The two types of unprocessed information were either anecdotes or representative data. *The monitoring reports would draw valid conclusions from representative data or be careful not to use anecdotes to draw conclusions widely.*

Research triangulation of datasets using different sources to verify findings helped develop robust evidence-base for decision-making by project managers and country directors. An intervention scenario was quantitative findings about low participation of females compared to males during the advanced business skills training and grant disbursement. The MEL team triangulated the quantitative findings about low participation with qualitative findings about "why" the situation occurred, and found females had low literacy levels relative to males. Qualitative findings showed that vulnerable teenage mothers needed support with day-care to enable access to training and more awareness about community accountability reporting mechanisms (CARM). Experience showed that findings from one data source (participants) prompted further questions for another data source (field coordinators and trainers), with the use of other research tools such as FGDs.

Information gleaned from data analysis were presented in short reports regularly which summarised the key research findings. The information was used by project teams to review and adjust interventions. This enabled the plotting of progress against the results chain which

ascertained whether the logic of the intervention was actualised through the implementation of programme strategies as depicted in the results chain. The project team projected the likely impact for the programme and documented it using quantitative values. The measurement concept is the comparison of achieved results against initial projections of targets, and this helped project managers gauge whether the interventions were progressing as planned during implementation.

Therefore "Knowledge" for MEL practitioners is when information is applied for the purposes of *improving* the impact of interventions. Validity of the contextual knowledge depended on the plausibility of the MEL team description of how the flow of information from data collection and analysis feeds into decision-making processes for development programmes. The programme team used data to provide information for; monthly project and core team meetings; quarterly strategic updates; quarterly progress reports; and evaluations.

Data use for programming also involved implementers knowledge of market information of the 'known unknowns': this relates with field knowledge that intervention teams acknowledge they do not know about. There are opportunities to learn more about the support mechanisms available in the employment market and devise innovative ways of unblocking the identified barriers through research. Project teams must recognise that new information from the field helps revise results chain documented in MEL frameworks. Intervention logic during design stage should acknowledge the importance of new information.

Therefore a project culture of research and supporting project teams with implement interventions using quality datasets enables scaled intervention. The effective use of processed information requires the ability of implementation teams to change and adapt strategies that

enhance data collection, analysis, acknowledging the role of 'new information' during project implementation, an open culture of enquiry and learning for project teams. The MEL team kept a Data Use Checklist that provided information on "who is going to use the information collected in the field and what decisions would be made from the specific datasets.

In addition to annual and end of programme evaluations, the MEL team conducts early warning checks (EWC) monthly to gauge progress towards achieving project objectives. The stakeholders check achievements along the results chain, provides an avenue for team member to reflect on the progress, share the learning from data collected in the field, and correct any challenges. The objective of EWCs is to ensure that the activity results actually benefit market participants. The market actors were financial institutions, government and business incubators supported by PROSPECTS to facilitate access to jobs.

Some of the activities market programmes implement is to support business linkages between stakeholders. The intervention logic for market interventions is to influence positive change in the interactions between market participants. Market sector development facilitators indirectly influence the decision of market stakeholders. Intervention teams require regular information about the operation of market players, the incentives that make market players offer services, and understand the contextual situation for those demanding the services. Understanding the situation of market sector linkages helps facilitators assess the extent that facilitations enabled sustainable access to jobs.

The practice of conducting EWCs allowed data to be collected and analysed quickly from key stakeholders and these spot checks is best suited for the dynamic nature of employment market systems in which PROSPECTS was implemented. EWCs provide the context for explaining the current capacity of market actors, the extent market actors agree the market change initiatives, how committed market actors are to market change initiatives, and any changes to the incentive of market actors to participate. Market development initiatives strive to change institutional practices to achieve sustainability of meaningful employment.

The project set-up phase of PROSPECTS III benefited from EWCs of the business model or proof of concept for the activities of market players such as MOYS, business incubators and financial institutions. Each of the early warning checks were administered on multiple occasions and not a 'one off': the early warning was repeated throughout the intervention life-time towards the creation of a learning culture and the dissemination of lessons learned for stakeholder advocacy. The MEL team conducted the EWC with each intervention leader, Business Development Service Provider (BDSP), and business incubator either individually and collectively. Decision on when to conduct the EWC depended on the need to update the Monitoring, Results and Measurement (MRM) plan and availability of programme implementers.

EWC activities included skeletal data collection, not statistically representative datasets, and findings were not used to report programme achievements. The findings helped correction any challenges market actors were facing in implementing market sector change initiatives aimed at the institutionalized behavioural change. The learning from EWCs were used by management for decision making. Learning questions for EWCs have three classifications, the value proposition check, service access check and sustainability check. The value proposition check had market

actors respond to semi-structured interviews, where the MEL team explained the proposed service, cost, and how market actors (business incubators, financial institutions and government) would access the service. The sample where then asked whether they thought the service would increase income and economic opportunities.

Market participants (youth) where asked about their interest to use the offered services by suppliers (employers, policy makers, PROSPECTS). If market actors differed with the programme intervention logic and would not access the service, they were asked why for example, they faced difficulty accessing finance, and whether the skills training on offer was not relevant. Efforts were made to document innovative suggestions from market actors (users) during the process of value preposition check.

PROSPECTS carried out service access checks with market actors by asking whether they intended to repeat the process of implementing specific results chain activities. Market actors not willing to repeat the process where asked "why not" and the objective was to learn more about barriers to sustainability within the market system. Sustainability checks were implemented as structured interviews for all market players that partnered with PROSPECTS. Aspects of the questionnaire had commercial system actors estimate profitability of their products and services. Stakeholders from the public sector (Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Education, Budget Office, Legislative members) were engaged on funding for youth skill acquisition, grants for business start-ups and apprenticeship placements.

The MEL team assessed how likely public actors were to continue funding the services efficiently. Learning questions investigated how result from the intervention pilot and testing of

the logical framework incentivised market actors to continue providing services within the employment ecosystem. Market actors were asked reasons why they will continue or discontinue the intervention based on the results from intervention pilot and testing of logical framework. For better contextual understanding of stakeholders, market actors were asked whether they had plans to upgrade their employment related services, such as support apprenticeship placements, skills training, youth advocacy activities for seed capital and trade credit. The collaborative meetings ascertained why or why not plans have been developed for learning purposes.

The programmes ability to estimate attribution or contribution depended greatly on the intervention leaders understanding of complex market systems and measurement approaches. Several market actors not facilitated by PROSPECTS contribute to the changes the programme intends to achieve in the employment market place. The programme monitored for changes in the actions of government and banks towards the encouragement of apprenticeship, credit and trade credit). Donor accountability required PROSPECTS to demonstrate attribution or contribution of its activities to the intervention results. This implies that the evaluation team must measure the degree to which the changes in the behaviour of market actors are because of the intervention activities and not other programmes. MEL approach for measuring attribution or contribution is that positive change for interventions need to make plausible arguments using evidence from difference-in-difference analysis and most significant change techniques.

Plausibility for attribution or contribution emphasizes the credibility of data collected and how practical it is for the programme faced with a limited budget and implementation timeframe. The result of plausible attribution or contribution is an impact storyline that explains the change brought about by the programme. A combination of scientific proof and contextual information

that is believable are the major building blocks for plausible attribution or contribution. Of note is the methodological difference between attribution and contribution analysis as applied by MEL experts. *Attribution approach* is about providing scientific proof based on the measurement design that represents the target population with robust statistical approaches. Attribution adopted a quasi-experimental research that compared the results from treatment and control groups at baseline, midline and endline. The attribution approach allowed for the use of propensity score matching and sample weights for baseline, midline and endline progress analysis.

Attribution for PROSPECTS used quantitative analysis tools that had close-ended questions during fieldwork and Difference-Difference (DiD) technique because it permits for comparison between baseline, midline and endline results. Attribution for the program was achieved with DiD analysis because it compared results at two different time-points (t1, t2) using the same questionnaires for panel data, and allowed for comparison between treatment and control groups. DiD technique made it easier to assign sample weights to evaluation results for different survey timepoints that aided comparability of indicator results.

Contribution Approach provided plausibility for the logical steps in the theory of change through contextual field information, focused on lessons learned during implementation. Contribution Analysis asked before and after questions at one time-point to gauge changes for the intervention. Non-representative dataset used for the development of several success stories and back-to-office reports. Most Significant Change technique was used to inform collaboration, learning and adaptation of the programme. Mixed methods approach meant donor reports had the MEL Plan use quantitative methods, while the narrative discussions relied heavily of qualitative

approach that used success stories, FGDs, KIIs, early warning checks and most significant change techniques.

MEL team established plausible attribution of changes to the programme by regularly examining the status of all planned activities and steps in the results chain. The result chain provided tree of events that linked activities to outputs to outcome and impact for the PROSPECTS programme. The two-pronged approach allowed implementers and partners discuss what employment-related change occurred at which level of the results chain and taken into account the counterfactual (what would have happened anyway without the intervention). This meant team members used CLA approach to investigate the extent to which each change is due to the previous one in the results chain (programme activities leading to outputs to outcome and to impact). When the chain of results do not happen during monitoring, PROSPECTS did not attribute any positive changes in livelihood of youth to the programme activities.

Monitoring, Results and Measurement (MRM) in Management Decision Making

Results management is at the core of monitoring, evaluation and learning in international development. Some programmes also refer to results management as learning and knowledge management. PROSPECTS result management system provided consistent feedback to decision-makers before, during and after the intervention. The regular information disseminated by the results management team helped management modify programme strategy and ensure the effectiveness of different interventions. Decision-making for the PROSPECTS senior management team required an effective programme management and results management teams. The results

management tools and processes are meant to inform adaptation and innovation of activities implemented by programme management teams which influenced management decisions.

The results management team organised regular programme management meetings that helped managers respond to pre-emptive problems before they happen (proactive) and address problems timely after it has occurred (reactive). Within the MEL framework, the results chain was updated by the programme team with support from the results management team. The meetings allowed the various teams to discuss planned and implemented activities, identify the opportunities and challenges, then document the findings quantitatively and contextually. The RAG (Red, Amber and Green) traffic rating method for assessment of each box in the results chain was used to document changes in the intervention over the implementation period.

Red colour in the RAG rating would mean a planned activity has not started and an explanation is provided in the relevant results chain box. Red colour also means no positive change or a negative change was observed in the behaviour or actions of market enablers. Amber colour mean a planned intervention is on-going but a little behind schedule. Amber also means partial change was observed as planned in the strategy. Green colour mean a planned activity is ongoing and on schedule. Green also meant the positive change expected from a planned activity occurred. Result chain boxes are left uncoloured for observations of unexpected changes not captured in the impact projections documented in the MEL plan.

The RAG ratings provide management with quick visual information about the difficult results anticipated from planned activities are likely not to happen and provides an opportunity to address the problem either proactively or reactively. It provides an opportunity for managers to

reflect on the strategies deployed for each activity and outputs in an intervention. Proactive management approach would address pre-emptive issues when at green or amber, while reactive management would address issues when showing red. The idea of RAG ratings for review of results chain is not solely to measure performance of a project, but to support programme teams respond and adapt intervention tools and requirements based on anecdotal field information received during the intervention.

Learned is that poor performance of a programme is the inability of results management team to help programme management teams realise the barriers to change (sticking points) in the results chain (theory of change). Management problems led to red colours and occur lower down the results chain (activities, outputs), and strongly related to the available human resources and how the project was set-up. Technical problems are as a result of the facilitation strategy in the logical framework used to influence change for market enablers/stakeholders are reflected higher up the results chain, at outcome and impact levels in the results chain.

Effective programme management for NGOs require a strategy that identifies the right kind of incentives for market players which enables the behavioural changes required to achieve anticipated results. The idea is to avoid a culture of blame that is focused on individual performance during results management meetings and embrace a collaborative, learning and adaptive culture in international development. Apart from grant disbursement, market facilitation activities try to influence partners to change behaviour or take action are solely dependent on the incentives that drive decision making for partners/businesses/service providers. Since most results are not within the control of programme managers, the results management team makes projections and sets targets. So effective management learns from the monitoring, evaluation and learning

team about results that did not work as expected and decisions are made to accept, learn adapt and or innovate.

A typical example of an effective management is the Light Up Liberia (LUL) funded by the European Union and implemented in Liberia between 2017 and 2019. The intervention objective was to provide affordable electricity for Liberians. A market assessment confirmed electricity was a challenge for youth and a barrier to information access and negative affected self-learning on the internet. The market assessment also identified all the market actors and enablers in the solar energy distribution system in Liberia. The results management team updated the results chain regularly with the programme management team, and identified the incentives and disincentives for each market actor and enabler within the solar value chain.

Identified market actors were producers, wholesalers, retailers, end-users, and financiers. The incentives and disincentives to participate in the solar ecosystem had cost implications, and the programme management team had to agree with the donor on the level of risk appetite for the intervention. This meant financial support had to be varied for different market actors in the value chain, with some heavy or small at the beginning of the intervention, and this varied throughout the implementation period and had to align with the donors risk appetite.

To achieve the results chain objective, decisions were made about spending heavy at the beginning of the intervention by purchasing solar materials from producers in China. The programme experienced bureaucratic delays in securing approval for the purchase of the solar lighting products from China. Reason was the European Union policy for purchase of equipment from European manufacturers. Market research by programme team showed the equipment were

cheaper in China and majority of raw or half-finished materials used by producers in Germany were procured from China. The programme management team requested for an EU exception to procure from China and got approval, and this delayed the LUL start-off timeframe.

The results chain required capacity building training for the coupling of the solar lighting products and distribution to retailers. The sustainability component required end users to repay the cost of the solar lights and rechargeable products over a three months period. The idea was to create a revolving in-kind grant system that reaches far more people and continues in the long-term. The challenge was high default rate among the end-users and this ended the initial pilot. Learned from the EWCs and results chain review was the need for an accountability mechanism that ensures all market actors have the right incentives to participate in the solar market. The donor provided additional funds for LUL and allowed for a revision of strategy based on learning from the initial pilot.

This experience of high payment default rate for the first set of distributed solar products influenced an increased donor risk appetite for the next round of intervention, and the revised MEL framework now had strategy for crowding-in, crowding-out, strengthening of existing market systems, or sustainability of job creation efforts. Trade credit, and technology-based financial systems used were used to secure 100% payback of funds provided to grantees. Programme management team addressed the trade disincentives between manufacturers, importers, wholesalers, retailers, and consumers of solar products. The market assessments identified the off-setters in the market system and built trust for market participants. There was a pilot period of two years before the revolving fund became sustainable.

Chapter Summary

New thinking from literature review highlights the importance for a merger of curricula for targeted-employability skills. In addition to soft skills, adult education teachers should be made to facilitate employability skills with students through a mix of soft skills, literacy skills, career planning, effective job application and business skills training. The review finds prevalence of informal economies inhibits access to credit due to most vulnerable youths do not possess formal identity cards, business registrations, financial records, employability skills training, a verified home address and street numbering systems. Study posits that poor developing countries can achieve sustainable employment by monitoring closely the debt-to-revenue ratios and net earnings from debt rather than solely debt-to-GDP ratios.

National policies focused on increasing productive capacity of entrepreneurs is needed through the better coordination public-private sector partnerships on aggregate expenditures, which will increase employment and positively affect GDP. For training curricula, the policy focus should be on enabling business and science development. Coping mechanism for people engaged in precarious employment is their ability to utilize social media to learn new entrepreneurial ideas. Liberia requires an ALMP[25] that provides employment subsidies for high growth industries, employability skills trainings based on employer needs assessment, and job search programs that integrates affordable access to the internet and industry specific-skillsets.

Sustainable labour-intensive methods of production sustain employment in the long run. Long-term financing of employment programs will depend on coordinated incentives for all market actors that enable youth employment. Study concluded that donor aid should align with the

[25] ALMP: Active Labour Market Policies

coordinated market incentive of market actors with the guidance of ALMP by government, because this protects growing businesses in Liberia and helps avoid market distortion.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS AND DATA COLLECTION

Introduction to the section

This case study focuses on education employability curriculum and questions the relevance of supervised apprenticeship placements in increasing beneficiaries' employment opportunities. Study evaluates the effect employability curriculum trainings has on the reduction of unemployment in Liberia. The research methodology is aimed at providing an evidence base for assessing the key factors within the soft skills curriculum that can enhance employment and entrepreneurship interventions in predominantly informal employment markets. Study provided a logical framework approach for analysing "contribution" through quantitative analysis of soft skills training relative to students' practice of course content towards access to jobs.

The study examined the practice of the training curriculum by trained youth towards job application, whether they find jobs, if they stay in employment and explains which types of soft skills most valued by employers in the assessments of donor interventions. The study assumptions are that soft skills and work-readiness enable long-term employment for vulnerable youths. A key objective is to document learning and knowledge from international development interventions through the assessment of how students access employment opportunities after completion of soft skills training modules. To establish this plausible body of evidence, the research constructs causal questions that answer quantitative perspectives of how soft skills training for employment affects employment outcomes for vulnerable youths.

To achieve this, performance assessments of the intervention theory of change is done to visualize practice effects of taught curriculum on employment and entrepreneurship trainings, and how results from knowledge application are sustained by the beneficiaries over three years tracking period. This research methods section explained the "how" of doing contribution assessments for

cause-and-effect relationships in an ex-post evaluation using a one-time point quantitative analysis.

The documented knowledge from this research allowed stakeholders gain insights into the performance of employment interventions on youth livelihood and what worked best and is replicable in a Less Developed Country context. The study applied rigor in building the theoretical framework that can be easily replicable for other development projects around the world. The study provided values for measuring relationships between trainings of youth on soft skills, youth behavioural changes that result in employment outcomes. Behavioural changes observed by descriptive analysis that is mostly qualitative, while employment outcomes and welfare changes were measured using quantitative measures.

Following Creswell (2003) explanation of quantitative methods as positivist, experimental, or empiricist, while qualitative as constructivist, interpretive, post positivist, and naturalistic. The implemented contributions analysis design provided answers to high-level research questions explaining "how" effective the different aspects of soft skills training are to young Liberians. How related are the soft and work-readiness trainings to youth access to job opportunities and their maintenance of paid employment. This mixed methods study explored: apprentices practice of the lessons learnt from trainings; whether apprentices wrote proper curriculum vitae; how apprentices apply good work ethics taught; whether apprentices have access to available jobs; and if the gain in securing employment is sustained almost two years after the end of the intervention by PROSPECTS.

Study examined the current income levels of youth participants compared to initial income prior to PROSPECTS phase 2 intervention. The study findings provided insight into the

effectiveness and sustainability of soft skills training and work experience gained by Liberian youth participants.

Arguments for Mixed Methods Triangulation

The basic definition of triangulation is the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to validate findings from a research study. This study validated the findings by checking for confirmation or completeness of the phenomenon studied. For the purposes of this paper, the discussion is about the complementarity of applying the two paradigms of qualitative and quantitative research to study one phenomenon. *The debate in the literature is the presentation of pragmatism in the form of "mixed research", as a new paradigm that complements qualitative and quantitative approaches.*

Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie (2002) described mixed methods as the use of multiple approaches to answer research questions by combining qualitative and quantitative techniques, concepts, and language into a study. Greene and McClintock (1985) state the objective of choosing mixed methods is to strengthen the validity of study findings. Practically this would imply congruence or complementarity. *Congruence* means results converge and are similar from quantitative and qualitative analysis. *Complementarity* implies results from one paradigm (i.e., qualitative) expands knowledge about another paradigm (i.e., quantitative). Therefore, within mixed methods triangulation, independent assessments are made from two datasets on the same phenomenon under study.

Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie (2003) studied steps in mixed methods analysis and summarized them into a) data reduction b) data display c) data transformation d) data correlation e) data consolidation f) data comparison g) data integration. Data reduction is about reducing the scope

and dimensions of qualitative and quantitative inquiry into phenomenon, while data display presents the findings of both qualitative and quantitative using pictures, charts, and tables. Data transformation is conversion of quantified data into narration and conversion of qualitative information in numbers that is used statistically. Data correlation is examination of relationship between variables from quantitative data and thematic areas found in the qualitative data for relationships.

Data consolidation is the combination of qualitative and quantitative datasets into one dataset. Data comparison compares data gotten from qualitative and quantitative sources. Data integration is the merging of findings from two datasets of quantitative and quantitative in a coherent manner. Different researchers argue that there are tensions in the use of mixed methods research methods. While mixed research methods are complimentary, there could be highly conflicting results from both quantitative and qualitative findings (Greene and McClintock, 1985). This is due to the logistical requirement that assessments for quantitative and qualitative paradigms are independent and done concurrently. The questionnaires for quantitative methods use positivist paradigm while the qualitative methods use naturalistic paradigm. There are fundamental differences in the two methods of quantitative and qualitative that the mixed methods researcher must consider in the implementation of research. They are as follows:

Table 22: *Mixed Methods General Assumptions*

Questionnaire	**Interview**	**Mixed Methods**
Descriptive	Understanding	The nature and role of phenomenon
Tests existing theories	Grounded theory	Steps in the theory of change

Technical rigor Likert scales	How meaningful	How questions are constructed
Deductive and Reductionist	Inductive and expansionist	Nature and quantified contextualised data

Note: Adapted from Greene and McClintock, 1985

Conclusions from questionnaires tend to be prescriptive while interview themes describe the phenomenon. Greene and McClintock (1985) state that reductionist approach refer to a criterion that questionnaires have, in terms of being specific, selective, and focused on the variables under study. For the expansionist approach (inductive), the interview themes are general and have contextual (affectional) information. One method for integrating findings from questionnaires and interviews is by comparing the content and sections of the two reports and searching for relationship. These relationships are then integrated into a mixed methods report.

The Types of Triangulations: (Opermann, 2000) suggest there are different types of mixed methods triangulation such as methodological triangulation, investigation triangulation, data triangulation and multiple triangulations. Below Table 23 distinguishes the differences in the mixed methods triangulation.

Table 23: *Review of Triangulation Methods*

Triangulation Methods	**Description**
Methodological triangulation	Multiple paradigms to measure one phenomenon (interviews and questionnaires)

Investigation triangulation	Use of different investigators with different backgrounds to investigate a phenomenon due to likelihood of different findings (i.e., female, and male interviewers).
Data triangulation	Application of one paradigm/method of two different datasets to check for consistency and similarity.
Multiple triangulation	A combination of at least two types of triangulations above.

Note: Adapted from Opermann (2000)

Answers to "why triangulate" is the reduction of bias and strengthening of validity from the use of two sources of data collection rather than one. Questionnaires using close-ended questions limit discovery since subjects are limited to the choice responses that are pre-determined. An addition of interviews, open-ended questions or observations allow for more complete picture of the phenomenon under investigation. The different types of bias in the literature are data bias, instrument/methodological bias, and investigator bias. This different bias is explained as follows:

Data bias simply asks how representative the sample of a study is to the general population.

Methodological bias simply asks the adequateness of using a single method of analysis due to researcher preference or technical know-how.

Investigator bias states the researcher considers the effect of different investigators arriving at different conclusions about the same phenomenon. This happens mostly with face-to-face interviews, and because of different backgrounds and training of the investigator. An extract quote from Opermann (2000) states the following:

The more different the instruments/methodologies, data sets and investigators used in analysing a specific problem, the greater will be the confidence in the result, provided all (sub-) results are congruent.

Importantly triangulation verifies results through the identification of weaknesses in the different methodologies and elimination of such deficiencies from data bias and investigator bias. Results from multiple methods (minimum of two methods) either provides divergent or convergent findings that enrich explanations of a phenomenon studied.

Issues Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Research: The literature argues that mixed research is an added paradigm to methods of doing research and a paradigm on its own. The questions researchers of mixed methods ask is how genuinely integrated and degree of independence the two methods (qualitative and quantitative) are of each other. In this section, the discussion focuses on the impediments that researchers face integrating qualitative and quantitative research.

Bryman (2016) interviewed 20 researchers that used mixed research method about the practice of substantial integration. Initial findings from the study show quantitative and qualitative and quantitative research are not usually integrated at the design stage of research. That writing a narrative that combines qualitative and qualitative findings both at analysis stage and interpretation was a cause for concern. The issues identified with mixed methods research are as follows:

- That a lot of researchers according to Bryman (2016) research analyse qualitative and quantitative data separately and report separately.
- A key theme in (Bryman, 2016) is few researchers have added value to arguments using mixed methods.

Bryman (2016) discussed the nine impediments to integrating qualitative and quantitative research and discussed below in brief.

Table 24: *Barriers to Mixed Methods Integration*

Different Audiences	Perceptions of audiences makes researchers to write up findings leaning more to one aspect of the data rather than a balanced use of all methodological findings.
Methodological Preferences	Methodological predilections of researchers make for emphasis on one set of data than the other set of data. Relates to skillsets of the researchers and comfort of methods use.
Structure of Research Projects	Research designs influences the reporting of findings with emphasis on one method compared to the other method, particularly when designs do not integrate quantitative and qualitative perspectives (open-ended, close-ended, observation, etc.). This makes integration of findings challenging.
Role of timelines	Quantitative timelines can be short for surveys while qualitative longer due to constantly redrafting the inquiry for meaning. Pressure builds up to publish the methods with shorter turnaround times.

. Skill Specialisms	Deficit range of qualitative and quantitative skillsets. Having both in a team can separate responsibilities and affect integration. Bringing people with the different skillsets can allow for knowledge sharing.
. Nature of the Data	Priority given to more interesting data and the other written with less emphasis.
. Bridging Ontological Divides	Pragmatism as a paradigm has emerged above ontological and epistemological concerns of combination of approaches, particularly integrating narrations of experiences and evidence from quantified values.
. Publication Issues	Different journals tend to favour paradigms relative to others. This influences the choice of mixed methods to use, required lengths of write-ups, and methodological bias of publishers,
Problem of Exemplars	Bryman (2016) introduced this barrier, explaining it is a lack of examples in the mixed methods literature of how to actually implement mixed methods research in practice. Not enough studies have done it and explained how it was done. The chances of replicability explained. How to draw upon "best practice" is lacking in the literature.

Note: Adapted from Bryman (2007).

Therefore, from literature reviews are few examples of mixed methods research in practice and very little guidance. At the heart of the mixed methods research is how reliable and valid the findings from studies are, whether the researcher provides both the evidence and narrates the contexts behind the phenomenon under study. Study validity lies in the completeness of information shared about a phenomenon and the ease of confirming such information through replication of the research process. The different studies on the power of triangulations show the researcher must be comfortable with the application of quantitative and qualitative analysis, understand the different paradigms used in research like grounded theory, induction and deduction, contribution analysis, impact evaluations and evaluation techniques. The key objective of mixed research methods is to achieve credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability, and authenticity (Beck, 2009).

Table 25: *Summary of the Power of Triangulation*

Qualitative research uses descriptive phenomenological paradigm that describes the meaning of an experience. Colaizzi's seven-step method of qualitative analysis involves reading of participant descriptions of phenomenon, documenting significant statements, draft meanings out of statements, use clusters to put meanings in categories, integrate the findings into a narrative description of experiences, validate the narrative descriptions with participants for confirmation, and add changes suggested by study participants (Beck, 2009).
Quantitative research states its theory and hypothesis for testing (quantification), deduction of findings from close-ended questionnaire is used in the research process. Paradigms used are correlations, difference-in difference approaches, and contribution analysis.

Qualitative research is also referred to as interpretivist, a subjective approach, constructivist, and moves from general to specific. Mostly uses open-ended questions and discussion guides for interviews.
Qualitative research is also referred to as interpretivist, a subjective approach, constructivist, and moves from general to specific. Mostly uses open-ended questions and discussion guides for interviews. Qualitative research allows for reflection in the process of designing research.
Quantitative research referred to as objectivist, positivist, and moves from specific to general types of inquiry. Mostly uses Likert scales and closed ended questions. Quantitative studies alone sometimes hide valuable information in outliers, while mixed methods provide multi-faceted perspectives to a phenomenon (Runciman, 2002).
Mixed methods research enhances rigor by providing more trustworthy datasets (multiple), crosschecked for credibility of methods, confirmable research procedures, and decision processes. Integration in mixed research findings requires a logical connection between themes and quantitative findings.
Discussions in qualitative findings are arranged in themes and significant statements studied for meaning. A qualitative sample is purposive, and in-depth in nature. Quantitative samples require large, randomised samples that cover wider populations. Person data triangulation is about securing all opinions and views in the research design. Completeness of research views and validation of findings are the key aspects of mixed methods research.

Authors' Own Summary, 2020

Argument for Mixed Methods Research

The study uses a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods to analyse the contribution of apprenticeship interventions to youth employment outcomes in the long run. The quantitative analysis provides quantitative values for measuring relationships between trainings of youth on soft skills, youth behavioural changes that result to employment outcomes. Behavioural changes observed by descriptive analysis that is mostly qualitative, while employment outcomes and welfare changes are measured using quantitative measures. Creswell et al. (2003) refers to quantitative methods as positivist, experimental, or empiricist, while qualitative as constructivist, interpretive, post positivist, and naturalistic.

The contributions assessment objective triangulates the high-level research question of how effective the different aspects of soft skills training for youths are regards accessing job opportunities and maintaining paid employment. This study explores the following intermediary research questions using complimentary mixed methods of research:

- Whether apprentices practiced the lessons learned from trainings on how to write proper curriculum vitae.
- How apprentices apply good work ethics taught.
- If apprentices have access to available jobs.
- How the gains in securing employment have been sustained three years after the end of the intervention by PROSPECTS.

The study examined current income levels compared to initial income prior to PROSPECTS phase 2 intervention. The research measured the changes in the employment sectors and demographic employment mobility among beneficiaries. The findings from the study provided

insight into the effectiveness and sustainability of soft skills training and work experience gained by Liberian youth participants.

The methodological approach for the study first used quantitative approach and thereafter contextualised findings in a second round of qualitative data collection. The methodological assumptions for the quantitative and qualitative methods used in the design of the research questions are detailed below.

Table 26: *Methodological Assumptions for Quantitative and Qualitative Designs.*

Quantitative design	Qualitative design
Deductive process uses a top-down approach to discuss a theory, sets up a hypothesis for testing whether it is a yes or no for acceptance, and then sets up specific questions that allow for data collection, and we confirm or reject the early theory discussed.	Inductive process observes a particular situation, identifies the patterns of ideas, and then hypothesizes about the situation based on the patterns found during observation. Normal patterns of thought for the groups then generalised as theories.
Cause and effect relationships is the focus of quantitative studies. The action and treatment that result as an effect on a dependent variable. An example is the effect of training youths on CV writing and the likelihood that those trained eventually got jobs. Is this due to the CV writing training? Cause and effect sets up a linear on	Mutual simultaneous shaping of factors that do not have to be dependent or independent variables. Variables studied individually as factors and explained as it is.

multiple regression to explain relationships between factors in a theory and test the hypothesis to establish the degree of relationships.	
Greene (2007) states static research design (treatment and control) used prior to the start of the research process. The respondents differentiated by specific factors. Some of the samples that received treatment and those yet to receive treatment referred to as control.	Emerging design-groups identified during implementation of the research by the researcher when administering open-ended questionnaires or focus groups. The respondents could share similar characteristics not known prior to the research, share similar experiences, or groups with different perspectives.
Context free and independent. The questions are standardised and devoid of personal opinions through structured questions.	Context laden in terms of personal views, explanation of events, the reasons why actions were taken, and personalized voices used in the explanation of theories and findings. The context-laden nature of qualitative research makes is subjective in nature and subject to verification.
Generalizations lead to predictions	Patterns and theories developed for understanding
Validation and reliability through replication of methods used for analysis of data and getting same results as original research.	Verification through reference to subjects in the research.

Note: Authors' summary of the difference between quantitative and qualitative research designs.

The research used mixed methods that combined both deductive and inductive processes for design of two questionnaires and analysis of data. One questionnaire used linear regressions to explain findings between apprenticeship trainings and employment outcomes, the second questionnaire used simultaneous factors to explain contextual issues by apprentices when searching for jobs. The study pulled data from respondents already trained on soft skills across three counties (isolated group) and administers focus group questions of business employers to find emerging patterns and perspectives. While the first quantitative findings are context free, the second qualitative findings are context laden.

The literature review explored three types of research for the study and the relative strengths as relates to the study. Examined correlation, experimental and descriptive types of research below:

Table 27: *Review of Correlation, Experimental and Descriptive Analytical Approaches.*

Correlation	Experimental	Descriptive
Analyses of mean, median, mode and checking for relationships between different factors.	Control groups are isolated, and conditions established before treatment occurs. This allows for calculation of treatment effects on the subject been observed and analysed.	Observes as a tool of data collection

Relational studies examine the degree of relationship between phenomena to know whether strong positive or negative relationship exists.	The four types of experimental designs are pre-experimental, true experimental, quasi-experimental, correlation and ex post facto.	Examines situations for normality to aid predictions under the same circumstance
Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) posit prediction studies done when correlations are known and used to predict future events and patterns.	True-experimental are experiments done in the natural sciences in science laboratories and rigorous. Correlation looks at cause and effect relationships in regressions.	Observations noted in questionnaires and analysed. Questions biased could be context laden. Non-randomised and selective samples mostly used.

The analytical approach for the study used both correlation and descriptive approach, correlation explained cause and effect from a quantitative perspective and qualitative approach provided the context of findings. Justification for choosing an objective and subjective research approach over one single approach is that quantitative allowed for the measurement of PROSPECTS contribution to youth access to available jobs. The qualitative angle explained the context in which the intervention took place, what worked best from emerging patterns not pre-identified in the research.

Therefore, both realist and idealist approaches used to triangulate findings in the study. The realist deducts fact for a general population and the idealist inducts contextual facts from an individual construct. The objective is to establish measurable evidence tied to a point in time which realist and objective approach allows for in the conduct of this survey. Theoretical models were set-up to test relationships between soft skills training and practice of CV submitting by beneficiaries. How work-readiness trainings assist youth's access job opportunities and maintain jobs. The relationship between psychosocial support and confidence building that might enable youths take full charge of their financial situation.

The final research fieldwork validated the quantitative findings from triangulations of findings from the qualitative focus group discussions from group of apprentices' employers. Study validated apprentices' self-reports with that of respective employers for robust, reliable and verified findings.

Themes to be covered by the study are changes in employment because of training; changes in income due to access to employment; changes in expenditure patterns due to the intervention; employment sectors for retained apprentices from the intervention; and youth access to finance and support services after the intervention. Triangulation will strengthen the validity of study findings by enabling the revision of employment theories, curriculums, and highlights the employment influencing factors in Liberia.

Arguments for Qualitative Approach

Researcher reviewed academic sources of information towards explanation of why qualitative research method is suitable for the study of practical soft skills education and effect on employment, survival strategy and poverty. The most appropriate research design selected and

discussed for the study of practical soft skills education and effect on sustained employment, survival strategy and poverty. The study will explain the merits of qualitative over quantitative research approach.

According to Marcel (2016), soft skills education was described as the training of a people to improve inter and intrapersonal abilities to enable a better work environment. The trainings provided are aimed at improving self-confidence, work-readiness skills, CV writing skills, business, and life skills. Another study Lipman (2015) extends the discussion by the assumption that once the soft skills behaviours are learnt, youths can find jobs and contribute positively to the work environment. Therefore, there is an economic focus about income generation, another perspective is better people's welfare and an efficient work environment.

Susan (2011) described qualitative research as exploratory research which is used to gain understanding *into how events unfold and reasons why phenomena happen*. The mostly used tools are observations, focus group discussions and individual interviews. Sample sizes used are usually small, purposive sample selection mainly used and induction used for analysis (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009). The qualitative research method allows for probing of respondent answers during unstructured interviews. The appropriateness of qualitative research is based on the collection of multiple views through unstructured interviews that contextualises findings and provides emerging patterns from respondent discussion.

In terms of qualitative analysis process, the inductive process is used to observe a particular situation, identifies the pattern of different ideas expressed by respondents and then states the patterns found from data which leads to formulation of theories. It allows room for bias and value laden responses that provides for robust discussions that validates objective findings. This is because personal voice is used to explain contextual meaning, evolving decisions are seen from

the viewpoints of respondents, and categorical patterns from multiple viewpoints that allow for induction.

Understanding the effect soft skills education has on employment, survival strategies and poverty strongly aligns with qualitative research approach. This is because the subject of study is focused on human behaviour because of soft skills training. Research questions will be used instead of hypothesis to describe how youths found jobs, how they have utilized soft skills training, how the skills enabled youths improve welfare and the reasons behind the changes youths mention within the qualitative research.

Adi (2019) described research design as a working framework for implementing research that efficiently addresses the research problem of a study through the logical combination of methods and techniques. Research design is broadly categorized as either exploratory, descriptive or causal framework. The specific categories of research design are experimental, correlational, diagnostic and explanatory research designs. Susan (2011) suggests the choice of a research design is dependent on the research problem that needs to be addressed by a researcher.

The research problem for this study is *understanding how* soft skills education is used by unemployed youths to access employment. It is established in literature that soft skills education like the work-readiness training helps improve team productivity in the workplace, but what is lacking is the description of soft skill effect on entry-level employees. The *reasons why* they were able to find jobs and key enablers. The inductive reasoning about key enablers of access to employment would assist improve the employment programs that utilize soft skills education curriculums. *Understanding this description of soft skills effect on youth, reasons why youth are able to access jobs and what the key employment enablers are strongly favours* ***the exploratory qualitative research design.***

The exploratory research design is flexible and allows for the selection of knowledgeable stakeholders and the use of non-experimental approach. The data collection will use observation, unstructured interviews, open-ended questions and in-depth stakeholder interviews. The constructivist exploratory research design will relate experiences of participants in the soft skills training with their respective employment outcomes, and acknowledges constructs change as participants gain more knowledge. Thus, different groups and patterns of experiences are studied using inductive research method.

The audience for the research is the primary consideration for the choice of qualitative research over quantitative research method. International donors, governments and development professionals are interested in understanding what respondents say about youth empowerment programs and how soft skills education has affected actions taken by youths to improve their welfare.

Unlike quantitative research design that is rigid and tests relationships, the exploratory qualitative research design is flexible, allows for contextual relativity of the idea's respondents suggest and the cross matching of group ideas together with the matching situational context. The qualitative research approach has an advantage of developing constructs (theory of change) from emerging knowledge based on interactions subject to existed theories. The quantitative research design assumes findings are context free and independent due to its use of structured questions that are close ended. This limits the scope of understanding for studies that are focused on human behaviour that requires logic, reasoning, value-laden and full of bias. The qualitative research design allows for the combination of logic, reasoning and explains the context behind the actions human beings take regards to the phenomenon under study.

Quantitative research only provides the number of youths that accessed jobs due to soft skills training. It does not describe how the youths utilized the soft skills to secure a job, what the reasons are for youths that were unable to secure a job. Qualitative research design provides reasons why a youth will seek soft skills education, what the youth is likely to learn, and what youths say strongly affects their access to employment and incomes. This allows for easy interpretation of multiple trends for respondents rather than generalise findings with one viewpoint that is very limited in scope. Therefore, while quantitative research design is able to inform researchers of quantitative progress made, the exploratory qualitative research design provides understanding of how and reasons for the progress made through multiple interpretations and perspectives.

The study of 'soft skills education effect' uses non-experimental research design. This exploratory qualitative research design aims to understand the effect soft skills education has had on participants and the reason why such effects happened. The analysis approach will present a pattern of views from respondents personally, as group of thoughts, and ideas that cut across the whole team of respondents. The study sample will use open-ended questions, field observation using checklist and an interactive platform that will use in-depth interviews for key stakeholders.

The Qualitative Process and Philosophy

The study reviews academic literature to briefly describe the research process and philosophies needed for the study of effects soft skills education has on access to employment and poverty reduction efforts. In addition, the most applicable research philosophy for the study would be selected and theoretical justifications made for the choice.

The concept of soft skills education is best described as the attributes employable youths are expected to have, such as leadership, teamwork, communication skills, problem solving skills,

work ethic, flexibility, and interpersonal skills (Lipman, 2015, and Marcel, 2016). These attributes expected of employable youths are best qualified to understand whether soft skills education leads to employment and poverty reduction.

To qualify the attributes expected of employable youths, *the research process* for the study will involve the test of youth practices before and after receiving soft skills education in an objective manner, through the analysis of information using a systematic process. This implies the explanation of steps in the research process used to investigate the studies research problems towards the establishment of knowledge. Following (Guba and Lincoln, 1994), *the research process comprises of the research approach (qualitative), the research method (descriptive analogy), the study sample (non-random), the data collection (unstructured) and the analysis approach (non-numeric).*

The research philosophies from literature are ontology, epistemology, axiology, rhetorical and methodology (Shields, 2013). This study examines how each research philosophy identified fits into the development of research process for the study of 'soft skills education effects. From the review, the relevant research philosophy of ontology assumes reality is multiple, epistemology looks at the level of interaction between researcher and phenomenon studied, and axiology examines the role values and bias play in the study of phenomenon. In addition, rhetorical philosophy uses personalized voice, while methodology discusses reasons behind actions. The above research philosophies described in the study are characterised by their qualitative perspectives.

Luo (2019) states qualitative research perspective uses non-numerical approach to provide reasons behind phenomenon, it provides for context, might be value-laden and present bias. The

qualitative data collection tools are observations, checklist, focus group discussion, in-depth interviews, and unstructured questionnaires. The analysis method uses emerging patterns and categories.

Qualitative research is best applicable for the study of soft skills education effects due to insights it provides into peoples' cultures, individual actions, and societies. It provides context about what happens to youths that receive soft skills education and innovations that can improve scaled delivery towards poverty alleviation. Qualitative use of induction for drawing conclusions allows the researcher to construct reality from the different emerging patterns found within textual data.

This construction of reality in the personalised perspective of the respondent is also referred to as *the constructivism paradigm*, best applies to the study of soft skills education effects. According to Shields et al. (2013), the constructivist researcher believes constructs change as knowledge levels of respondents change and should be captured in research. To buttress this point, Guba and Lincoln (1994) describes *constructivism from an ontology perspective* as the relativity of different views shared by many people with conflicting social realities with limitations. The authors also describe *constructivism from an epistemological perspective* as knowledge generated from discussions between researcher and respondents. *From a methodological perspective, that constructivism* uses interpretivist methods that replicate previous theories and constructs. *Therefore, the research process for the study will use qualitative research approach, descriptive analogy, non-random, unstructured questions, and non-numerical data.*

The research process for the study first states the research problem of the study. *Literature on soft skills education only discusses the curriculum but does not demonstrate the effect it has on*

participants' access to employment and poverty alleviation [26] (LISGIS, 2011) and (World Bank, 2010). The thesis explored how youths have practiced this learnt soft skills, its effect on self-confidence, and whether they find jobs and move out of poverty.

Research approach for the study will use direct observation of participants using checklist, review of secondary data to build theory, administer key informant interviews and inductive research approach used to draw learning from textual constructs. *The study follows Shields* and *Rangarajan (2013) definition of descriptive research as the description of a population with the objective to answer the question, 'what is the situation'.*

This study will use purposeful sampling technique to select key informants and generate qualitative information (Ma, 2007). As an informant selection tool, purposeful sampling is dependent on the quality of information the informant possesses. The knowledgeable informants for this study are youths: who received theoretical soft skills training; youths placed at apprentices, youths that received start-up business grants and government.

For data analysis, the study will apply content analysis, narrative analysis and discourse analysis. Word frequencies will be examined from text, categories created to draw out contextual meaning for the content analysis (Ian , 2012). The narrative analysis will require the researcher to interact with respondents over a period and place. *According to* (Clandinin and Huber, 2014)*, the narrative is created within the context of social environment, temporary situations that are transitory in nature, and the place events occur which is linked to the persons' identity and experience*. Following Tebogo (2014) study, discourse analysis will be used to study written or spoken language related to existing social context to understand social groups and how they

[26] Relevant to International Non-Government Organizations and Developing Countries with mainly informal economies.

communicate. *Luo (2019) further states discourse analysis is needed to understand the social and political contexts behind the occurrence of the phenomenon under study (Unemployment).* The applicable research process for the study is descriptive research which will use induction techniques from a purposive non-random sample, draws assumptions from qualitative perspectives of ontology, epistemology and methodological.

Researcher examined the research process and philosophies required for the study of soft skills education effects on youths seeking sustainable employment. Study conceptualised soft skills education, research process, research philosophies, and selects constructivism paradigm as the most appropriate qualitative research philosophy. This descriptive approach uses qualitative perspectives that draw from ontology, epistemology, and methodological views of philosophers. A broader understanding of the contribution of employability soft skills education will increase productivity for organisations, scale employment opportunities and alleviate poverty.

Argument for Quantitative Approach

Preliminary findings from PROSPECTS (2018) baseline study of employment and entrepreneurship participants showed 32% had no source of income, with 68% of participants that rely on a combination of daily hire jobs, short-term contracts, family business, family agriculture, and very few 10% in full-time jobs. [27] The perception of youths as regards their ability to take care of their needs showed low confidence levels overall. Below a quarter of participants agreed they are confident in their capacity to earn income, with similar results for participants that said, “my

[27] The Employment and Entrepreneurship baseline surveyed 494 respondents randomly with equal distribution between males and females between the ages of 15 and 35. Study implemented across Montserrado, Gbarnga and Ganta.

earnings can take care of education for my household", "my income can take care of household needs", "my earning can take care of hospital needs".

According to PROSPCTS Evaluation Report 2017, between July 2014 and March 2017 some 701 Liberian youth benefitted from apprenticeship placements as part of the PROSPECTS 2 program. Desk review findings from the phase 2 evaluation report showed 44% or 310 offered jobs after the apprenticeship placement, which exceeded the original logical framework milestone target of 35%. Further interrogation of the findings showed that out of the 44% youths offered jobs at the end of the apprenticeship, 38% of the apprentices accepted the employment offers and retained as employees at these businesses, while 62% of apprentices were not employed by the host businesses after the apprenticeship placements were completed. Over 60% of the unemployed youths at the end of the intervention, raises questions about the sustained impact of the PROSPECTS intervention.

The contributions assessment objective answers the high-level research question of how effective the different aspects of soft skills training for youths are regards accessing job opportunities and maintaining paid employment. This study explores the following intermediary research questions using quantitative research:

- How effective the different aspects of soft skills training for youths are regards accessing job opportunities and maintaining paid employment.
- For apprentices that were retained; are they still working with the same host business, or have they moved on to another job; whether they moved to another job; were they promoted on the job since their placement; did apprentices job title change; and whether apprentice income increased.
- For beneficiaries of the PROSPECTS phase 2 placements; which aspects of the soft skills training do they value the most and why; what is the relationship between the soft skills training acquired

and the job acquisition and or retention; and the relationship between recall of soft skills training curricula and income variance.

The study quantifies current income levels and compares them to the initial income earned by the apprentice prior to PROSPECTS phase 2 intervention. The quantitative research measures changes in the employment sectors and demographic employment mobility among beneficiaries. The knowledge from the quantitative study provides insight into the effectiveness and sustainability of soft skills training and work experience gained by Liberian youth participants.

The study narrated the different support given to youths and the expected outcomes. Research design for the study uses structured questionnaires to establish values for youth perceptions. According to Greene (2007), Likert scale allows for the use of quantitative point scales to measure behavioural changes in the social sciences. The responses using Likert scale show five types of responses around agree and disagree positions. Creswell et al. (2003) posits that quasi-experimental approach allow for the use of experimental methods in the study of social phenomenon. The study replicates contributions theory that compares before and after question responses of a respondent to understand the changes that might have occurred because of a social phenomenon (Catherine-Rose, 2014). For the study, researcher assessed the income changes from questions about wages earned during the PROSPECTS intervention and current income earned to quantify mean and standard deviation.

Frequencies in %s established from the perceptions of respondents about confidence levels about ability to access available jobs based on skill level. Randomised sampling of beneficiaries from the PROSPECTS soft skills training and apprenticeship placements allows for generalizations for the population studied (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009). Causal steps taken into the research question design allows the researcher to compare variables and the relationship that

exists within them to establish correlation (Eric , 2018). The analytical approach to the study used a “theory-based contributions evaluation approach” to provide a clear structured understanding of reasons for the effectiveness of soft skills training and apprenticeship placements on youth income and employment levels. The map of the causal chain of youth intervention inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impact informs the intervention contributions, through the test of assumptions around youth behavioural changes, as a pre-requisite of youth getting and sustaining gainful employment.

The immediate focus is not on proving direct causality; rather the researcher provides a structured quantitative approach to examine how beneficiaries have practiced soft skills lessons taught by PROSPECTS trainers both in the classroom and work culture learnt during the apprenticeship placements. Study sets out the attributable processes that indicate factors that produce significant outcome and contribution; we ask what changes have occurred for the beneficiary apprentice and what activity influenced the result for the beneficiary. Positivistic ontology used in the research approach assumes that findings collectively report on the social behaviour of beneficiaries on access to employment opportunities. The positivist paradigm measures from observations that reveal evidence about results and does not ask reasons behind actions with the use of open-ended questions (Greene, 2007).

The research approach for the study uses a quasi-experimental approach, research methods drawn from a positivist paradigm, and contributions theoretical literature used to test assumptions within the research about correlation between variables. Justification for choosing an objective research approach over subjective is that individual opinions make it difficult to generalise for entities like PROSPECTS that carry out interventions across a large geographical space. While the subjective approach brings out the context about why actions taken by beneficiaries, the objective

approach chosen provides results that are measurable over time for the PROSPECTS interventions. From a realist perspective, findings from quantitative studies report generalised fact for sampled groups while idealist report social phenomenon from an individual perspective. Therefore, while the realist deducts fact for a general population, the idealist inducts contextual facts from an individual construct.

The objective is to establish measurable evidence tied to a point in time which realist and objective approach allows for in the conduct of this survey. Models' set-up to test relationships between soft skills training and practice of CV submitting by beneficiaries. How work-readiness trainings assist youth's access job opportunities and maintain jobs. The relationship between psychosocial support and confidence building that might enable youths take full charge of their financial situation.

Research Approach and Design

Study Research Approach

The research approach for the study uses both correlation and descriptive approach, correlation explains cause and effect from a quantitative perspective and qualitative approach provides the context of findings. Justification for choosing an objective and subjective research approach over one single approach is that quantitative allows the measurement of PROSPECTS contribution to youth access to available jobs. The qualitative angle explains the context in which the intervention took place, what works best from emerging patterns not pre-identified in the research. Therefore, both realist and idealist approaches used to triangulate findings in the study.

The realist deducts fact for a general population and the idealist inducts contextual facts from an individual construct.

The objective is to establish measurable evidence tied to a point in time which realist and objective approach allows for in the conduct of this survey. Models' set-up to test relationships between soft skills training and practice of CV submitting by beneficiaries. How work-readiness trainings assist youth's access job opportunities and maintain jobs. Research approach will be a "theory-based contributions measurement approach" aimed at providing a clear structured understanding of reasons for the effectiveness of soft skills training and apprenticeship placements on youth income and employment levels. The research design tests assumptions of youth behavioural changes as a pre-requisite of youth getting and sustaining gainful employment.

Contribution Methods

This case study will use 'contribution analyses, a mix of quantitative to qualitative research methods to derive new knowledge on PROSPECTS theory of change (above). The research approach will provide the results from youth practice of work-readiness and soft skills training. Study proposed mainly a quantitative study with a few qualitative questions added to qualify responses of beneficiaries in the study for narrative purposes. The proposed mixed methods approach will provide triangulation for what apprentices' self-report as improvements, which aspects of PROSPECTS intervention they have practiced, and emerging patterns we intend to capture from various validation questioning techniques. Study focus is not on proving direct causality; rather we provide a structured quantitative approach to examine whether and how youth have practiced soft skills lessons taught by PROSPECTS trainers both in the classroom and work culture learnt during the apprenticeship placements.

The study approach asked youth participants what employment changes have occurred and the associated activities that contribute to their ability to access employment. Questions were asked to understand the conditions needed in job markets to assist development initiatives work optimally. A logic model will be developed to explain most significant contributory activities that are associated with expected employment outcomes in the theory of change and highlight possible external influences to the employment results. At the analysis stage, evidence will be assessed to see whether the pattern of findings match the theory of change logical model. Researcher will also study the main strengths and weaknesses in the PROSPECTS intervention story for learning and knowledge purposes.

The methodology approach for the study first uses quantitative approach and thereafter contextualises findings in a second round of qualitative data collection. The methodological assumptions for either quantitative or qualitative methods decides the research design used for data collection. The research uses mixed methods that combines both deductive and inductive processes for design of two questionnaires and analysis of data. One questionnaire uses linear regressions to explain findings between apprenticeship trainings and employment outcomes, the second questionnaire uses simultaneous factors to explain contextual issues apprentices face when searching for jobs. The study pulls data from respondents already trained on soft skills across three counties (isolated group) and administers focus group questions of business employers to find emerging patterns and perspectives.

While the first quantitative findings are context free, the second qualitative findings are context laden. The question for the quantitative aspect uses structured/standardised methods and applies Likert scales of five from agree, strongly agree, disagree, and strongly disagree and none.

Questions for the qualitative aspect develops open-ended questions using a discussion guide for focus group discussion.

Population and Sample of the Research Study

A randomised sample drawn from the 701-youth population that benefitted from the apprenticeship placements between 2014 and 2017. The sampled population domains stratified into Gbarnga, Montserrado and Buchanan. The first step in the sampling method is the extraction from the PRSOPECTS dataset, the population of apprentices that completed the three months apprenticeship placement between year 2014 and 2017. Next, three excel tabs are created that disaggregate all apprentices, retained apprentices, and not retained apprentices. Thirdly, randomised function is used in excel to select a sample from retained apprentices following the same proportion achieved during the field intervention. Researcher then seeks the consent of participants, checks for correct addresses, and contact information. The objective of this sampling design is to allow for triangulated in-depth analysis of findings from the general sample of retained apprentices.

Proposed Sample Size and Allocation by Domain and Frame

85 sample size estimates for the survey are drawn based on 95% Confidence Level and 10% Confidence Interval and allocated to each domain based on proportions of total population domain. Further sample stratification is done below following the population distribution of intervention participants by counties used a ratio of 42.51% (Montserrado): 28.81% (Gbarnga): 28.60% (Buchanan). *For effect size and to avoid response ceiling effect, the representative sample yielded a margin of +/-10 % points at a 95% confidence level.* A key consideration in the initial parent

population is that Montserrado County is the capital of Liberia, a commercial hub and has higher unemployment rate compared to Gbarnga and Buchanan Counties.

Table 28: *Stratified Sample Frame by Counties*

Stratified Sample Frame by Counties				
Locations	Montserrado	Bong	Buchanan	**Total**
Sample size	37	24	24	**85**

In summary, the 85 sampled respondents will be called via telephone, questionnaires emailed, and face to face interviews done. Informed consent will be ascertained before agreeing on date for the interview. The researcher and respondent will agree on a mutual location for the face-to-face interview. In addition, interview methods will be provided to the potential respondents such as emailing the questionnaire and Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI).

The qualitative interviews consisted of two business owners that hosted apprentices, one institutional donor, one PROSPECTS staff and one government youth centre coordinator.

Materials/Instrumentation of Research Tools

This section describes the development process for the survey tools which assesses the contribution of soft skills education received by apprentices to their employment outcomes. Two research tools were used for the study, the first a quantitative survey and second tool a qualitative interview guide. For study reliability, 85 apprentices were randomly selected and representative of apprentices that completed three months apprenticeship placement and received employability skills training. To triangulate findings from the quantitative survey, an additional in-depth

interview of three key stakeholders that implemented the youth employment program is interviewed is done.

For the quantitative research tool, Section A establishes beneficiary information related to current employment status, the likely contributory factors such as apprenticeship placement and soft skills training provided by PROSPECTS to the research participants. Next, Section B of the research tool examines changes in employment and the effect it has on financial independence of the apprentice. Whether changes in the level of financial independence is due to the contributory factors from apprenticeship placement and employability trainings. Study examines key actions taken by apprentices that improved employment outcome of increased income for apprentices over the observation period. This helps highlight major behavioural factors for improving employability skills curriculum. How effective the soft skills intervention is towards sustained employment is investigated in this section. Study investigates how jobs accessed by unemployed youth contribute to livelihood of participants that received employability and soft skills training.

To further develop the themes on employability skills for youth in primarily informal economies, we delve deeper into the educational contents of employability curriculum and how it affects youth employment PROSPECTS. Here, we establish whether quality CV writing practices contributed to employment access, towards evidence on which significant aspects of soft skills (work-readiness training) that contribute to employment. For validity of the study, we triangulate findings from a variety of sources such as apprentices, employer, and program implementers. Study validity is triangulated from the instruments by extrapolating apprentice self-reporting of practicing employability skills, stakeholder continued practice of apprenticeship placements, trainings and employment.

The qualitative tool provides perspectives on intervention relevance and how sustainable the knowledge and effects of the intervention is sustained long after the grant period. Narrative is captured on how stakeholders contribute to skills building for youth after the grant period ends. The in-depth narrative interviews explains whether host businesses, program staff and national youth stakeholders consider employability skills acquisition for apprentices relevant for confidence building towards job applications. Mixed methods triangulation validates both employer and apprentices' views on how relevant acquired skills by apprentices is to access to employment. Triangulation of findings from varied sources is focused on how acquired skills contributes towards access to employment. The acquired skills studied for triangulated findings are CV writing, effective job applications and customer service skills.

Operational Definition of Variables

This section describes each variable in the study, the level of measurement, variable disaggregation and scoring of variable responses. Here, the data collection tool initially designed is reviewed, the nature of data collected, and related analysis is explained.

Employment Variable Construct

The dependent variable in the context of this research study are respondents engaged in paid work. Here, an agreement exists between an employer and an employee where the employee provides specific services and in return the employee is paid a wage. The employment categories for respondents are not employed, full time employed, part-time employment, seasonal employment and self-employment. The objective is the measurement of whether apprentices stay in long term employment and attribute it to soft skills, work-readiness, and three months apprenticeship placement. To contextualise the research study within the narrative for low-income

countries for the purposes of attributing trainings to access to employment, study groups paid employment into formal, informal and for people engaged in both formal and informal employment.

Sustainable Employment Variable Construct

According to the Dutch Standardisation Institute, *'Sustainable employment is the ability of the employee to provide added value for an organisation now and in the future, while also experiencing added value themselves'* (NEN, 2021). This variable construct highlights the contributions employees bring to an organisation and their personal experiences about self-improvement. Behaviour of an employee at the workplace is construed as the practice of soft and work-readiness skills learned from the PROSPECTS intervention. To avoid the effect of attrition on the value added by employees, the research study controls for the effect of interventions from other donors' government interventions from the time of initial intervention to date.

Creation of added value for the employee because of employment is also a construct of Sustainable Employment variable. Within the narrative, different perspectives of personal growth is measured by different variables. First is the variable that measures employment mobility after the end of apprenticeship placements and the capacity of survey participants to secure additional work experience. A second independent variable construct is the analysis of savings after expenses from wages is accounted for from income generated from paid employment. This provides the metrics for measuring whether a relationship exists between work experience and wage changes.

Study Procedures and Ethical Assurances

The research study was approved by the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) 24th June after the submission of informed consent form, research tools, and gatekeeper letter to UREC. Only youth that participated in apprenticeship placement, work-readiness, life skills trainings, and between the ages of 25 and 40 years were interviewed. 85 randomly sampled respondents gave informed consent, interviewed virtually and in-person. Potential participants will be contacted via phone calls, emails, and in-person with a request from the researcher asking for participant participation in the proposed research.

Consent of participants were gained through the provision of a letter to respondents that detailed the research objective, study benefits and contact details of the researcher. All participants in the research study had the ability to give free and informed consent. Researcher explained to research participants how potential study findings will be used to improve youth employment programming with an emphasis on anonymity of respondents. That the research study will provide an understanding whether apprenticeship placement and work-readiness training contributes to sustained employment in the long-run after the PROSPECTS intervention ended.

Potential respondents were informed there will be no direct benefit to the interviewee, but their participation will help the research find out innovative means on how best to support the unemployed and under-employed youths in Liberia. Interviewee were chosen for this study because you completed three months apprenticeship placement, attended work-readiness training at the PROSPECTS youth employment centres in Liberia between 2015 and 2017. Researcher and respondents agreed on a mutual location for the face-to-face interview. To ensure comfort of respondent during the interview, additional interview mechanisms were provided such as emailing the questionnaire, face-to-face interviews, and Computer Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI).

Other ethical considerations observed were no relationship between principal investigator and respondents prior to the interviews except for the purpose of this research. The respondents were not students to the researcher and had no work-related relationship to the researcher. Apart from the risks associated with everyday events such as accidents travelling, there are no potential risk associated with the research study. All data collected were treated as confidential, secured for five years and anonymised.

Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection ended 30th July and used both closed and open-ended questions during the survey fieldwork. Quality data checks were completed 6th August, with 85 respondents surveyed and three in-depth qualitative interviews of stakeholders done. The description of respondents was youth mostly out of school, unemployed, underemployed, employed, intervention leaders, and Ministry of Youth and Sports officials. The data analysis is aimed at answering the hypothesis: *"If youth get soft and employability skills training, they will be gainfully employed rather than remain unemployed*". This assumption is tested by questions employment, livelihood changes, the relationship with skills practice and sustained support from national stakeholders after the grant period. The data collection instruments are guided by the sub-questions on: *"a description of youth employment status, actions youth take to access employment and learning on what lessens the effect of unemployment".*

Variables were labelled for each column on excel with questions asked during the survey. The value responses were labelled with text responses for the excel dataset. As part of data cleaning, multiple responses will be separated into different columns and labelled clearly. To better understand the data collected, pivot table analysis for each variable will be done. This provides

descriptive statistics for dependent and independent variables in the study. Gender patterns for behaviour (outputs) and outcomes across variable indicators will be established in the study. State differences for behaviour and outcomes will be explained using descriptive analysis. A description of findings about the employment dependent variable is contextualised from the descriptive analysis and the self-reporting of actions taken by respondents discussed.

Excel data collected using Commcare Mobile Application and downloaded as forms on MS Excel will be imported in SPSS Application. After this, the SPSS syntax will be developed to code text responses such as yes and no as 1 and 2. The different categories of responses will be categorised as either nominal or ordinal variables. The objective of this level of analysis using SPSS is to run multiple regression analysis. Here, mean significant differences between independent variables are tested and contributory effects to dependent variable analysed. Some of the following correlations are tested as part of the analysis:

- The relationship between the practice of work-readiness (hard and soft skills) as reported as contribution to employment and actual employment statistics from the survey
- The relationship between the practice of CV submissions and livelihood changes due to job mobility.
- The relationship between the value apprentices place business skills training and financial independence from self-esteem.

The quantitative section analysis the relationship between soft skills, employment and income changes. While the qualitative section examines the relevance and effectiveness of the intervention towards access to employment. The qualitative approach interviewed stakeholders on whether services offered as part of the intervention targeted the needs of youth, whether youth utilised the trainings provided towards access to employment. For the study, we move from

quantitative to qualitative as a triangulation approach for deducting and inferring from quantitative and qualitative findings respectively.

Chapter Summary

Cross-sectional descriptive research explains the research methodology for the study. Survey provides a general overview of the situation trained apprentices face in the job market in Liberia. At a one-time point, study establishes the relationship between knowledge gained from employability trainings, securing employment and livelihood changes. Credibility and validity of findings from the data collected is based on methodological triangulation that combines 85 structured survey questionnaire and three Key Informant Interviews.

Scope and Methodology: This evaluation has used a mixed methods approach, consisting of a document review, survey, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and an analysis of secondary quantitative data collected by PROSPECTS staff. Therefore, it draws on both quantitative and qualitative data. The following information provides a description of each method:

a. Key informant interviews

Researcher designed an interview guide based on findings from the desk review, and other secondary data. The data collected from interviews has been used to triangulate and validate the findings from the desk-based review and other relevant data sources. The interviews addressed the relevant questions and were conducted with stakeholders that have been involved in the project.

b. Survey

Researcher designed the survey based on the findings from the desk review, and other secondary data. The survey enabled us to gather information from a significant proportion of youth participants.

c. Documents Review

This involved reviewing the project proposal, results framework and/or Theory of Change, outlining the project objectives, results, and targets, so we could assess achievements against original targets. Documents reviewed were annual reports, baseline survey, midline survey and cash grant policy for youth participants.

d. Data Collection and Analysis

The data was collected in Bong, Montserrado and Nimba counties. Below shows the number of interviews undertaken with various respondents. Overall, there were five in-depth interviews and 85 survey responses.

Table 29: *Breakdown of Interviews and Survey Respondents*

Data Collection	**Total**
Interviews with business host	**2**
Interviews with Donors	**1**
Interviews with PROSPECTS staff	**1**
Interviews with Government (Youth Centre Coordinator)	**1**
Survey Respondents	**85**

Researcher reviewed relevant planning, process, and reporting and guideline documents to better understand the project. Survey results were used to inform the contribution of apprenticeship

placement and employability trainings to sustainable access to jobs. The researcher triangulated the findings from the mixed methods research to get an even more accurate picture of the experience of youth participants. The interviews enabled better understanding about the views of beneficiaries and other stakeholders. This has helped the understanding of any changes in knowledge, behaviours, and attitudes, as well as long-tern project contributions. Mixed methods approach allowed the study to triangulate findings from quantitative and qualitative data sources and helped provide knowledge about alternative approaches that assist achieve sustainable results.

To select a sample for the qualitative data we used a purposive sampling method that will include key stakeholders and participants targeted by the project. This involved identifying and selecting key informants that were conversant with topic under discussion. Researcher considered key informants' availability at the time of the evaluation and willingness to participate. The research data analytical framework was guided by the design of contribution questions of asking before and after questions at one time point. The thematic analysis coded the questions and responses into themes and analysed the thematic data from interviews, surveys, and desk reviews. The researcher used a coding framework to help with consistency and reliability of findings, assisted with linkages of specific questions to high level research questions and the testing for relationships.

CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

Chapter 4: Introduction to the section

This section discusses the study findings framed around the research statement 'If youths get soft and employability skills training, they will be gainfully employed rather than remain unemployed.' Sub-section 4.1 describes how trustworthy the data collected in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability, confirm-ability, and explains how the variable constructs meet the assumptions of the statistical tests. While Sub-section 4.2 discusses how the same results will be achieved if questionnaire is repeated. Sub-section 4.3 provides answers to the quantitative and qualitative questionnaire on whether youth trained in soft skills access employment. Here, the study also provides a triangulated mixed methods approach to validate findings in a contextual and practical manner. Finally, Sub-section 4.4 provides a description of the relationship between the study results and compares them against the literature review to provide likely explanation for unexpected results.

Trustworthiness of Data

The trustworthy the data collected during the survey period is dependent on whether variables in the research explain whether soft and employability skills training contribute to employment. Therefore, the study did not focus on proving direct causality between training and jobs, instead the study provided a structured and unstructured mixed methods approach towards examining whether apprentices practice soft and employability skills during apprenticeship placement. The identified variables that could produce apparent contributions from the literature review asked respondents about experience during the apprenticeship training and placement, also examined was the long-term results of the exercise in terms of wages and employment.

Another perspective about trustworthiness of the data is the mixed methods approach where same questions are asked differently to different stakeholders during the intervention and answers are triangulated for validity. To reduce the role of external interventions and effect on attrition, questions were asked on what influenced employment outcomes and role of external stakeholders. The study used the last criterion of trustworthiness of qualitative research – confirmability by tracking previous apprentices in the field to establish what theory of change enables positive employment outcomes for trained apprentices. The dependability of study findings is based on questions about expected employment outcomes of income changes and contributory influences such as government, NGOs, etc. Credibility of the study depends on discussion of strengths and weakness of the apprentice's applied knowledge from the employability skills training.

Study assumes the representativeness of a sample of 85 persons surveyed out of 108 retained apprentices and the similarity of characteristics for the sampled participants. The rationale for the first assumption is that selected sample size was based on Confidence Level of 95% and Margin of Error of 5%. The second assumption is that the opinions of the sampled apprentices represent the opinions of their colleagues either employed or unemployed. For mixed methods limitation, the study presented pragmatism in the form of mixed research that complements qualitative and mainly quantitative approach (Onwuegbuzie, A. J., 2003).

The limitations of mixed methods is in the reassessing of the cost-effectiveness and data integration of mixed methods over single method.

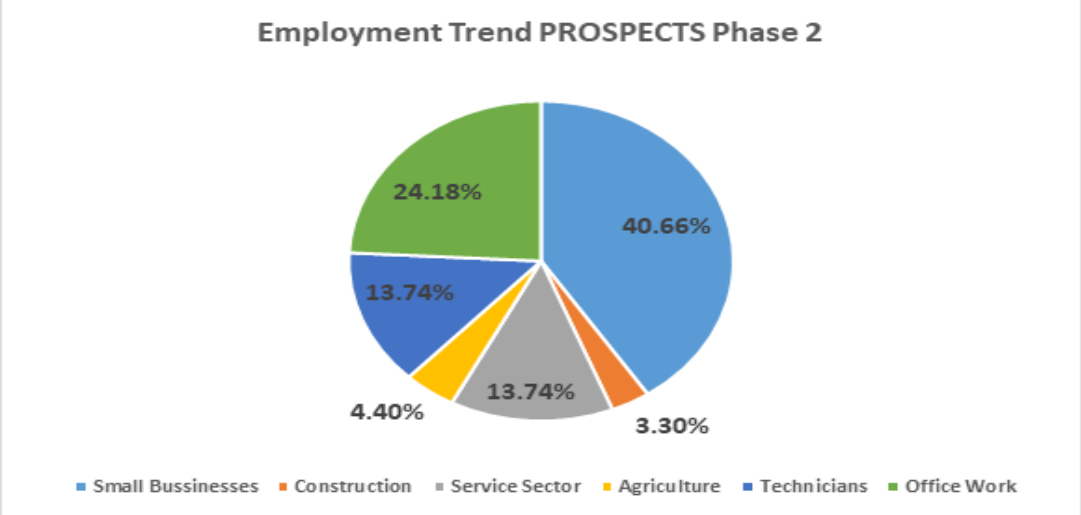
Reliability and Validity of Data

Here, the study discussed the internal and external validity of the measurement test and research ability to generalise the findings to the targeted study population. For accurate

representation of the research concept, we discuss whether the research questionnaire used in the study if re-administered will provide the same study findings. Reliability of the study depends on the assumption that trained youth will access available jobs in their community. That knowledge of soft employability skills will enable youth access employment towards an improved livelihood for the apprentice. The internal validity of the study establishes the cause-and-effect relationship between treatment and outcome.

To describe the targeted study population, this section provides demographic information about employment and income of 85 respondents spread across Montserrado (37), Bong (24) and Buchanan (24) in the survey. In terms of gender, 50 male (59%) and 35 female (41%) respondents responded to the quantitative questionnaires. The age range of respondents were between 18 and 42 years. The study set out to understand what happens in the long run regarding employment of trained apprentices in soft and employability skills. Figure 8 and Table 30 below describes the findings.

Figure 8: *A Description of Sectors Tracked Apprentices Found Employment*



Findings show majority trained apprentices found employment as Technicians (40.66%), followed closely by office work (24.18%) and worked for small businesses (13.74%). Very few apprentices worked in the agricultural sector (4.40%) while the service sector had a sizeable proportion of employed apprentices (13.74%).

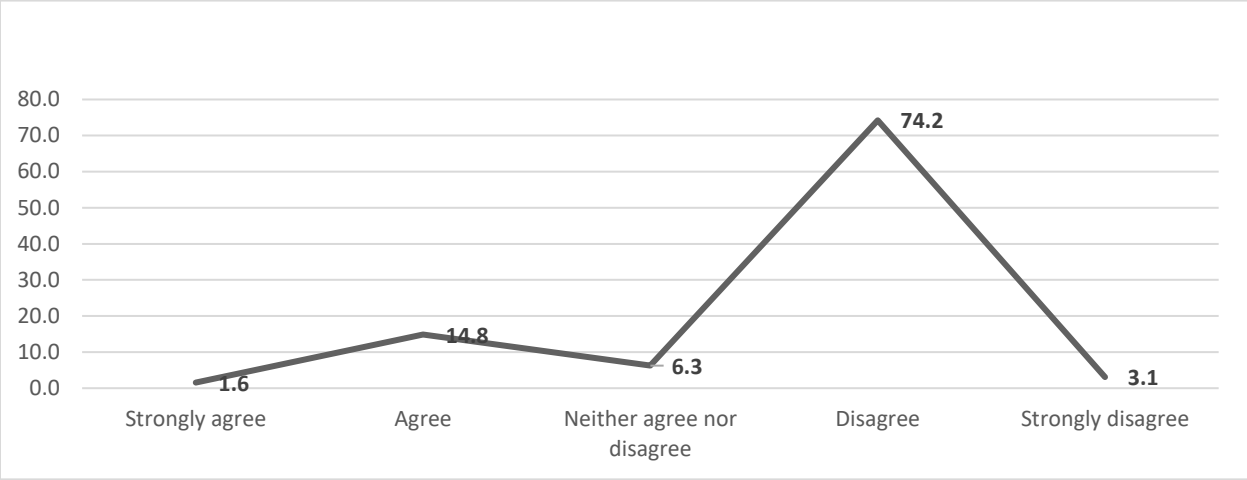
Table 30: *Employment Status Classified by Gender*

Employment Status	**Unemployed**	**Full-time**	**Part-time**	**Seasonal**	**Self-employed**	**Grand Total**
Male	15%	16%	30%	3%	36%	100%
Female	17%	27%	8%	2%	46%	100%
Grand Total	16%	21%	21%	2%	40%	100%

Findings in Table 30 show self-employment had significantly more females (46%) than males (36%). That part-time employment had significantly more males (30%) than females (8%). Deduced is that majority of apprentices will set-up own businesses after completing apprenticeship.

Another study objective was to examine the issues of attrition where the contribution of PROSPECTS soft and employability trainings for apprentices are reduced by other organisations supporting the sampled respondents with similar support. For validity and reliability, the study asked respondents whether other organisations supported them with employment trainings and apprenticeship placements during the period after PROSPECTS intervention. Findings are shown in the below Figure 9.

Figure 9: *Attrition: External Support for Job Trainings*



Of the 9.8% apprentices that received assistance from Non-Governmental-Organisations (NGOs) and Governments, the disaggregation by counties of apprentices that got additional support in soft and employability skills showed Bong had 23.8%, Montserrado 20.51%, and Buchanan 8.11% of apprentices. The main reason given by 90.2% of respondents for no assistance received from other organisations is that they knew of no other organisation offering employment trainings or job placements in their communities.

To control the issues of attrition, survey asked respondents whether health issues negatively affected their ability to work. The findings from Table 31 below showed that majority (94.40%) had no health issues with very few respondents (1.60%) stating that their health issue affected their ability to work.

Table 31: *Health Issues that Affect Ability to Work.*

Health issue affects ability to work	1.60%
Unemployed with health issue	1.60%

Health issue prevents me from employment	1.60%
Health issue affected my chances retaining a job in the past	0.80%
No health issue	94.40%

Financial inclusion was a major aspect of the intervention with an objective to enable apprentices build financial history towards ability to access financial opportunities in the formal banking sector. As part of studying the contributory effects of financial inclusion intervention, the study asked how employers paid wages and findings are shown in Table 32 below.

Table 32: *Method Used by Employers to Pay Wages.*

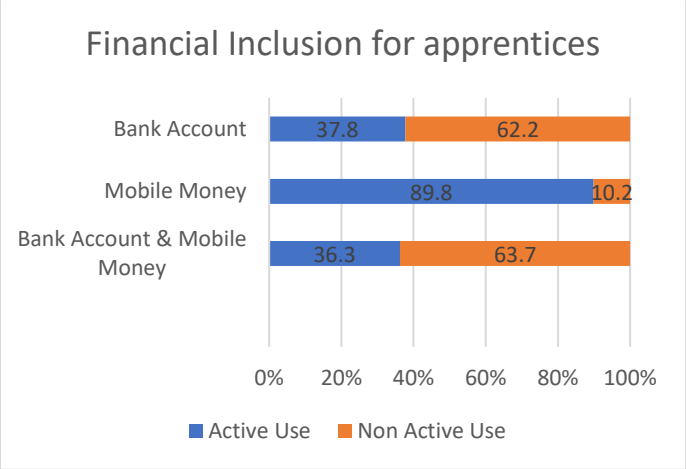
Description	Employer Method of Payment
Bank transfer	21.43%
Mobile money	7.14%
Cash payments	69.64%
Cheque payments	1.79%
Total	56

Study finds that majority wages paid to apprentices was cash payments (69.64%) and followed closely by bank transfers (21.43%). The use of mobile money as a means of payment by employers is also becoming an option with 7.14% of respondents stating they received wages via mobile money transfers. The findings here are congruent with the assumption that majority of business owners lack the financial capacity to access formal financial services and hence pay

employees in cash. Study inferred there is an opportunity for business owners to use more of bank transfers and mobile money payments for an improved record of financial transactions.

During the intervention, majority of respondents had no access to bank accounts and the intervention intentionally encouraged apprentices to open mobile money accounts for the payment of $70 monthly stipends aimed at supporting transport. The assumption was that once they had access to mobile money accounts as a short-term measure, it provides apprentices the opportunity to understand the benefits of formal banking products and the long-term financial history that it creates. From Figure 10 below, findings show that few apprentices actively use bank accounts (37.8%) with majority actively using mobile money (89.8%). There is a strong likelihood that apprentices that actively use bank accounts also actively use mobile money (36.3%).

Figure 10: *Active Use of Bank Account*



Further analysis of the disaggregated data by counties showed interesting patterns. That the 89.8% of apprentices that actively use mobile money, that Bong had 95.2%, Montserrado 83.7%, and Buchanan had 90.7% mobile money users. A sizeable proportion of apprentices in the sample actively use bank accounts (Bong 26.2%, Montserrado 39.5%, and Buchanan 47.6%). *It is noteworthy however that more youth at Buchanan (54.8%) on average use both Mobile Money and Bank Account when contrasted to Montserrado (31.7%) and Bong (21.9%).*

Several studies that interviewed employers suggest soft and employability skills assist youth access employment (Rakesh, 2009). The introduction of Soft and Employability Skills (SEL) in the workplace enhances customer satisfaction and business performance (Remedios, 2012). Despite various studies on Soft and Employability Skills (SEL) as a panacea for business growth and job creation, gaps still exist regarding the extent strategic soft and employability skills can enable access to sustainable employment in predominantly informal economies.

Existing studies have come short in establishing connection between Soft and Employability Skills in Development Initiatives and related topics on work motivation, apprenticeship, welfare changes and CV submission. Soft and Employability Skills practices in the Development Sector of access to employment is still exploratory (Yao and Tuliano (2019). Development Practitioners need to embrace strategic and targeted Soft and Employability Skills Curriculums that scale employment opportunities.

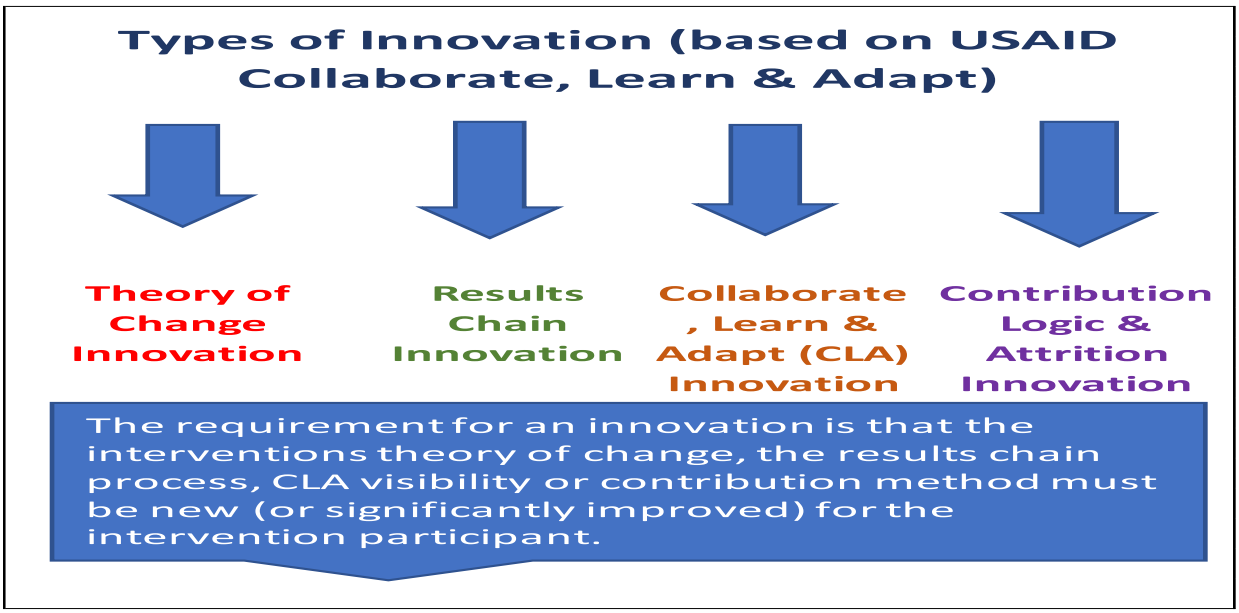
The purpose of this research is to evaluate the degree to which Work Motivation and Apprenticeship Knowledge can crystallise into better welfare and sustainable jobs in the Liberian employment sector. To investigate the key drivers in informal economies that enable youth access available jobs and alleviate poverty. To examine how work-readiness training, CV writing, on-the-job experience, and effective job application influences on youth access to employment in predominantly informal economies. The high-level research question is “To what extent can Work Motivation and Apprenticeship Knowledge enable Sustainable Jobs in the Liberian employment sector?

To explore the existing Work Motivation and Apprenticeship Knowledge capabilities of Liberian youth and evaluate the required WM and AK resources to achieve scaled access to jobs. Explain the inter-connections between the various components of WM and AK Curriculum

competencies and their impact on the effectiveness of development interventions. To establish the various factors that influence Development Practitioners towards adopting employment curriculums that are effective in enabling youth access jobs. To guide development practitioners with recommended skillsets that ensure employment curriculums impact knowledge and skills, it provides the right motivation and strategically reduces unemployment.

The study conceptualised the key terms of innovation and sustainability to explain USAID's Collaborate, Learn and Adapt (CLA). Innovation is discussed as the Advancement of a new concept not discovered in the past (Turulja and Bajgoric, 2016). The application of adaptive learning gained from collaborative efforts used to offer donors value for money through effective interventions with scale and depth for intervention participants. (Nur et al., 2016). While sustainability is discussed as a value creation strategy not implemented by any existing or future development agency, and when stakeholders are incapable of reproducing the gains of such strategy (Elijah and Millicent, 2018).

Figure 11: *Collaborate, Learn and Adapt Innovation*



Note: Authors Drawing, 2020.

The three theories for this study include: good theory, enterprise development needs and contribution theory. Good theory has concepts with a prediction property that a more unlikely event will happen with different unpredictable results. Good theory was devised in early 2000 (Wacker, 2008). Enterprise Development theory coined by Senarathne, in 2020. Contributions theory was advanced by Mayne J. in 2012. The below Table 33 conceptualises market development within the confines of development actors' contribution to employment.

Table 33: *Market Development and Employment Contribution*

Systematic and Intentional Practices	**Collaborating:** Are we collaborating with the right partners at the right time to promote synergy over stove-piping?	**Learning**: Are we asking the most important questions and finding answers that are relevant to decision making?	**Strategic Collaboration**

Improve Development Effectiveness	**Adapting:** Are we using the information that we gather through collaboration and learning activities to make better decisions and adjust as necessary?	**Enabling Conditions**: Are we working to create an organisational environment that supports collaborating, learning, and adapting efforts?	**Continuous Learning**

Note: Authors Collaborate, Learn and Adapt Design, 2020

This study's population is 108 retained apprentices while sample size is 85. A total of 701 apprentices (retained and not retained) completed three months apprenticeship placement between 2014 and 2017. At the end of the apprenticeship placement, 108 persons were retained to work at the businesses and 593 were not retained or employed. Sample were drawn from retained apprentices (employed) after the apprenticeship placement ended representing 85 persons or 79% of the 108 total population. The sample stratification used the distribution of retained apprentices in the three intervention counties broken down as 42% (Montserrado, 35), 29% (Bong, 25), 29% (Buchanan, 25). The research surveyed 85 people, and 3 people interviewed representing business owners, Ministry of Youth and INGOs.

Key Independent variables (IV) include: practice of soft skills training, work-readiness motivation (Blamey and Mackenzie, 2007). Key Dependent variable (DV) include apprentice wage trajectory as a function of continuous employment (Senarathne, 2020). Sustainability is the positive long-term result of an intervention on the welfare and livelihood of vulnerable persons (Michael et. al., 2017). Independent variables were tested with Cronbach's alpha, correlation coefficient, content, and discourse analysis. The ordinal scales 5 to 1 (5 = Highly Agree and 1 =

Highly Disagree) were used to measure the Likert scale IV data. The ratio scales in %s were used to measure the frequency of the independent variables data.

Study had three hypothetical statements discussed throughout the research. First hypothesis states: Soft Skills Practice (SSP) is positively related to Work-Readiness Motivation (WRM). The second hypothesis states: Wage trajectory is positively related to aspects of Employability Curriculum of SSP and WRM. The third hypothesis states: Wage trajectory is enhanced by Soft Skills Practice and Work-Readiness Motivation.

The research method for this study is the concurrent mixed research methods (Creswell et al., 2003). Both quantitative and qualitative were collected at the same stage and more weight given to quantitative. Concurrent transformative design are theoretically driven to initiate social change or advocacy. Contributions Analysis a combination of verified theory of change and influencing factors accounted for in before and after question design at one time point (Patton., 2008, Carvalho and White., 2004).

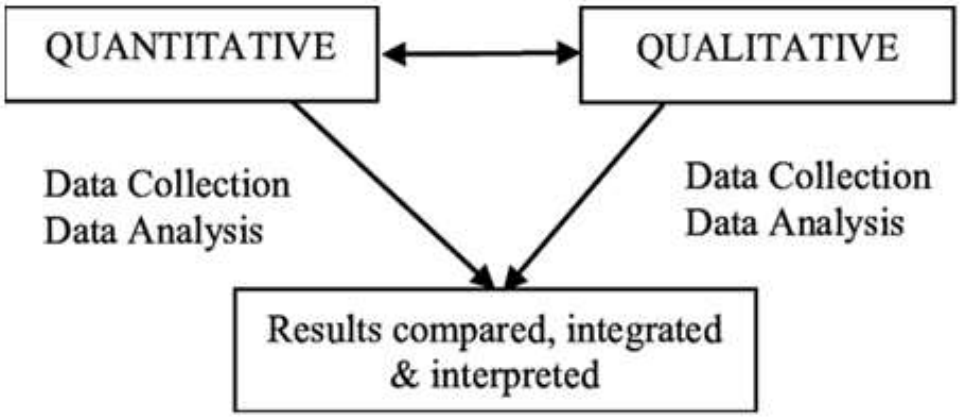
Figure 12: *Study Mixed Methods Design.*

Note: Authors Drawing, 2020

Data collection took place from July to August 2021 and lasted for 8 weeks. Paper questionnaires were used, and data entry templates designed on excel with variable labels and coded responses. Data collection was done in Monrovia, Gbarnga and Ganta towns of Liberia. Interviews were done at respondent homes and offices. Face to face survey and interviews lasted for about 20 to 30 minutes per participant. Interviews and survey focused on retained apprentices.

The main quantitative data analysis tool for this study is the SPSS. Cronbach's alpha and correlation calculations were performed as proofs of validity and reliability. The statistical techniques include frequencies, ratios, %s, etc. Quantitative data presentation was made on tables, charts and graphs. The qualitative data analysis techniques include content and discourse analysis. Qualitative data were presented on tables.

Figure 13: *Study Research Triangulation Approach*



Note: Authors Drawing, 2020

The study followed ethical procedures during the data collection stage. This study received UREC approval on 24th June 2021. This study has no risks. Anonymisation was used to secure the anonymity and confidentiality of participants' data. Participants' data have been stored electronically in databases and files. Eliciting information from some participants posed challenges

to the study. Participants' informed consent was used to mitigate challenges of people's reluctance to provide information.

Below findings show demographic data analysis by gender. Majority respondents are not University graduates. A good proportion completed secondary school education and others dropped out school.

Table 34: *Gender Disaggregation by Education Qualification*

Education by Gender	Female	Male	Grand Total
Completed elementary 6	1	2	3
Completed high school (12)	15	18	33
Completed trade/vocational school	1	2	3
Completed University	7	10	17
Did not complete elementary	1	1	2
Did not complete high school	2	2	4
Did not complete University	9	14	23
Grand Total	35	50	85

Table 35: *Gender Disaggregation by Age Groups*

Respondent Age Range	Female	Male	Grand Total
18-27	13	15	28
28-37	21	34	55
38-47	1	1	2
Grand Total	35	50	85

Very few respondents 17 (20%) completed university education. Substantial number of respondents 33 (39%) completed high school. Significantly more male than females completed high school, university and did not complete university. Majority respondents 55 (65%) were between age 28 and 37 and in their active working ages. Significantly more males than females are between age 28 and 37 and in their active working ages.

Below Table 36 measured the internal consistency of the research instrument, the scores show the absence of measurement error during data validation and eliminate the possibility of data redundancy.

Table 36: *Findings – Reliability Statistics*

Analysis of variance:					
Source	DF	Sum of squares	Mean squares	F	Pr > F
Between subjects	4	425746.700	106436.675	6.162	**0.006**
Within subjects	15	277808.500	18520.567		
Between measures	3	70538.800	23512.933	1.361	0.301
Residual	12	207269.700	17272.475		
Total	19	703555.200	37029.221		
Computed against model Y=Mean(Y)					

Table 37: *Cronbach's Alpha*

Cronbach's alpha statistics :	
Cronbach's alpha	Standardized Cronbach's Alpha
0.838	0.951

The overall Cronbach's alpha for all items is 0.838. This measures internal consistency of the research instrument, the scores show the absence of measurement error during data validation and eliminate the possibility of data redundancy.

Table 38: *Findings – Pearson Correlation Matrix*

Correlation matrix (Pearson):

Variables	Work Motivation	Soft Skills Practice	Attrition Support	Welfare Trajectory
Work Motivation	**1**	0.871	0.768	0.656
Soft Skills Practice	0.871	**1**	**0.916**	**0.926**
Attrition Support	0.768	**0.916**	**1**	0.842
Welfare Trajectory	0.656	**0.926**	0.842	**1**
Values in bold are different from 0 with a significance level alpha=0.05				

p-values (Pearson):				
Variables	Work Motivation	Soft Skills Practice	Attrition Support	Welfare Trajectory
Work Motivation	**0.000**	**0.054**	0.129	0.229
Soft Skills Practice	**0.054**	**0.000**	**0.029**	**0.024**
Attrition Support	0.129	**0.029**	**0.000**	0.074
Welfare Trajectory	0.229	**0.024**	0.074	**0.000**

Table 39: *Findings – Pearson Correlation Matrix*

Variables	Work Motivation	Soft Skills Practice	Attrition Support	Welfare Trajectory
Work Motivation	**1**	0.759	0.590	0.431
Soft Skills Practice	0.759	**1**	0.839	0.858
Attrition Support	0.590	0.839	**1**	0.709

Welfare Trajectory	0.431	0.858	0.709	**1**

Findings – Correlation Results Summary for tables 38 and 39 above

There is a strong positive correlation of +0.916 to +0.926 between the constructs. The p-value results show statistical significance from 0.01 to 0.05. The inter-item correlation results show matrices of correlations between variable items at a default confidence interval of 95%. The coefficient of determination result shows Soft Skills Practice (SSP) as independent variable is strongly correlated (0.858) with Wage Trajectory (WT) of the apprentice. The coefficient of determination result shows Work Motivation (WP) as independent variable has weak correlation (0.431) with Wage Trajectory of the apprentice. The coefficient of determination result shows Soft Skills Practice (SSP) as independent variable is strongly correlated (0.839) with Attrition Support (AS) of the apprentice. The coefficient of determination result shows Work Motivation (WP) as independent variable has moderate correlation (0.590) with Wage Trajectory of the apprentice. The results indicate statistical significance, and all the hypothetical constructs are acceptable based on the results.

Results of Findings including graphical illustrations.

Findings whether trained youth accessed employment opportunities.

To systematically identify and validate the possible influences that enable trained youths access available jobs, the study first investigates the research statement '*whether trained youth accessed employment opportunities.'*

Overview of apprentices that were placed with businesses on three months apprenticeship [28](N=85)

Table 40: *Distribution by Current Type of Employment*

2021 Employment Types	
Description	**Percent**
Not employed	**15.9**
Full time employment	**20.6**
Part-time employment	**20.6**
Seasonal employment	**2.4**
Self-employment	**40.5**
Total	**100**

This section starts with some data on the present characteristics of the 85 sampled apprentices, all of which were recipients of monthly subsidy of $70 during the apprenticeship placement. Aggregated findings showed 85% of apprentices are in full-time, part-time, seasonal or self-employment type of jobs. In wage paying job groupings, most apprentices are currently self-employed (40.5%), followed by 20.6% in full-time employment, and those in part-time employment at 20.6%. Of concern is the 15.9% of beneficiaries that report they are unemployed at the time of the survey (Table 40).

Next, the study closely examined the 85% of apprentices employed to learn whether access to jobs is due to soft and employability skills training and this revealed different patterns. First, we find that majority apprentices (59%) attribute their access to informal employment as a result of soft and employability training received (61% Bong, 47.06% Montserrado and 69% Buchanan, See Table 41 below).

[28] General sample size of 85 analysed in this section.

Table 41: *Contribution of Soft and Employability Training to Employment.*

Employed due to PROSPECTS	**Bong**	**Montserrado**	**Buchanan**
Formal employment	34.09%	52.94%	11.54%
Informal employment	61.36%	47.06%	69.23%
Formal and Informal	4.55%	0	19.23%

Sizeable population of apprentices at Bong (34.09%) and Buchanan (11.54%) also reason that access to formal employment is due to the soft and employability skills intervention. They were no apprentices located at Montserrado that suggested contributory effects from skills training towards employment in formal and informal sectors. Few apprentices (4.55%) at Bong were found to do a mix of both formal and informal jobs and attribute this to soft and employability skills training.

Extrapolated findings from Table 41 show a fair spread between formal, informal and a mix of both formal and informal types of employment in Buchanan which apprentices state PROSPECTS contributed to through soft and employability training. In contrast, findings from Montserrado and Bong show none and very few apprentices state they accessed a mixture of both formal and informal jobs because of PROSPECTS soft and employability training. For Montserrado and Bong, it is either formal or informal that PROSPECTS contributed towards access to jobs while Buchanan had apprentices employed in the three classifications of employment types (formal, informal, formal and informal) state PROSPECTS soft and employability trainings contributed to their access to employment.

Findings about informed decisions youth take to successfully access employment.

1. **What is the interaction between actions taken by youth to access employment and how the constraint of unemployment is overcome?**

Are PROSPECTS youth beneficiaries[29] financially responsible for dependents and vulnerable?

This section looks at socio-economic status of the apprentices through observation of apprentices financially responsible for self and dependents. This to understand the overall level of welfare of households whose youths participated in the PROSPECTS apprenticeship program. First respondents asked whether they are financially responsible for dependents, and this used to explain the assets-based measure of poverty administered.

First, findings show many PROSPECTS beneficiaries (78.9%) are financially responsible for dependents. Of note that the beneficiaries were apprentices placed with micro business and the ages varied between 18 and 35 years. *Interestingly findings show an apparent contribution of 13.3% for more apprentices that suggest prior to PROSPECTS, 65.6% were responsible for dependents and now 78.9% are responsible for dependents.* The apprentices were termed as youths due to the peculiar nature of Liberia just recovering from a thirteen-year civil war and Ebola, with a predominantly youth population.

To what degree has PROSPECTS Intervention facilitated access to jobs?

This section looks at how effective the contribution of PROSPECTS 2 intervention has been for the apprentices placed with businesses in the past. The section studies whether PROSPECTS were able to help more youth access jobs. Perhaps retention rate for apprentices retained after the

[29] General sample size of 85 studied in this section.

apprenticeship placement stayed the same or there were an increased number of apprentices currently in paid employment.

Table 42: *Wages and Expenses of Apprentices Working for Apprenticeship Businesses, Other Businesses and those Self-employed (USD)*

Wage Changes/Expenses at Apprenticeship Businesses	**Bong**	**Montserrado**	**Buchanan**
Mean wage earned a month after retained at apprenticeship business	$30	$93	$53
Mean monthly wage earned currently at apprenticeship business	$37	$174	$88
Mean monthly wage for self-employed beneficiaries	$46	$166	$83
Mean Total Expenses Monthly for all beneficiaries	$45	$62	$69

To start with, study looks at the relative wage changes after PROSPECTS 2 ended across the whole sample. From table 42, we deduce likelihood that positive wage increase is a function of continuous employment experience.[30] To support the contribution evidence, the study quantifies vulnerability among the apprentices, and the quintile analysis index showed that majority of youths are mainly from vulnerable groups, with 91% classified as poor, 9% near poor and none in the analysis termed as non-poor.

[30] Issues of self-selection bias assuming all apprentices were motivated youths that could have achieved increased wages over a sustained employment period. To be further studied in the next complementary qualitative research to provide context.

The study asks youths to rate their ability to pay for personal needs now compared to before PROSPECTS and findings show an apparent contributory difference in perception about better welfare, and this pattern shows across Bong, Montserrado and Buchanan.

Table 43: *% Distribution of Ability to Pay for Personal Needs Now Compared to Before Intervention.*

Rate ability to pay personal needs	**Bong**	**Montserrado**	**Buchanan**
Much stronger	36.6*	20.0*	34.2*
Somewhat stronger	53.7*	55.0*	28.9*
About the same	7.3	17.5	15.8
Weaker	2.4	7.5	21.1

On average over 63% of apprentices that completed apprenticeship placement posit they can pay for personal needs with a rating of much stronger and somewhat stronger (Table 43 with cells highlighted). *In line with intervention theory of change, beneficiaries in Bong, Montserrado and Buchanan show high confidence levels in their ability to pay for personal needs and agree PROSPECTS contributed to this positive gain.*

Description of where sample (n=85) of retained apprentices currently work

This section provides detail on whether retained apprentices still work for the businesses where apprenticeship placement took place and whether they moved on to work elsewhere. Discusses what has changed for the retained apprentices' regards income and general welfare. Findings show a sizeable proportion of the retained apprentices (40.91% of retained apprentices) were still employed at the apprenticeship businesses the three months work placement took place. In addition, findings show 59.09% of retained apprentices moved on to work elsewhere after the

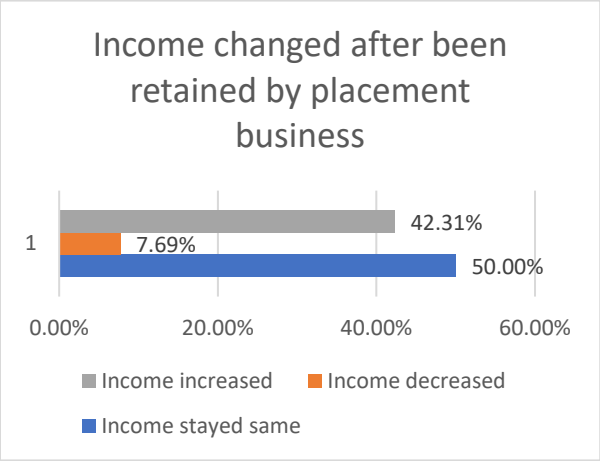
apprenticeship placement ended with PROSPECTS. Study found that 13.08% of all the 85 apprentices that completed the apprenticeship placement still work for the same apprenticeship placement business years after the soft and employability training ended.

Qualitative patterns identified from responses infer apprentices moved on to search for higher wage paying jobs and a few suggest low productivity relative to staff size contributed to their search for alternative employment. Further to above findings, findings show that some (24%) apprenticeship businesses did hire more apprentices after PROSPECTS intervention ended and the new apprentices financially supported by business owners with stipends. These quantitative findings would need further validation since this finding is from employees and we are yet to cross validate this with the actual employers.

Majority of the apprenticeship businesses (76%) did not hire more apprentices after the PROSPECTS intervention ended. Qualitative reasons given by beneficiary apprentices were that the businesses did not have capacity to employ more apprentices due to the small business sizes. For this inquiry, the study intended to validate PROSPECTS activity to ***check for copying effect*** by businesses and we find an indication of that from the findings of 24% of employers actually replicating PROSPECTS activity of hiring apprentices without PROSPECTS facilitation.

Consistent with what we have known for some time regarding the higher chances of getting a job at Montserrado and Buchanan due to larger companies sited in both counties in comparison to other Liberian counties like Bong with less employment opportunities. The findings reveal higher %s of apprentices in paid employment in Montserrado at 45.45% and Buchanan at 66.67% when compared to Bong's 11.4% of apprentices employed after the apprenticeship placement ended.

Figure 14: *Income Changes for Retained Apprentices by Placement Business.*



It is remarkable that only 42.31% of retained apprentices in Figure 14 assert that income increased after PROSPECTS apprenticeship placement ended. Half of the retained apprentices (50.00%) agreed their income stayed the same relatively after employment. Very few retained apprentices (7.69%) report income decreased after been retained as an employee by the apprenticeship placement business.

Contributions Analysis of PROSPECTS to Wage Increments through Soft Skills Training and Skills Gained from Apprenticeship Placement

Later in the analysis of questionnaire, the study weighted wages against the sample and averaged the wages by counties for apprentices that discussed their current wages at the present place of employment. Responses to the question of wage amount earned now was compared to wages earned in the first month of employment.

Table 44: *Wage Comparison with Expenses across Counties*

Wage/Expenses	Montserrado	Buchanan	Gbarnga
Wage at apprenticeship business (2014-2017)	$93	$53	$30
Wage currently at apprenticeship business (2018)	$174	$88	37
Wage for self-employed participants (2018)	$166	$83	$46
Expenses monthly for participants	$62	$69	$45

Findings reveal apprentice wages increased positively after working for a sustained period with an employer (Table 44). The weighted averages show employed apprentices across the three counties studied in the survey earned $86 monthly, with a positive increment of $54 in monthly wages between end of PROSPECTS intervention to date. Study deduces likelihood that positive wage increase is a function of continuous employment experience. Far less disparity from the mean for Montserrado with self-employed participants earning far better. Issues of self-selection bias assuming all apprentices were motivated youths that could have achieved increased wages over a sustained employment period. To be further studied in the next complementary qualitative research to provide context.

The study learns the most important soft skills factor for pursuing a career path for apprentices is the career planning training and followed closely by the work readiness training. In terms of ranking, apprenticeship placement beneficiaries rank career-planning (choice of work) highest at 47.50% as key contributory variable towards pursuing a career path. The second highest ranking is work readiness at 36.30% as a key contributor to pursuing a career. Other minor contributors mentioned by placement beneficiaries were effective job application at 15.00% and very few youths 1.30% do not remember any of the PROSPECTS soft skills training. Therefore, PROSPECTS apparently contributes towards knowledge retention on the three thematic curriculum areas that the employment and entrepreneurship work stream intervene in for youths. The three thematic areas found to contribute to soft skills practice are Career planning, Effective Job Application and Work Readiness Trainings. *The data establishes that 98% of PROSPECTS apprentices self-report soft skills training as contributing to their pursuit of a career.*

The study asks apprentices whether PROSPECTS trainings really helped towards their job application efforts, 44.72% of beneficiaries report *knowledge from soft skills training really helped*

them apply for a job. Apprentices rank skills gotten from the apprenticeship placement second at 41.61% as a contributor towards making job applications after the business placement. Minor contributors towards applying for jobs by the apprentices were their literacy and numeracy skills (11.18%). Personal experience also contributed to a few actions taken by 2.48% of youth beneficiaries towards applying for a job after the apprenticeship placement.

2. What are the recommended knowledge and skills, motivation, and organisational solutions that lessen the effects of unemployment?

Training curricula modules mostly valued by apprentices as contributory factors to accessing the job market.

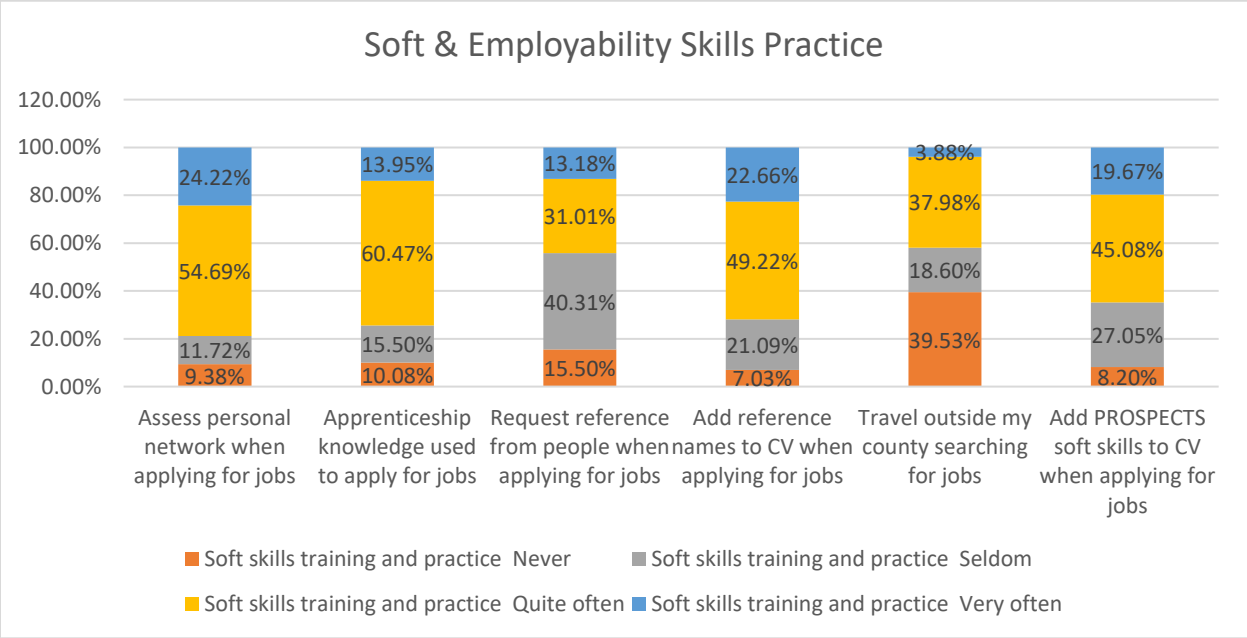
A striking discovery on apparent contributory effects show most beneficiaries (60.47%) quite often practiced knowledge gained from the PROSPECTS apprenticeship placement, and most apprentices reached out to personal networks to discuss job opportunities. *Encouragingly, 44% of apprentices add reference names to CV when applying for jobs, so it appears the trainings are proving successful towards sustained life skills practices in relation to youth behaviour and towards access*[31] *to jobs*. A good proportion of apprentices (19.67%) very often added the PROSPECTS soft skills training experience to their CVs when applying for jobs, and this used to triangulate how apprentices valued the training services long after the intervention ended.

Further triangulation of the questions on the general application of the soft skills training by the apprentices; particularly responses to questions on 'very often' and 'quite often', *shows lowest*

[31] Access for the study is ability to prepare a CV, apply for a job, with an increased chance of securing jobs, with an emphasis on soft skills knowledge applied by beneficiary youths.

practices by apprentices were travelling outside the county to search for jobs (41.86%). Almost 40% of apprentices report they have never travelled outside their county to search for jobs. These are expected results and imply there are constraints that impede on youths accessing available jobs *and that Internet availability could ameliorate this identified challenge*[32]. This suggestion could go into an amended theory of change that promotes sustainability in the design of future employment programs in contexts like Liberia.

Figure 15: *% Distribution of Apprentices Reporting Practice of Knowledge from Soft Skills Training.*

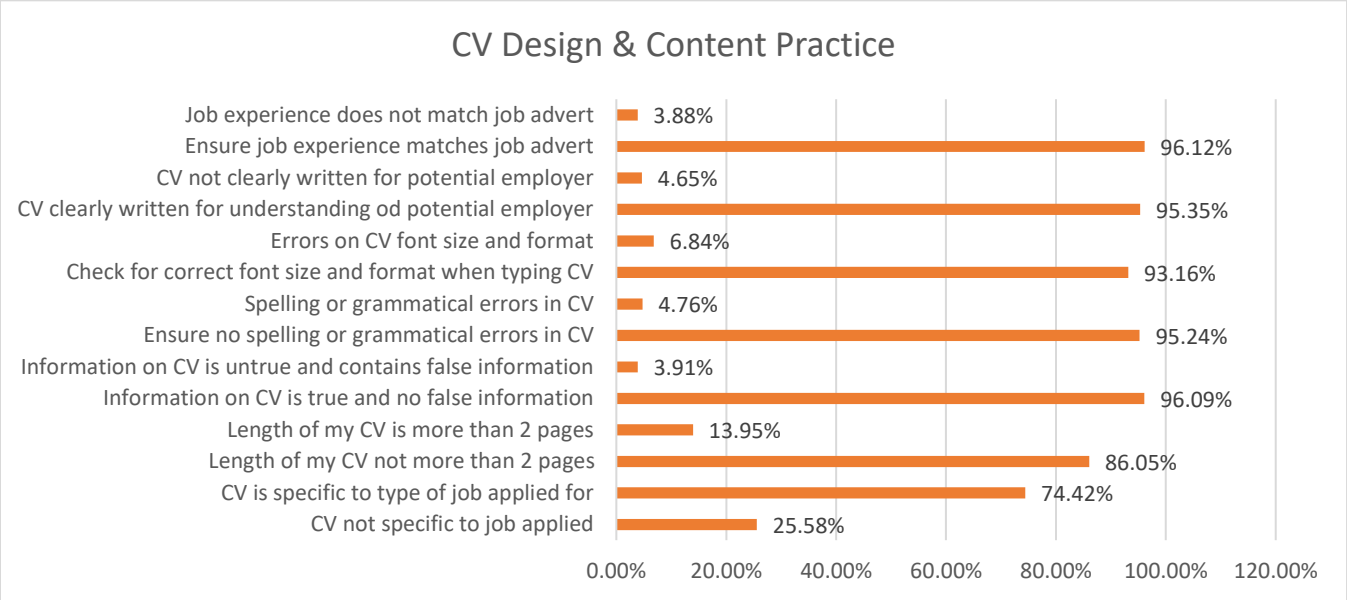


Later in the survey, the responses on soft skills practice were triangulated by asking more affirmatively if apprentices paid attention to detail in the preparation of CVs using multiple answer responses. The primary focus for the evaluation was how apprentices sustained the practice of CV design and CV content towards employment.

[32] Access to the internet is scarce with low literacy levels in the Counties intervention took place.

In Figure 16 below, while over four-fifths reported that they ensure job experience matches job advert, just less than this, 74.42% reported CV is specific to type of job applied. A significant proportion of apprentices' report ensuring CV is clearly written (95.35%), that they check for correct font size and format when typing CVs (93.16%), ensure no spelling or grammatical errors on CV (95.24%) and information on CV is true and no false information (96.09%). *Very few apprentices report job experience does not match job advert (3.88%), a minority also report CV not clearly written for potential employer (4.65%), a few others mention errors on CV font size and format (6.84%), and spelling or grammatical errors in CV (4.76%).*

Figure 16: *% of Apprentices that Practice of Clear CV Writing Design and Accurate Content*



Evidence above shows positive behavioural changes by apprentices through the practice of knowledge learnt from the PROSPECTS Employment and Entrepreneurship (E&E) trainings, further triangulation from table below reveals apparent contribution for over 60% of apprentices that strongly rate (much and *somewhat stronger) their ability to pay for personal needs higher when compared to before PROSPECTS.*

Table 45: *% Ratings of Ability to Pay Personal Needs Compared to Before PROSPECTS*

Rate ability to pay Personal Needs compared to before PROSPECTS	**Bong**	**Montserrat**	**Buchanan**
Much stronger	36.6	20.0	34.2
Somewhat stronger	53.7	55.0	28.9
About the same	7.3	17.5	15.8
Weaker	2.4	7.5	21.1

This indicates that apprentices trained on how to access available jobs are much more likely to be self-reliant financially. However, the two factors that might have been at play are either most apprentices applied for jobs with better resumes, or they may have used job experience gained from the apprenticeship placement. It is not possible to say these factors may have influenced directly better welfare, but we can allude they are contributory factors based on patterns observed from the analysis. The experience from the apprenticeship placement could also contribute to better negotiation skills that lead to financial self-reliance.

Soft and Employability Skills Contribution to Welfare Changes of Beneficiaries [33](N=85)

Table 46: *Perceptions about Interventions Contribution to Employment.*

	Percent	Cumulative Percent

[33] We analyse the general sample of 85 for apprentice behaviours that Prospects intervention contributed to and have resulted to outcomes and impact depicted in the Prospects theory of change.

Informally employed due to PROSPECTS intervention	14.14%	14.14%
Informal employment not due to PROSPECTS intervention	12.12%	26.26%
Formally employed due to PROSPECTS intervention	20.20%	46.46%
Formal and informally employed due to PROSPECTS intervention	4.04%	50.51%
Unemployed and contribution not applicable	49.49%	100.00%
Total	100.00%	

For employed apprentices across the sample, questions asked whether PROSPECTS intervention contributed to their employment directly. Encouragingly, half of beneficiaries (50.51%) suggest their current employment is due to job trainings and apprenticeship placement experience from PROSPECTS. Some steps in the theory of change were achieved to a considerable extent given the sizeable population of apprentices that stated the apprenticeship placement assisted access to available jobs.

Table 47: *Changes in Welfare - Now Compared to Before Intervention*

	Percent	**Cumulative Percent**
Much better welfare now compared to before apprenticeship	30.00%	30.00%
Somewhat better welfare now compared to before apprenticeship	45.83%	75.83%

About the same welfare now compared to before apprenticeship	13.33%	89.17%
Much weaker welfare now compared to before apprenticeship	10.83%	100.00%
Aggregate	100.00%	

Further to above findings about PROSPECTS contribution to formal and informal employment access to apprentices, 75.83% of apprenticeship beneficiaries report somewhat and much better welfare currently compared to before PROSPECTS apprenticeship placement. This also shows there is an apparent contribution effect on the welfare of beneficiaries due to PROSPECTS trainings and apprenticeship placement.

To capture differences in the soft skills practice and behaviours of PROSPECTS 2 beneficiaries, study assumes effects from other donor or government interventions from the time of initial intervention to date. Study therefore asks apprentices questions whether they received external support on employment initiatives, during and after the PROSPECTS intervention. Generally, a substantial proportion (83.46%) of apprentices received no assistance with soft skills training on employment and entrepreneurship from other organisations prior to PROSPECTS intervention. This is consistent with knowledge about the labour market in Counties fraught with information asymmetry for demand and supply of labour for informal employment. The information and communications process that enable access to job opportunities depends on the availability of employment trainings, career advice, apprenticeship positions that provide job experiences for entry-level youths, and start-up grants for youths intending to create self-employment.

Further disaggregation of apprentices that received external assistance[34] from other organisations across sample counties show Buchanan received the least assistance (8.11%), with Bong getting the most support at 23.8%. The study deduces that apart from PROSPECTS, there minor or no external support systems in place to support youth with soft and employability trainings at Montserrado, Buchanan and Bong counties in Liberia. One of the positive behavioural changes PROSPECTS expects to see with apprentices about sustained livelihoods is the ability to do multiple jobs and earn a livelihood, and due to the informal employment nature of the communities where the interventions took place. Encouraging findings from the analysis show 12.93% of the apprentices' actual do multiple jobs and paid for such jobs.

Remarkably, further triangulation to establish the contributions of PROSPECTS to apprentices doing multiple paid jobs reveal 47.40% started doing multiple jobs after the apprenticeship placement ended. Interestingly, 47.40% of the 12.93% doing multiple jobs reported this activity started after the apprenticeship placement. *Therefore, cross tabulation of findings shows reasonable contribution effects of 13% for apprentices that started multiple paid jobs after the apprenticeship placement ended as due to PROSPECTS intervention.* Doing multiple jobs for PROSPECTS is a positive development due to the informal nature of most available jobs in Liberia, prevalence of low wages and the almost zero availability of employment social services. Beneficiary apprentices are actively encouraged during training to have multiple sources of income, which protect households from high and unpredictable variability of income flows. *Qualitative findings for those doing multiple jobs show while some work part-time for business owners, they also co-own a family farm, and do contract jobs like carpentry that is a skilled*

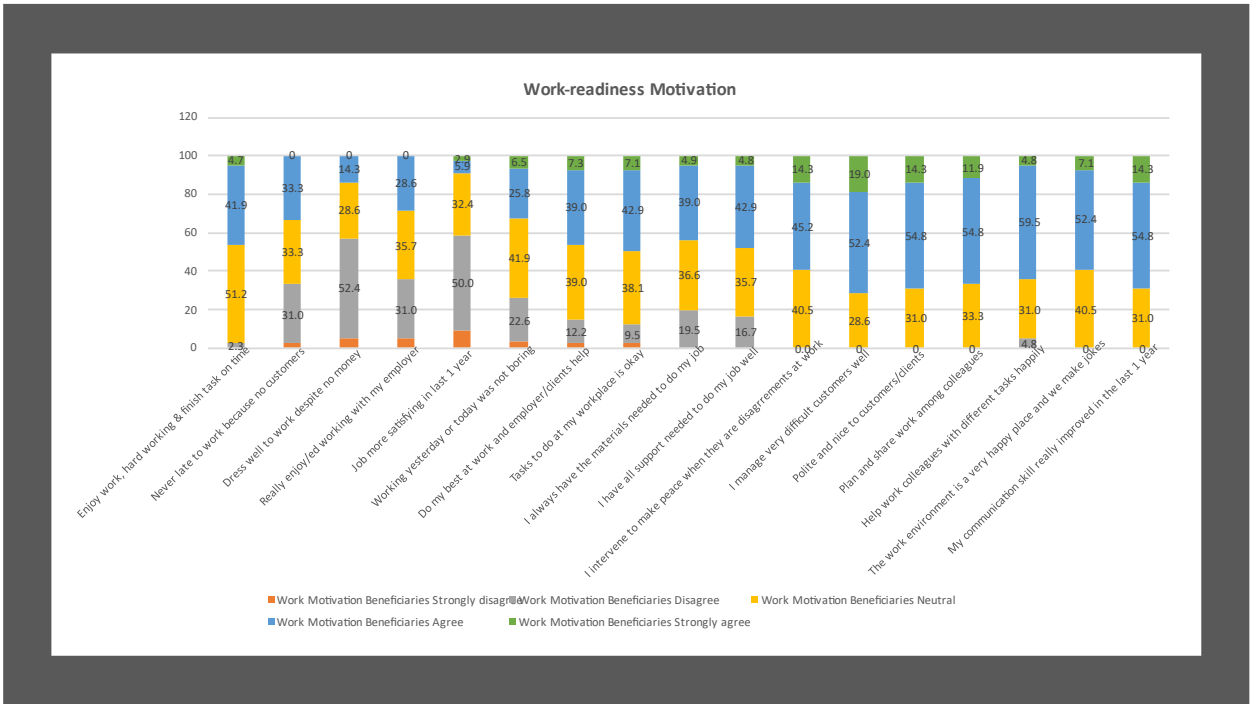
[34] External assistance refers to other organizations that supported apprentices with employment trainings and access to job opportunities.

profession. These survival techniques elicited from the research is an area employment programs need to include formally as part of the life skills curriculum.

A good proportion of apprentices (48.96%) report strongly remembering work readiness training from PROSPECTS trainers. Approaching a quarter remember Curriculum Vitae writing skills (22.41%) while 26.56% recall Business Skills training. Recall of the different trainings received provide an indication of skills sustainability with the assumption that when apprentices recall, and practice topics learnt, this increases the likelihood of accessing available jobs. Towards "prove and improving" PROSPECTS contribution claims espoused by the theory of change, triangulated findings show apprentices not only remember soft skills learnt, but also practice them towards accessing employment opportunities. Cumulative totals reveal almost all (except for 2.07%) of apprentices remembered topics taught during PROSPECTS soft skills training at Youth Opportunity Centres.

Opinions differ as to apprentices with high motivation to work compared to those with a lower motivation to work (See Figure 17 below). For apprentices that reported lower motivation to work, nine out of the seventeen indicators showed indifference toward work attitude. For the remaining eight indicators, they report high motivation to work with businesses in their localities. The aspects enjoyed by apprentices are that "task at the workplace is fair", "collaborate with colleagues well", "enjoy customer service", and "work environment a happy place" and that "communication skills improved" in the last year. The demotivating aspects mentioned by apprentices were "finishing task on time (hard work)", "punctuality to work", "proper dressing at work", "happiness with employer", "job satisfaction", "work appreciation by employer" and "required tools to perform work tasks well".

Figure 17: *% Distribution of Apprentices' Work Motivation*



Curriculum Vitae sharing practice is a behaviour PROSPECTS expects to see beneficiary youths inculcating in their pursuit of stable employment. Interestingly, 37.50% of apprentices shared their CVs recently with potential employers and 23.65% have shared several CVs with different employers. In contrast, 35.47% report they shared CVs prior to participation in the apprenticeship placement with PROSPECTS. *Therefore, we extrapolate there is little, or no contribution observed for beneficiary apprentices sharing of CVs because of PROSPECTS intervention.*

Study shows a substantial proportion of apprentices (86.05%) report not receiving trainings on safe work environment. Apprentices require additional training module regards knowledge about a safe work environment. To expand on the above findings that most apprentices did not receive training on safe work environment, the study digs further to understand to situation apprentices' face at work. Findings show majority of apprentices (above 86%) under the

PROSPECTS program not exposed to dangerous work environment, with very few reporting exposures at Montserrado (13.95%) and Buchanan (11.90%).

Qualitative Findings

A coding framework based on the interview questions was developed and data collected from desk review, interviews were coded and analysed. The coded data was then categorised, and the categories were determined by the codes. This coding framework helped to ensure consistency across the research by providing greater reliability of results. Five Key Informant Interviews (KII) were conducted and involved one donor, one PROSPECTS staff, one Government Youth Opportunity Centre (YOC) coordinator, and two host businesses. In addition, desk review of program documents (baseline and midline evaluation) was done for different qualitative perspectives. Findings from the qualitative transcription were categorised and summarised in the below data summary table.

Table 48: *Categorised Qualitative Findings from Transcription.*

Questions	Total Response	Positive Response	Reasons for Response
How do stakeholders participate in the planning processes of soft skills interventions?	5	4	They asserted that youth were not asked what training they wanted but the Youth Opportunity Centre presented them with a list of training topics.
Describe the challenges faced regarding the training of youth?	5	4	Generally, respondents said inadequate stipends for training, far distance from home to placement business, and literacy challenge for females.

What are the outcomes of the apprenticeship work placement?	5	3	Reports of confidence building, self-esteem building, financial independence, and copying effects of the trainings at community level.
What skillsets do apprentices have?	5	4	Host businesses said apprentices have good customer service skills and a few have a bad attitude at work.
Describe the needed improvements to soft skill trainings offered?	5	4	Suggestions of need for trade-specific skills and the short soft skills trainings not sufficient to find sustainable jobs.
Relevance of the apprenticeship trainings?	5	3	That grants can be used to provide businesses with equipment that support apprentices receive trade-specific skills training.
Did apprenticeship help overcome employment issues?	5	4	Varying responses about sustainable jobs. Issues were small businesses unable to sustain employment of apprentices without further support from CBOs and NGOs.
How adequate is the apprenticeship placement of three months?	5	5	The five respondents agreed that the three months placement is short and rigid. There is need for longer and flexible placement periods that cater for students and mothers.
Any operational issues with the apprenticeship trainings and apprenticeships?	5	2	Delayed training and grant payment, businesses not supporting apprentices with
How sustainable is the soft skills training and apprenticeship placements beyond PROSPECTS?	5	3	Need to improve the capacity of Government Youth Centre staff to continue soft and employability trainings in the future.

Some of the interesting qualitative quotes that resonate about the research are captured in the below summary.

Table 49: *Identified Qualitative Patterns.*

Categories	**Type**	**N**	**%**	**Sample Comments** and **Responses**

Soft Skills Practice	Overall Positive:	4	80%	"Youth were interested in entrepreneurship and not just getting a job and intervention provided financial management training."
	Overall Negative:	1	20%	"We did not ask youth what training they wanted rather provided them with a list of training topics on offer."
Work Motivation	Overall Positive:	3	60%	"I believe the program is about building self-esteem and confidence, and now confident about getting a job anywhere."
	Overall Negative	2	40%	"Some apprentices need behaviour training as they showed bad attitude towards each other and customers."
Attrition Support	Overall Positive:	4	80%	"We had former apprentices receive hard skills training from TVETs and other INGOs, with some saying previous training and work placement helped them realise the importance of building skillsets."
	Overall Negative	1	20%	"I found the trainings provided too short and apprentices were without adequate skills to get a job."
Wage Trajectory and	Overall Positive:	3	60%	"Many apprentices now own businesses and host apprentices.”

Employability Curriculum	Overall Negative	2	40%	"Some businesses could not retain apprentices after the placement because they could not afford to pay them."
Wage Trajectory and Intervention Strategy	Overall Positive:	4	80%	"The apprentices had customer service skills that improved how they talked with customers and contributed to improved sales."
	Overall Negative:	1	20%	"There is a lack of participation of stakeholders in planning processes for apprenticeship trainings. Pre-existing skills needed when shortlisting apprentices for trainings and business development programs."

The general qualitative findings are listed below using bullet points.

- Regarding participation of stakeholders in the planning processes of the soft and employability skills intervention, youth were not asked what training they wanted but the Youth Opportunity Centre presented them with a list of training topics. The needs assessment report showed youth were interested in entrepreneurship and not just getting a job. Baseline report highlighted more than 50% of business owners had no financial management training.
- Youths complained of financial hardship and felt the $70 monthly stipends needs to improve for future apprentices and complained they travelled far for the apprenticeship placements. The donor suggests girls face literacy challenge completing application forms for apprenticeship, trainings and entrepreneurship support. That this results in more participation of males than females in the soft and employability skills trainings.

- Youth and donor suggest the intervention focused more on urban than rural areas. They state radio broadcasts about the program reached those in rural communities, but more effort was needed to recruit females from rural areas and on the street. General feeling people with disabilities were not specifically targeted and one apprentice was disabled.
- Apprentices say the selection process for placement is competitive due to the requirement for specific job experience to apply. An example is auto electrical skills and the suggestion that Youth Opportunity Centres (YOCs) provide youth placements that require pre-existing skills and education.
- An outcome of the work placement is apprentices reporting they can support family and financially independent. Youth report peers at local church were trained and knowledge helped them become useful and accessible to community. While the donor believes program is about building self-esteem and confidence, youth also report they gained confidence, and they can get a job anywhere. Youth believe the following learned topics helped them better prepare for a job, CV writing, record keeping, customer service and time management. Youth reported training expanded their existing knowledge about business plan and marketing, and this was especially the case for apprentices that turned into entrepreneurs.
- Hosts believe the apprentices come with good skills, particularly customer service. That employees at host organisations copy the trained apprentices and follow their customer service skills. However, one business host suggested that youth need behaviour training as they come with a bad attitude towards each other and customers.
- Some improvements for trainings were outlined as follows: a) that trainings need to be tailored to support specific trades and soft skills extended to younger teenagers 15 to 18 years of age; b) also some mentioned that trainings are too short, and they do not have the skills to get a job.

- Host businesses see apprenticeships as a good thing for themselves and appreciate that apprentices are trained before placement. They also believe PROSPECTS trained apprentices are better trained than other students on placement. Hosts believe PROSPECTS should help them improve their businesses (either with grants or equipment) to better support the youth. That youth need specialised training to support youth lack of work experience.
- Hosts say previous PROSPECTS apprentices now own businesses and host apprentices. They also state some apprentices not employed due to no employment vacancy. Smaller businesses don't have capacity to pay apprentices and hosts suggest PROSPECTS engage more of the local based institutions, CBOs, and NGOs to support the apprenticeship program.
- Apprentices said they were checked regularly by project officers, asked how they are doing, any weaknesses, if working relationships with hosts are good and attendance during placement checked. That timesheets are used by hosts to monitor attendance and interactions between project officers and business owners will help influence the government. Of note is the mention by host that project officers did not communicate feedback from monitoring visits with them and focused more on whether apprentices received the monthly stipends.
- *Lack of participation of stakeholders in planning processes.* Youth not asked what training they wanted but presented with a list of options. Youth not asked what they needed to start up or expand a business. Staff found through a needs assessment that youth were interested in entrepreneurship and not just getting a job. Apprentices say a form asked them about the kind of help they needed.
- *Various opinions about the inclusion of vulnerable groups.* Youths faced financial burden (difficult for low-income groups). Youth believe stipend needs to improve, difficult for young people to access training/apprentices – apprentices feel they travel far. Rural/Urban focus – Youth and donor focus on urban areas/lack of focus on rural – donor received this as feedback. Others say

radio broadcasting meant rural communities were targeted. No effort was made to recruit females from rural areas. Youth recommend that they should target young people on the street and the rural areas and to other areas. Disabled - Apprentices – do not feel people with disabilities were included. Need for pre-existing skills/education - Apprentices said it was competitive, sometimes needed specific skills to apply e.g., auto electrical skills. Donor believes that program doesn't only target vulnerable people, some have university degree on apprenticeship program. Challenge of reaching out to vulnerable people.

- Unexpected and additional outcomes. Youth gain respect from family and community – able to undergo training for peers at local church - training makes youth useful and accessible to community. Youth said, 'at the end of the day you can be able to support your family from that business you are making, so that's one of the greatest things we ever achieve from Mercy Corp' 'it made me an independent person'. Apprentices can support family and shift their budget line. Apprentices and YIF grantees able to pay family members' school fees. One youth said they were empowered to form an organisation. 'I sat for this training I went home and thought it wise to form an organisation called Youth Educative Matter...We have been preaching lot of educative things around here on Hot FM and to the Red Cross of recent we hosted a workshop of over 40 persons, and I was one of the speakers for that workshop.
- Heightened confidence because of training. Youth feel they have gained confidence and feel they can get a job anywhere. Apprentices also said it helped their confidence. Youth believe training taught them time management. Multiple mention benefits of CV writing and record keeping. Youth believe they are better prepared for job and because of the training they know how to improve their lives. Youth centre coordinators believe it trains youth on how to undertake job

application process. Apprentices said that they now know about things about businesses and jobs that they didn't learn in high school.

- Customer service skills was mostly seen to be a significant advantage of the training. Youth said training was useful for understanding how to deal with customers and how to talk to them to improve sales. Greater involvement of hosts/youth centre/other stakeholders in training needed. Youth centre coordinators feel they need a new TOR/MOU with PROSPECTS staff, as they see youth coming for training but don't know how to monitor. Youth centre coordinators say there needs to be a training of trainers' program, as people who are still at school can't attend – youth from various schools get the training and pass it on.
- Some improvements for trainings were outlined. Apprentices said training was too short. Trainees wanted to learn specific trade: they suggested PROSPECTS should open a vocational school for people to learn different ideas or trades. Bring skills training like catering as this is needed for many jobs. Some say they do not have the skills needed to get a job. Youth think training needs to be extended to younger children.
- Mixed outcomes of gender training. Youth learnt that women should dress appropriately to not entice men. Women taught how to deal with bosses. Staff said they have recently altered life skills, so men/women are separate as women answer a lot less questions when men are there. Youth said there was no specific training provided on GBV topics, but that trainers gave little advice and words of encouragement about sexual harassment.
- Host businesses said they benefit from having apprentices, particularly from training PROSPECTS give. Hosts see apprenticeships as a good thing for themselves. Apprentices say they passed on customer service skills to staff. Hosts appreciate that apprentices are trained before coming, big gap between the apprentices that came from schools and PROSPECTS In other words that

PROSPECTS apprentices are better trained. Hosts require more support from PROSPECTS, including further training of apprentices before undertaking placement. Hosts believe PROSPECTS should help them improve their businesses (either with grants or equipment) to better support the youth. Hosts feel there needs to be specialised training for nurses or just generally other specialised training. Hosts say apprentices had some skills, but they needed a 'top-up'. Hosts had issues with them not understanding the role due to lack of experience.

- Youth feel they benefit from apprenticeships. Apprentices believe it was right approach. Some feel they are more able to get jobs now. Now applying for jobs apprentices feel confidence. Apprentices believe it helps them become recognised in community can help you to get recommended for a job. Hosts also provided youth some training. Apprentices felt they learnt a lot on program e.g., new practical skills. Others say they did not benefit from apprenticeships. Youth felt they would have benefitted from being asked what training they needed – one participant would have benefited from training in video recording and editing. Apprentice faces challenge of language barrier at placement.
- Varying opinions about if apprenticeship helped overcome employment issues. Staff believe apprenticeships dealt with employment issues, as after 3 months many of them were retained. Hosts say previous PROSPECTS apprentices now own businesses and host apprentices. Hosts say some apprenticeships are not staying on at end as no space. Number they are sending is too many for space they have. Smaller businesses don't have capacity to pay them after apprenticeship... hosts believe that PROSPECTS should engage more of the local based institutions, CBOs, NGOs etc. to support them. They don't have the money to keep them on as paid employees – government come round to check after a few months to see if they are employed

because of tax law. Donor has heard success stories of apprenticeship moving to being a full store manager. Apprentices didn't gain employment afterwards as not enough space.

- Apprenticeships are too short, need to be longer than 3 months. Hosts believe the placement period is short and it should be extended, so they can grasp something. Apprentices believe placement period is too short. TVETs felt 3 months for apprenticeship was too short – speaking on behalf of youth. Apprentices' attendance sometimes dropped due to other commitments. Hosts reported one woman skipping days/not showing up. Hosts say female apprentices didn't turn up as they had to look after the children or cook for their husband, one of their husbands had issue with his wife doing nights. Hosts allowed various working hours for women so they could work around other responsibilities. Hosts said people stopped attending because they had to go to school. Or they leave to go to classes, after saying they were no longer in school.
- There were some operational issues with the apprenticeships, which the youths found frustrating. Apprentices said that some get stipend from business, others don't, and this is impacting retention. Apprentices not received certificates and not received them for training. Apprentices say there was delays in transportation reimbursement and some delay in implementation of training. Apprentices had difficulties with bosses, not understanding their skills/knowledge and tensions over being late. Apprentice registered for training but didn't get a call.
- Monitoring of youths on day-to-day basis (e.g., project officers going to check up on young people): Apprentices said they were checked regularly - ask how we are doing, any weaknesses, if working relationships are good etc. Apprentices said their boss also monitored them too, e.g., through use of time sheets. Apprentices say PROSPECTS staff also check on host businesses. Staff confirmed this and said it is helpful for influencing the government. Hosts say they come and visit the apprentices and ask you questions, suggest they need to communicate

possible improvements to businesses. Others said they didn't communicate/give feedback. Hosts said that feedback on the monitoring visits is not given. Staff said they monitored apprentices to see how much they were paid - $70 is what we pay 3 months to apprentices, but a lot of businesses will pay 40$ at Gbanga and at counties that are in the rural area, but Montserrado was around 60-65$. Trainees said PROSPECTS monitored the training. Trainees said they were monitored and take attendance. They think they use the data to improve the program.

- Sustainability: Many say that if PROSPECTS leave today, it will have a negative impact on young people. Youth feel that if it stops there will be a lot of challenges to continue with the activities happening, they cannot depend on the government for this. Youth said '*I wouldn't go back to school. I will be like a high school dropout and just be passing around here. Moreover, we have more Zogo and Zogie (Drugs users or Substance users) within the streets.'* Youth feel there are many more young people to reach, and it will be bad if PROSPECTS leave.
- Sustainability: Government's (lack of?) capacity to take over program activities. Staff say government have $600,000 budget to continue with cadet program, but this is not enough. Meeting with finance committee to discuss future of the program and how budget can be utilised. Youth feel NGO needs to partner with the government. PROSPECTS Staff did training of trainers for staff at ministry (as said by National Cadet Program staff), to guide them on training cadets (graduate interns). Government (cadets) had meeting to discuss sustainability once PROSPECTS depart, plans to prepare a proposal, and take it to the cabinet meeting. Donors see the importance in having discussions with various stakeholders to ensure sustainability.
- Sustainability: Building capacity of youth centres is important. Staff see the problem/challenges with government funding of youth centres - 'in Gbarnga the facility, the physical facility is not up to date. The wage government paid staff is not enough, its only one staff and they need more about

4 or 5 additional staff. Donors see a key factor to ensuring sustainability is working through the youth centre. Youth Centre Coordinators said PROSPECTS failed to provide new MOU to Ministry of Youth and Sport. They have not involved youth centres volunteers much either. Need more coordination between Youth centre and PROSPECTS as they are good source to access youth. They feel they need to be trained by PROSPECTS so they can continue to pass on the training. Youth Centre coordinators see youth coordination meeting set up by government as a positive (17). National Cadet Program coordinators also see national youth centre coordination meeting, which involves PROSPECTS, as a positive.

- Ensure the government can deliver TVET training. Staff said they used studies to convince the government to start replicating their activities – cadet program included in national youth policy. Staff are trying to hand over the curriculum to Ministry of Youth and Sports and TVET so they can replicate what they are doing to ensure sustainability. Staff feel there is a need for TVET administrators to identify some of the instructors they can provide Training of Trainers to. Also, a technical working group has been formed to discuss the curriculum with Ministry of Education and Ministry of Youth and Sports, once this is formed it can then be rolled out to TVET institutions. TVET staff feel they need to be trained to ensure training can continue. TVET staff feel that they need some financial support for the first couple of months e.g., with refreshments for trainers.
- *Access to financial capital is hindering the sustainability of the project for young entrepreneurs.* Staff feel Banks need to support young entrepreneurs with loans, particularly those who show good reporting and financial management. Staff are trying to create connections with Banks and asking them what they can do for youths with businesses. They want to then invite them to the youth centres to do training with youths, banks came and spoke about itself and what it can offer for youth. Want to set it up so it can continue without PROSPECTS. SMEs said to staff that it would

be good to link with financial service providers. An INGO have agreed to tentatively work with them as they have a start-up centre in Monrovia anyway. Youth feel they are empowered through knowledge, but not yet financially - still need more financial support to grow business.

- Varying views on the continuation of apprenticeships. Hosts want to continue to have apprenticeships but issue that people don't want to give their service for free. They will begin to be more focused on money and less on learning – they won't be able to afford to pay transport. Hosts feel institutions do not have money to maintain apprenticeships. Hosts said they will continue to take on apprentices, had apprentices out of the program. Hosts feel there is not enough set in place to help people after the apprenticeship. E.g., providing equipment for tailoring business. Youth feel they need more financial support e.g., with equipment to start their own business or needing more help with finding a job. Hosts feel more attention should be given to local NGOs as they can sustain work, particularly talking about apprenticeships. Hosts feel PROSPECTS need to partner with people with similar interests. Hosts feel they need support from PROSPECTS to continue to take on apprentices. Hosts feel PROSPECTS should partner with the Ministry of Youth and Sports to continue the apprenticeships.
- Knowledge gained from apprenticeship training and placements will have a lasting impact. Grantees feel they can continue to use the training. Hosts feel that apprentices have skills which they can use to find a job. Staff outline that they have developed a toolkit which they have encouraged SMEs to use – been distributed to 100 people so far. Apprenticeships feel they can help their family and give them ideas about how to run a business.
- *To put with formation of youth organisation (in unexpected outcomes), more needs to be done to ensure youth can enact positive change in community.* Youth want to be empowered to become volunteers in the community e.g., money to set up a community club. They feel they can mobilise

people and pass on important messages but need to be empowered by PROSPECTS to do so. Trainees (who set up organisation) feel they have capacity to talk to fellow youth from the knowledge and confidence they have gained.

- *There were some operational issues with the apprenticeships, which the youth found frustrating.* Apprentices not received completion certificates and not received them for training. Apprentices say there was delays in transportation reimbursement and some delay in implementation of training. Apprentices had difficulties with bosses, not understanding their skills/knowledge and tensions over being late.

Evaluation of Mixed Methods Findings

Discussion of Triangulated Findings

Mixed methods research provided the study with both a cause and effect perspective using correlation, and also contextualised the learning from the employment intervention. While the quantitative design measured the contribution of soft employability skills to youth ability to access decent jobs, the qualitative research design provided nuance to the social situation of apprentices with the use of emerging patterns not pre-identified in the initial research design. The combination of quantitative and then qualitative allowed the study to deduct facts for the general population of apprentices in Liberia with similar situation to the intervention case study. Study triangulated and complemented quantitative findings with induced contextual facts from an individual perspective in the qualitative section.

Correlated quantitative findings showed a strong positive relationship between soft skills practice and increased wage trajectory for apprentices. Evidence shows a weak positive relationship between work motivation and an increased wage trajectory for apprentices. A strong

relationship exists between soft skills practice and attrition support. Study showed a strong positive correlation of +0.916 to +0.926 between the constructs of work motivation, soft skills, wage trajectory and attrition support. The p-value found statistically significant results from 0.01 to 0.05 at a confidence interval of 95%.

Deduced from the quantitative research is that knowledge from soft employability skills training assisted youth access employment and that income increased over time. Initial knowledge about soft employability skills also enabled youth to receive other various employment-related assistance (attrition support). Work motivation was found to be a major module that cuts across all themes taught in the curriculum for soft employability skills trainings. Interestingly, work motivation though positively correlated with increased wage trajectory, deduced is the weak contributory factor of work motivation to the increased wages of apprentices in the long-run.

Induced qualitative findings also supported this weak contributory factor of work motivation to increased wage trajectory of apprentices. Descriptive analysis using quintile analysis showed majority of youth are still vulnerable in the long-run, with 91% classified as poor, 9% near poor and none in the analysis termed as non-poor. This supports the qualitative point about youth not asked what training needed before the trainings. This emphasises the importance of providing relevant skillsets that enable youth participate in viable employment ecosystems.

Deduced quantitative findings showed that 85 percent of trained apprentices remained employed in the long run with challenges of accessing decent jobs. Some information from qualitative findings suggest that apprentices travel long distances to work and the stipend of $70 a month from PROSPECTS was inadequate. Triangulation of challenges with accessing to decent jobs and grants to support transportation can act as an incentive or disincentive for the strengthening of market ecosystems.

Study argues that re-skilling and up-skilling should be demand driven and financially supported by employers. Rather than fund apprentices with stipend and promote the idea of donor independence and donor fatigue, interventions can avoid market distortion by investing in businesses with capability to absorb more apprentices and support them with stipends for transport and accommodation. Employers with capability to support apprentices financially will also have the ability to promote the concept of trade credit, which facilitates business capital growth in pre-identified market ecosystems.

Higher levels of inclusion of women and disabled can be achieved through prioritising literacy training of females and field outreach to disabled persons rather than relying mainly of radio advertisements. Some of the contextual qualitative evidence is highlighted as one disabled person participating in the intervention and lower number of females participating in the advanced stages of Advanced Business Training module of the employability skills training. Learned is the inadequate reports of quantitative success of access to jobs attributed to humanitarian aid without recourse to the contextual narrative of decent jobs and well-functioning market ecosystems.

Triangulated evidence support the terminology of soft employability skills as an area for further studies and an advancement of current employment curriculums presently focused on soft skills training. Study findings from both qualitative and quantitative research showed CV writing, record keeping, customer service, business plan, marketing, and time management assisted youth access jobs. This supports qualitative suggestions that Soft Employability Curriculum should prioritise adequate literacy levels, skills in specific trades, and above six months rather than three months for apprenticeship placements. The suggestions align with deduced findings that higher apprentice skillsets enable higher motivation levels and result in higher chances of access to decent jobs.

Triangulated findings show intervention designs should put more emphasis on holding employers accountable for apprentices rather than a focus by intervention leaders on fulfilling project requirements. Unexpected qualitative and quantitative finding showed high reports of self-employment and requires further study.

1) In answer to the research questions, the results of the study show that Soft and Employability Skills (SES) practices and Contributions Learning Approach exist and are valuable to vulnerable persons towards access to jobs.
2) The contribution of Soft and Employability Skills was towards sustained informal and formal employment, also learned is that self-employment trending as a means of livelihood.
3) Gainful employment is greatly influenced by work-readiness training, CV writing, on-the-job experience, and effective job application, with practices of Soft and Employability Skills getting more vulnerable youth into the informal sector at a greater rate than the formal sector from findings.
4) Soft and Employability Skills practices by the apprentices enabled business owners to replicate the intervention by placing apprentices on internship without donor support long after the intervention ended.
5) Learning and Knowledge Management that uses contribution analysis and SES tracking enable youth to withstand the stress of unemployment by accessing jobs and staying employed.

The key research questions were:

- Whether apprentices practice the lessons learnt from trainings on how to write proper curriculum vitae.
- How apprentices apply good work ethics taught.

- Whether apprentices have access to available jobs.
- How the gains in securing employment have been sustained almost two years after the end of the intervention by PROSPECTS.

The study closely examined the pattern of employment for apprentices that were retained at the apprenticeship business after three months placement ended, and welfare in terms of disposable income.

Briefly, the mixed research contributions of soft and employability skills training were as below:

Intervention Theory of Change:

- 85 respondents out of 701 youths placed as apprentices were interviewed as part of this study.
- 701 apprentices placed with businesses July 1, 2014 to May 31, 2017(Cohorts).
- Each apprentice completed three months placement with a business.
- 38% out of 701 apprentices were retained as at 2017 at the end of the apprenticeship placement.
- Apprentices trained on work readiness training (soft skills), curriculum vitae coaching, and business skills training.
- Apprentices mentored and supported during the three months placement.

Access to jobs 2021:

- 85% currently engage in full-time, part-time, seasonal or self-employment type of jobs.
- 34% of the 38% retained apprentices currently work for the placement businesses facilitated by PROSPECTS as of 2021.
- 13% of all apprentices are currently engaged in multiple jobs.

Participant Practice of Skills Learned 2021 (At Present):

- 25% of 701 participants report **updated** CVs and applied for jobs.
- 48% report 8 out of 17 indicators taught about work motivation.

- 91% show 7 out of 7 practice indicators of ensuring accurate CV design and content.
- 63% practice 4 out of 6 taught behaviours of soft skills curriculum.

Most Important Learning

- CV design and content skills *apparently contributed* to both 21% formal and 36%informal employment for the apprentices.
- Informal employment the highest type of jobs accessed by participants.
- Of Participants in Informal employment explained only 9% report job satisfaction, 14% allude to dressing well to work, and 29% enjoyed working with employer.
- 24% of the participants reported, *Making Markets Work for the Poor (M4P) strategy termed "Copying effect"* as business owners hired more apprentices after PROSPECTS intervention ended.
- Apprentices leveraged more external support towards soft skills training or finance after the intervention ended. Many (69%) received no assistance with soft skills training or finance from other organisations (attrition) after the intervention ended.
- The trainings enabled more apprentices' access more external support in the long run and showed the contribution of the intervention to securing employment. In comparison, a higher majority (84%) received no assistance with soft skills training or finance before the intervention started.

CHAPTER FIVE: IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

The problem statement bothers on mass unemployment and the identification of key drivers that enable youth access available jobs. Identification of contributors to youth employment required an understanding of results from work-readiness training, CV writing, on-the-job experience, and effective job application. The study used a mixed approach method to triangulate findings from youth that participated in the apprenticeship placement and articulated views from stakeholders that participated during the intervention.

The study establishes the relationship between contributors (work-readiness training, CV writing, on-the-job experience, and effective job application) and gainful employment. This section explains the implication of each contributor (work-readiness training, CV writing, on-the-job experience, and effective job application) to employment. Based on the discussed implications, study recommends knowledge, skills, motivation, and organisational solutions that lessens mass unemployment.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning for humanitarian aid has prompted INGOs towards finding effective module sources for employment master class reference materials. Work-readiness training, CV writing practice, on-the-job experience, and effective job application are the greatest sources of effective employment interventions in predominantly informal economies. Mayne (2012) states that development challenges towards adaptation involves extending evaluation techniques that are cost effective, improves the effectiveness, and draws on learning from the contribution of an intervention.

Implications

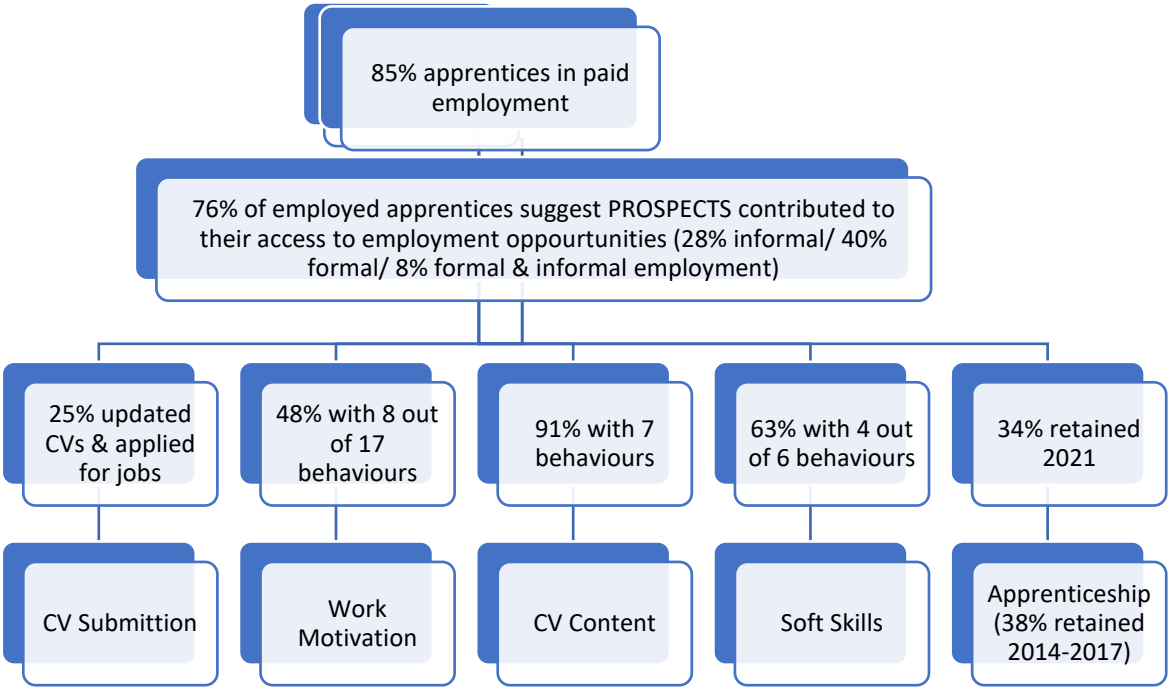
This research is significant for its contribution to theory and management. To theory, research added to the body of knowledge in Work Motivation (WM), Soft Skills Practice (SSP), and Wage Trajectory (WT) livelihoods. Study provides background for future research by identifying gaps in employment theories and enterprise development. For academics, the research added to the current body of knowledge on NGOs evaluation strategies for sustainable jobs. For management, study will make Learning and Knowledge Management (LKM) more effective due to the application of best strategies of Contribution Analysis, WM, SSP and WT.

The study will promote donors Collaborate, Learn and Adapt (CLA) policy through new knowledge about contribution analysis. For NGO management, the study will inform innovation in the design of theory of change approach focused on cost effectiveness of adaptive evaluation methods. It provides development staff with a logical guide for an employment curriculum. For taxpayers, the study provides a working framework that reduces the time for humanitarian evaluations and prioritises real-time adaptive changes. The study will help development organisations in designing micro economic interventions that work well in economies with mainly informal sectors. It helps policymakers improve social security strategies by focusing on incentivising people to stay employed through enterprise development. It has enhanced NGO's value for money framework through a structured theory of change and processes for learning and adaptation of humanitarian interventions.

A key finding is that PROSPECTS helped beneficiaries' access jobs (and job skills) for apprentices that most likely would not have succeeded in accessing employment in the jobs market. Overwhelming % of apprentices (85%) are currently engaged in full-time, part-time, seasonal or self-employment type of jobs. A sizeable proportion of apprentices were retained (38%) at the time

apprenticeship placement ended by PROSPECTS, with 34% currently working for the businesses at the time of this survey (See Figure 18).

Figure 18: *Employability Skills and Employment Results*



Sustained practice of CV related skills learnt during PROSPECTS soft skills training found among beneficiary apprentices and this practically implies a higher likelihood of success to access jobs now and in the future. Relevant data shows practice of clear CV writing technique (96%), that they check for correct font size and format when typing CVs (93%), ensure no spelling or grammatical errors on CV (95.24%) and information on CV is true and no false information (96.09%), and this *implies apprentices* ***applied use*** *of topics taught in employment trainings by PROSPECTS facilitators*. Self-reporting by beneficiary apprentices on CV related skills reflect a ceiling effect and bias risk that needs some validation in the next research from apprentice

employer responses. Meanwhile, this positive CV related skills seems to have generated both formal and informal employment for the apprentices, with informal employment the highest of jobs accessed (36%). Those in formal employment were 21% and a few reported to be in both formal and informal employment (5%)[35]. Robust apparent contribution effect would be complete after cross tabulation of CV skills evidence from both employers and employees in the next study. *The Soft and Employability trainings helped apprentices get work in the informal sector at a greater rate than the formal sector from findings*[36].

In terms of contributions for disaggregated samples, the study finds majority of employed apprentices that accessed jobs in the informal sector (61% Bong and 69% Buchanan) attribute their access to jobs due to PROSPECTS intervention, with less proportion of apprentices that accessed formal employment (34% Bong and 12% Buchanan) reporting access because of PROSPECTS. Employed Montserrado apprentices all elude their access to both formal and informal jobs as due to PROSPECTS soft skills training and apprenticeship placement. Nearly 63% of apprentices posit they are better able to pay for personal needs with ratings of much stronger and somewhat stronger with very few (24%) stating they received further external training support from other organisations. The study finds 24% of business owners did hire more apprentices for placement at their businesses (after PROSPECTS intervention ended), which shows some level of sustainability of PROSPECTS interventions.

[35] At this point, we can only speculate that more apprentices access informal than formal sector as a reflection of the Liberian economy, or that apprentices were more likely to start informal businesses (and be successful with them) with the skills they gained.

We find a key M4P strategy termed "copying effect" replicated by employers of apprentices by placing apprentices on internship over two years on average after the PROSPECTS intervention ended.

This leads us to ask further questions about the contribution of PROSPECTS intervention on the employers' strategy of managing businesses; "*employer-copying effect" is this because of the positive gains from the PROSPECTS apprenticeship placement*. Strikingly, findings show 49% of apprentices vividly remember work readiness training by PROSPECTS, 22% recall CV writing skills and 27% remember business skills training long after the intervention by PROSPECTS ended.

Particularly for self-employed apprentices with a sizeable proportion of 39% generating own income with 79% financially responsible for dependents in their respective households.

Contribution analysis reveal wages of apprentices increase positively after working for a sustained period with employers.

Weighted averages for the three counties studied show apprentices earned $86 monthly and closer observations reveal an increment of $54 between the end of PROSPECTS apprenticeship placement to date. The data establishes that over 98% of PROSPECTS apprentices attribute soft skills training as contributing to their pursuit of a career, with another 60% rating their ability to pay for personal needs higher and better than before PROSPECTS intervention. An issue that needs improvement is the low practice by apprentices regards travelling outside the county to search for jobs (42%) and requesting reference from people when applying for jobs (44%).

PROSPECTS is the major provider of social security function in the three treated counties where the employment and entrepreneurship intervention took place[37]. The evidence is further strengthened regards sustainability of the intervention, with 34% of the sub-sample of apprentices retained as employees still working presently at the placement business. This contribution claim considers the informal nature of the employment sector in Liberia, low wages, and dearth of work contracts. Youths are likely to move between jobs within short period of weeks and few months in search of stable employment offers. Despite these contextual factors, a good number of retained apprentices (13%) have remained in the employ of apprenticeship businesses, and highly probable that apprenticeship businesses find the inputs provided by trained and experienced apprentices as valuable based on this retention rate.

Those that were demotivated to work within the general sample mentioned they had issues with finishing task on time[38], punctuality to work, proper dressing at work, satisfaction with employer, job satisfaction, work appreciation by employer and required tools to perform work tasks well. The mentioned demotivating factors linked to the informal nature of available employment opportunities in the three intervention counties, and this logically connects to the slight reduction from 38% to 34% of retained apprentices' sub-sample currently working in the formal sector.

Study concludes that PROSPECTS placed apprentices on three months apprenticeship training. These apprentices received on the job experience. Few businesses did not really need apprentices and let the apprentices go after PROSPECTS placement intervention. Some businesses gave the

[37] Social security function of PROSPECTS in the intervention counties show the relevance of its Theory of Change.

[38] Also referred to as hard work

apprentices an opportunity at transitioning to formal jobs after the apprenticeship was completed. Other apprentices moved on to look for other jobs in the formal sector with the increased skills. A relative majority ended up self-employed with many in the informal sector. Teamwork and quality customer services are aspects enjoyed by apprentices about motivation to work.

It appears that quality of trainings and experience from apprenticeship placements at Montserrado have far better outcomes than intervention treatments received at Bong. A similar pattern seen for retained apprentices with a large proportion of 67% are presently in paid employment at Buchanan, 11% for Bong and 46% at Montserrado. *Two contributory factors in the study found to improve apprentices' chances of financial self-reliance are better resumes and job experience.*

Apparent contribution from findings shows 51% of apprentices currently employed allude their employment is due to PROSPECTS soft skills training and apprenticeship placement. Another 30% of sampled apprentices' welfare are better presently in contrast to before the apprenticeship placement. *Study found the need for employment assistance programs in the two intervention counties outside Montserrado based on the relative higher unemployment rates.* Generally, majority of the sampled apprentices not trained on modules that cover information on safe work environment.

The study further establishes that over 86% of apprentices not exposed to a dangerous work environment after the apprenticeship placement ended. For the 14% of apprentices that report exposure to unsafe work, PROSPECTS should explore the inclusion of safe work modules to the employment and entrepreneurship curriculum. One issue shown from findings is the gap about breadth of financial inclusion among the apprentices; few (38%) actively use bank accounts for transactions, with wage payments by 70% of employers primarily done using cash. Of interest is

the few apprentices at Buchanan that report the use of both mobile money and bank account that shows some depth regards financial inclusion. In terms of market penetration of banking services, mobile money actively used among the beneficiary apprentices. Active use of both mobile money and bank account shown by 36% of apprentices that benefitted from PROSPECTS 2 intervention. Over 83% of apprentices transact with mobile money platforms and *there is an opportunity for businesses to explore the use of mobile money for wage payments*. This would improve business financial record keeping and helps improve credit risk that aids access to formal credit.

Recommendations for Application

NGOs working on poverty alleviation programs should craft innovative masterclass curriculum that supports access to jobs and entrepreneurship. The Liberian Ministry of Youth and Sport should support employment ecosystems that provide relief for business owners that provide apprentices with soft and employability skills training. Financial Institutions should collaborate with experienced apprentices participating in viable business value chains for an effective employment ecosystem. Fostering collaborative practices within value chains will enhance knowledge sharing that improves business performance and will inform adaptive employment curriculums used by NGOs and TVETs. Application of competencies for sustained employment interventions such as holding regular CLA workshops, tracking changes in the interventions theory of change, and asking before and after questions at a one-time point is recommended.

For proficient business productivity, employment ecosystems should prioritise motivating apprentices through a work and life balance strategy. Financial inclusion for value chain actors recommended that enables financial literacy for business owners and strengthens financial transactions within employment ecosystems. Employment curriculums should promote

entrepreneurship knowledge that provides apprentices information about support networks that facilitate trade and production. Livelihood strategies that involve skillsets that allow apprentices gain knowledge in multiple employment sectors recommended for sustainable employment. Cheap and accessible access to the internet in predominantly informal economies recommended to enhance knowledge sharing that improves access to jobs and business productivity. Scaling of trade credit as a means of financing for self-employment recommended as a means of linking finance with soft and employability skills training, it supports apprentices' transit from informal to formal employment in the long-run.

While this survey has provided many answers to the 'contributions of Soft and Employability Skills training towards apprentices' access to job opportunities', this study has resulted in several further questions, meaning that much of this recommendation comprises of suggestions to try to find the answers to these important further questions[39].

The first recommendation is to try to find out the answer to why a significant proportion of apprentices are self-employed and what specifically they do along the value chain of employment. It may be that there are more demands for start-ups in these counties with unmet supply needs and the apprentices see self-employment as the easiest means to financial independence in a predominantly informal employment market that has around 36% of apprentices as entrepreneurs, and positively engaged. *In summary, first recommendation about understanding what activities self-employed youth are engaged in through qualitative research and provide an evidence-based approach for scaling up sustainable market interventions towards youths access to jobs in the formal sector.*

[39] The further questions raised by this research would be answered in future research where employers of apprentices will be tracked for triangulation of findings.

Further inquiry is needed to understand activities done by the 13% of apprentices currently engaged in multiple paid jobs and how significant its contributions are when contrasted with working in one sector (formal or informal). *The second recommendation is that training on what doing multiple jobs entails is needed.*

The third recommendation results from the finding that few apprentices travel outside their counties in search of jobs. The 42% that travel in search of jobs is this due to unavailable communication channels *(job internet cafes)* for disseminating information about job openings. Coupled with the knowledge that nearly 84% of apprentices received no external support from other organisations regards either finance or employability training. The three PROSPECTS Youth Opportunity Centres presently provides employability trainings and computers that youth's access to develop CVs. An additional Internet service and electronic jobs boards added to strengthen access to the job market; this also serves as part of the hand over package to future partners (government and institutions) as regards sustainability. *Recommendation 3 is that Implementing Partners sustain the positive momentum gains of employment created in these communities through addressing the issues of information asymmetry for the demand and supply of labour. Bridging the gap provides for increased availability of information and a communication process for virtual interface between employers and job seekers across a larger geographical space (Liberia and the world at large).*

The fourth recommendation is Implementing Partners (IPs) encourage business owners to use mobile money as a means of wage payments. This is based on the finding that majority of apprentices actively use mobile money while employers use cash as the major means of wage payments. *In summary, the use of mobile money for financial transaction by both the employer*

(currently using cash) and apprentice (currently using mobile money) allow financial records for both the employer and employee to access credit.

Lastly, study recommends that PROSPECTS and Implementing Partners should re-examine the approach to market systems intervention with emphasis on linking finance and skills training through TVETs. Findings show a good proportion of apprentices tends towards self-employment that requires capital. While PROSPECTS apprentices demonstrate fully the attributes from CV writing to positive work attitude, there is need to *link access to finance with potential apprentices* that provides required start-up capital for self-employment initiatives. *In summary, PROSPECTS revise its results chain to enable the intersection of finance and skills training to reinforce access to jobs and towards sustained employment, which assist apprentices' transit from informal to formal employment.* This recommendation is because a negative difference in disposable income found in the study for a substantial number of self-employed apprentices at Bong and Buchanan.

Recommendations for Future Research

Summary recommendation from the study is as follows:

- This research was conducted in an undeveloped economy with predominantly informal employment sectors. Studying self-employment and the drivers of business growth within will make findings of this study more beneficial.
- This research was conducted in an undeveloped economy with predominantly informal employment sectors. Studying self-employment and the drivers of business growth within will make findings of this study more beneficial.

The report outlines in detail the following recommendations for future research.

- Research policies and strategy document that outlines how government can fund and independently manage a National Cadet Program. This requires a study on how to foster collaboration between the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Youth and Sport, Universities Commission, and the Legislative Committee for Youth Development. Guidelines can be set-up on how to pass budgets and incorporate the private sector in the strategy document.
- Organisational Capacity Assessment studies are required to understand the capacity of the National Youth Centres. Learning from stakeholders that coordinate with the National Youth Centres will help benchmark the level of current support received by the National Youth Centres. An Organisational Capacity Assessment provides an understanding of what support is needed by the National Youth Centres to undertake employability skills trainings in the future.
- Research how TVETs assess the knowledge level of students trained in employability skills training and how they have incorporated the employability skills curriculum into specific hard skills and technical curriculums. Whether the Ministry of Education approved the employability skills curriculum, how the implementation is sustained by TVET teachers and students access to jobs.
- Research into women with less education and engaged in self-employment is needed to encourage women. The research learning will enable businesswomen access larger loans, grow businesses from micro to macro type of business. The proposed study provides for the mapping of a successful microenterprises from the beginning of their journey to present, providing an opportunity for younger businesses to learn. The research provides an avenue to learn about women groups in business, networking potentials for mentorship, and sustainable means for the assessment of women proposals for viability by private sector participants. Networking potentials from existing women groups in the private sector also provides an opportunity for the provision of low literacy

training sessions for those who are less educated, to ensure vulnerable groups are not excluded and improves access to finance.

- Further research is needed about an ecosystem approach for self-employed apprentices running small businesses. Further qualitative investigation is required to better understand the nature of self-employment for beneficiary apprentices and relate with the Liberian context of self-employment. *The study about ecosystems will enable small businesses use in-kind grants, floating capital that acts as insurance for product orders, financial history for retail businesses, and the participation of large-scale distributors and banks*. This will include a training needs assessment for small businesses to identify gaps and tailor trainings for self-employed apprentices that own start-ups and more advanced businesses. A comprehensive study ensures appropriate information is provided for adaptation by SMEs. Another variable to study is how Implementation Partners involve banks in the design and possible rollout of youth focused financial products.
- There is need for research into the market cost of labour for entry level apprentices and learn about the effect of higher stipends paid to apprentices by Implementing Partners. An understanding of possible market distortion due to external intervention in the Liberian labour market. The study findings will help avoid donor fatigue, promote competitive markets and equilibrium in the labour market demand and supply. External funding support for youth to access jobs must provide incentive to young people to participate in the labour market without creating unrealistic expectations for future local salaries.
- Due to the informal nature of the Liberian economy, employability training that includes only soft skills, business and CV writing skills may be inadequate for promoting a productive economy full of creativity and innovation. With majority of apprentices engaged in self-employment implies an opportunity for young people to engage in creative industries. Further research is required to

identify the major creative industries young people are mostly engaged and design an employability skills curriculum that incorporates practical and trade specific training. The future studies can investigate specialised fields such as catering, animal husbandry, and value-addition to agricultural produce.

- Further study required to understand how vulnerable apprentices that receive employability training and complete three months placement are in terms of poor, near poor and none-poor classifications using an assets index. Learning needed on coping mechanisms apprentices use in an informal economy with low wages and possibility of multiple paid jobs.

Conclusions

The study concludes that soft employability skills (SES) training enabled youth access employment but remained around the poverty line of $2 a day. Impact logic for the study does not hold true that poverty is alleviated when SES is provided. Study provided context about the contribution to employment of SES themes that include work-readiness training, CV writing coaching, business skills training, business grants and apprenticeship training. Higher inclusion of vulnerable youth (emphasis for female participation) in employment interventions would require strong literacy training for effective communication. Future SES Curriculum will have detailed guide for apprentices with themes on informal learning within a pre-identified ecosystem, mentorship and formal learning about entrepreneurship.

The SES Curriculum should provide trade specific knowledge of pre-identified market sectors with the highest multiplier effect for decent jobs and address the market linkages that enable the incentives for the participation of market actors. Current gap in the literature is the inaccessibility of SES training for illiterate uneducated persons, school drop-outs and marginalised

populations resident in predominantly informal economies. Study expanded the post-Keynesian economics argument on effective demand by positing that market failure (ineffective demand) is because self-employment is what employs the majority of youth in predominantly informal economies. There is very little or no government influence on employment and those self-employed are unable to access bank loans and credit.

Decent jobs creation will depend on revolving fund for entrepreneurs within an ecosystem that provides for insurance of the products and access to trade credit. To achieve full employment in informal economies, policies needed that enable formal identity cards, mechanism for street names and house address, ease of business registration, knowledge of value chain actors and collaborative practices. Study expanded the employment theories of Classical, Keynesians and post-Keynesian economists by arguing that hyperinflation in informal economies is because of monetary policy changes (higher interest rates) in formal economies and low production capacity in informal economies.

From a macroeconomics perspective, rather than LDCs to focus on currency devaluation to address unemployment, policy makers should prioritise income per capital growth dependent on monitoring debt-to-revenue ratios for LDCs. Learned for the literature review of employment theories is that high levels of corruption and currency devaluation reduce the expected creation of jobs from higher government spending on public consumption.

Policymakers can improve the productive capacity of pre-identified ecosystems for an increased domestic consumption, and that this would increase income per capital and reduce poverty. The SES Curriculum needs to include the type of jobs to be created, informal knowledge required by youth, the type of employers to participate, what qualifications from training

institutions needed and where government can subsidise. Successful enterprises require high performance leadership from employees, and this is dependent on the high motivation of employees. Study showed that high motivation of employees is a function of the availability of decent jobs. Enterprises require transformational and servant leadership that encourages individualised consideration for the management of employees and participative forms of leadership.

Below are the major objective findings from the study:

- As at FY2017, employers employed 38% of apprentices after SES trainings and stipend payments to apprentices ended and completion of three months apprenticeship. As at FY2021, the study observed a slight drop from 38% to 34% of apprentices that currently worked for the apprenticeship placement businesses. Findings from the whole sample showed a strong positive outcome, with 41% of all apprentices that report self-employed, some in full-time employment (21%) or at least in part-time employment (21%)[40] and 2% engaged in seasonal employment. *Based on the contributory factors, it appears that the apprenticeship placements and soft skills training have been key in apprentices' access to employment opportunities.*
- Study further investigates the effects from external contributors[41] within the sampled population and finds that before PROSPECTS intervention, 84% of apprentices received no assistance with soft skills training on employment and entrepreneurship from other organisations. *Apprentices*

[40] Strong contributions of PROSPECTS intervention shown with the slight reduction in the employment retention rate of retained apprentices at the apprenticeship business and with little known from the present study about the nature of self-employment. Future research should investigate the nature of self-employment in the intervention areas for the beneficiary cohort and within the Liberian context of self-employment. Provide contextual answers to why employers hired some of the apprenticeship graduates.

[41] Refers to other external employment trainings or apprenticeship placements provided by other organizations and not PROSPECTS.

leveraged more external support to access soft skills training since intervention ended. 69% of apprentices received NO assistance with soft skills training or finance from other organisations AFTER PROSPECTS intervention ended.

- *Study concludes that PROSPECTS placed apprentices on three months apprenticeship training. These apprentices received on the job experience. Few businesses did not really need apprentices and let the apprentices go after PROSPECTS placement intervention. Some businesses gave the apprentices an opportunity at transitioning to formal jobs after the apprenticeship was completed. Other apprentices moved on to look for other jobs in the formal sector with the increased skills. A relative majority ended up self-employed with many in the informal sector.* Teamwork and quality customer services are aspects enjoyed by apprentices about motivation to work.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Apprentice Questionnaire

A.1 beneficiary INFORMATION/changes in Employment and its impact (for all youths)

A.1.1	**Respondent name**	
A.1.2	**Age of respondent**	*(Write calculated age, example 25)*
A.1.3	**Gender**	Male 2. Female
A.1.4	**Education level**	No Education Did not complete elementary Completed elementary 6 Did not complete high school Completed high school (12) Did not complete University Completed University Did not complete trade/vocational school Completed trade/vocational school
A.1.5	**Respondent phone numbers**	
A.1.5.1	**Were you retained after completing the apprenticeship facilitated by PROSPECTS?** *(This is in the past)*	1. Yes 2. No
A.1.6	**What is your employment status now?** *If A.1.6=1, skip to A.1.13*	1. Not employed 2. Full-time employment 3. Part-time employment 4. Seasonal employment 5. Self-employed
A.1.7	**Current Work address and contact details**	
A.1.8	**Describe the current type of paid job**	

A.1.9	**When were you employed at present place of work?**	Month _____ Year _____ *(i.e. Write 03 for March, 2017 for year)*
A.1.10	**If yes employed now, is it at the business where apprenticeship placement took place?** *If A.1.10=2, skip to A.1.13* *Select 1 (This is present employment)*	1. Yes 2. No
A.1.11	**If yes currently employed, how long have you worked for the business?** *(Question only for respondents that answered employed to A.1.6 and ticked 2, 3, 4 or/and 5)*	_____
A.1.12	**If yes currently employed, has your income changed over the period?** *Select 1*	1. My income stayed the same over the employment period 2. My income decreased over the employment period 3. My income increased over the employment period 4. Other, specify_____
A.1.13	**If not employed after placement ended, did you get another job?** *(In the past)*	1. Yes, specify job_____ 2. No

A.1.14	**If not employed after the apprenticeship placement ended, are you <u>currently</u> unemployed?** *(In the present)*	1. Yes (Why not working_____) 2. No (Tell us where you work:_____)
A.1.15	**Do you currently have dependents you take care of?** (*This could be children, parents, other family members, etc.)*	Yes (How many _____) 2. No
A.1.16	**Before completing the PROSPECTS apprenticeship placement, were you financially responsible for these dependents?** (*This could be children, parents, cousins, etc.)*	Yes 2. No
A.1.17	**Do you get paid for doing more than one job?** *If A.1.17=2, skip to A.1.20*	Yes 2. No
A.1.18	**If yes you do more than one job, did this start after the apprenticeship placement?** *(Jobs here refer to paid employment done by the respondent)*	Yes 2. No
A.1.19	**Please tell us the types of other jobs you do?**	Hair dressing Table market or shop

	: Multiple responses allowed	Wholesale trade Livestock (poultry, piggery) Farming Secretarial job/office work Laborer/ Building/Block production/Factory worker Others: _____
A.1.20	**Do you own a business supported by PROSPECTS that generates income?** If A.1.20=2 or 3, skip to A1.26	Yes (how much income generated? _____) No
A.1.21	**If yes, when was this business established?** (*tick only one option)*	Before attending the soft skills training by PROSPECTS Before attending the apprenticeship placement by PROSPECTS During the soft skills training by PROSPECTS During the apprenticeship placement by PROSPECTS After completion of the soft skills training After completion of the apprenticeship placement
A.1.23	**Does the business generate monthly income?**	1. Yes (Amount_____) 2. No

A.1.24	**Are you able to save monthly from the business and how much?**	1. Yes (Amount_____) 2. No
A.1.25	**Have you employed people at your business?**	1. Yes (Number_____) 2. No
A.1.26	**Please tell us the type of soft skills training you remember receiving at the PROSPECTS Youth Centres?** *Multiple responses allowed.* *(do not prompt and only tick the correct responses mentioned by the respondent)*	Curriculum Vitae writing Work readiness training(attitude to work) Business skills training I cannot remember training received Did not receive any soft skills training
A.1.27	**Were you placed as an apprentice with a business after receiving training from PROSPECTS?**	1. Yes 2. No
A.1.28	**Did you receive an allowance monthly from PROSPECTS during the apprenticeship placement?** *Select 1.*	No I did not receive an allowance Yes I receive some allowance(Amount:_____) Yes I received an allowance monthly(Amount:_____) Can't say Don't know

A.1.29	**Have you received financial assistance or training from other organisations apart from PROSPECTS?**	1. Yes (Name of Organisation:_____) 2. No
A.1.30	**Have you received financial assistance or training from other organisations apart from PROSPECTS <u>AFTER</u> the apprenticeship placement?** *Multiple responses allowed.* *(Organisations here refer to government, International Non-Government Organisations(INGOs), Local NGOs, Private Sector)*	I received financial help (How much _____) I received training (On what type of skills _____) Other types of assistance received (Please mention _____) I did not receive any type of help
A.1.31	**Have you received assistance from other organisations apart from PROSPECTS <u>BEFORE</u> the apprenticeship placement?** *Multiple responses allowed.* *(Organisations here refer to government, International Non-Government Organisations (INGOs) and Local NGOs)*	I received financial help (How much _____) I received training (On what type of skills _____) Other types of assistance received (Please mention _____ I did not receive any type of help

SECTION A.2.1 INCOME (Only PAID EMPLOYMENT & SELF-EMPLOYED youths)

Income breakdown	**Classification**	**1=Yes 2=No**	**Month & Year** *(Date)*	**Total monthly income** (*Amount)*
Employer type *: A.2.1.1 and A.2.1.2 only for retained apprentices.* *A.2.1.3 is answered by all apprentices that have changed jobs.* *A.2.1.4 can be answered by anyone.*	**A.2.1.1. What was your wage <u>a month after</u> been retained as an employee at the apprenticeship Placement Business**			
	A.2.1.2 Are you <u>currently</u> working for the apprenticeship Placement Business and what is your <u>current wage (last month)</u>			
	A.2.1.3. Has a different business employed you after completing apprenticeship, and what is your monthly wage? (Last month)			
	A.2.1.4. Are you self-employed and what is your monthly wages? (Last month)			

SECTION A.2.2 Expenditure (ONLY PAID EMPLOYMENT & SELF-EMPLOYED YOUTHS)

Expenses breakdown	**Classification**	**Last month expenses (amount)**
	A.2.2.1. Living expenses (*food, rent, hospital, clothes)*	

enter 999 if not applicable	**A.2.2.2. Formal Education** *(enrolled & studying school)*	
	A.2.2.3. Informal Education *(Learning a trade and training)*	
	A.2.2.4. Savings	

SECTION A.2.3 CHANGES IN EMPLOYMENT AND ITS IMPACT (FOR ALL YOUTHS)

A.2.3.1	**Are you employed informally and earn irregular wages?** *If A.2.3.1=2, skip to A.2.3.5)* *(For No answers, see whether interviewee is in informal employment-non-wage)*	1. Yes 2. No
A.2.3.2	**If answer to above is Yes, please tell us on average how much irregular income you get monthly?**	Amount:_____
A.2.3.3	**Did you start getting this income after the PROSPECTS apprenticeship placement?**	1. Yes (Month/Year:_____) 2. No, started getting the income before the apprenticeship placement (Month/Year:_____)

A.2.3.4	**Please describe the type of employment?** *(Formal employment refers to a written and signed agreement between employer and employee with fixed monthly/weekly wages)* *)(Informal employment refers to oral agreements which can involve daily wage rates, short term contracts, and unpredictable)*	1. Formal employment (Due to PROSPECTS? 1. Yes 2. No) 2. Informal employment (Due to PROSPECTS? 1. Yes 2. No) 3. Both formal and informal employment (Due to PROSPECTS? 1. Yes 2. No) 4. Not applicable
A.2.3.5	**Do you currently get financial support from family and friends in addition to your wages monthly?**	1. Yes (Amount:_____) 2. No (Explain why:_____)
A.2.3.6	**How would you rate your ability to pay for personal needs compared to before PROSPECTS help with apprenticeship placement?**	Much stronger Somewhat stronger About the same Weaker 5. Much weaker

SECTION B.1. for ONLY youths retained at placement businesses

B.1	**Were you retained as employee after the 3 months apprenticeship placement facilitated by PROSPECTS?**	1. Yes 2. No
B.2	**Are you still working for the business where you completed apprenticeship placement?** *If B.2=2 or 3, skip to B.8* *(If response No, Don't know, skip next question)*	1. Yes 2. No 3. If No explain why:_____
B.3	**Did the business take more apprentices since you were employed?**	Yes 2. No 3. If Yes, explain why the business took more apprentices:_____ 5. If No, explain why business did not take more apprentices:_____
B.4	**Did your income change after been retained by the placement business?** *(Select 1)*	1. My income stayed the same over the employment period 2. My income decreased over the employment period 3. My income increased over the employment period 4. Other, specify_____ _

B.5	**Has your wage been reviewed upwards by your employer?** *(record amounts)*	1. Initial amount earned:_____ 2. Amount increased(+) or decreased(-) to:_____ 3. Amount difference:_____
B.7	**Assuming you worked for the placement business for a short-time after completing placement and presently unemployed. Why?** *(Multiple responses allowed)*	1. I disagreed with my employer and quit. 2. The business closed shop and had to stop work. 3. I went job searching which was unsuccessful. 4. Resigned to pursue further education. 5. Others, explain:_____
B.8	**Which of the following soft skills training was helpful to you getting a job and staying employed?** *Multiple responses allowed*	1. Career planning (choice of work to do) 2. Effective job application (CV writing skills, presentation, & job hunting) 3. Work readiness (how to fix a car, good behavior) 4. I don't know

B.9	**What has really helped you to retain a job after completing the apprenticeship placement?** *(Multiple responses allowed)* *(literacy and numeracy skills refers to ability to read, write, add, subtract, multiply, divide)*	1. Skills from apprenticeship placement 2. Knowledge from soft skills training 3. My literacy and numeracy skills 4. Personal experience (Explain:_____) 5. I don't know
B.11	**How satisfied are you with the performance of the training facilitators (soft skills)?**	1. Very dissatisfied 2. Dissatisfied 3. Satisfied 4. Very satisfied
B.12	**If dissatisfied above, please explain the main problem you experienced with the training facilitators (soft skills)?** *(record reason)*	
B.13	**How relevant do you think the soft skills training is for securing a job?** (*Select 1)*	Not at all useful 2. Slightly useful 3. Very useful 4. Extremely useful
B.14	**Will you recommend someone from your community to participate in the soft skills training?**	1. Yes 2. No

B.15	**How satisfied are you with the learning from the placement businesses (job experience)?**	1. Very dissatisfied 2. Dissatisfied 3. Satisfied 4. Very satisfied
B.16	**If very dissatisfied above, explain the main problem you experienced with the placement business (job experience)?**	
B.17	**How relevant do you think the apprenticeship is for securing a job?**	Not at all useful 2. Slightly useful 3. Very useful 4. Extremely useful
B.18	**Will you recommend someone from your community to participate in the apprenticeship placement?**	1. Yes 2. No 3. Don't know
B.19	**How satisfied are you with your current job?**	1. Very dissatisfied 2. Dissatisfied 3. Satisfied 4. Very satisfied
INCOME RELATED QUESTIONS **(For RESPONDENTS RETAINED)**		
B.20	**My income increased after completing the apprenticeship placement with PROSPECTS.** *(confirm how respondent agrees to above statement)*	1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

B.21	**My employment chances improved after the apprenticeship placement and now earn more money.** *(confirm how respondent agrees to above statement)*	1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree
B.22	**Why has your income increased after the apprenticeship placement?** *Multiple responses allowed*	1. Not due to PROSPECTS training and apprenticeship placement but my efforts. 2. Due to help received from government and other organisations 3. I developed a career plan and applied it. 4. Before the soft skills trainings I had no CV, but I now have a CV. 4. Before the soft skills training I had an average CV, but now have a better CV. 5. The apprenticeship placement experience assisted me get employed and earn an income.

B.23	**What are the things you did to increase your income?**	1. I developed a better work attitude during work hours 2. Went for further training self-sponsored 3. Did extra work during weekends in addition to full-time employment 4. Combined full-time paid job with agriculture 5. Combine a mix of more than two jobs and family support(hair plaiting, barbing, petty trade)

SECTION D: ACCESS TO FINANCE AND SUPPORT SERVICES (All respondents to answer)

D.1	**After the apprenticeship placement, have you continued the active use of mobile money for transactions?**	1. Yes (Provider:_____) 2. No (Why:_____)
D.2	**Are you actively using a bank account?**	1. Yes (Bank :_____) 2. No
D.3	**Do you use both mobile money and bank account?**	1. Yes 2. No

D.4	**How does your employer pay your wages monthly?**	1. Bank transfer 2. Mobile money 3. Cash payments 4. Cheque payments 5. Not applicable
D.5	**Are there other organisations or government in your community that supports with employment trainings and apprenticeship placements?**	1. Yes (Explain: _____) 2. No (Only PROSPECTS I know)
D.6	**Other organisations have helped me with employment trainings and created job opportunities.** *(see if respondent agrees with the above statement)*	1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Disagree 5. Strongly disagree
D.7	**Do you have health issues that affect your ability to work and be gainfully employed?** *(If D.7=2, Skip to D.12)* *(Health issues related to eyes, ability to walk, serious and long-term illness)*	1. Yes (Please explain_____) 2. No
D.8	**If yes to having health issues, are you currently employed?**	1. Yes 2. No
D.9	**Does your health issue prevent you from getting employed?**	1. Yes 2. No

D.10	**Has this health issues affected your chances to retain employment?**	1. Yes (Explain:_____) 2. No
D.11	**If yes to having health issues, are there specific things as an organisation we can do to improve your employment status?**	
D.12	**Have you attended apprenticeship programs that offer trainings on safe work environment?**	1. Yes, trainings on safe work organized by other Organisations (Specify:_____) 2. No trainings on safe work environment 3. Yes, trainings on safe work organized by PROSPECTS (Specify:_____)
D.13	**Were you ever exposed to dangerous work environment?** (*Refers to workers not wearing protective work equipment like helmets, gloves, head covers, etc.)*	1. Yes (Explain:_____) 2. No

SECTION E: SOFT SKILLS TRAINING

How often do each of the following action happen at when you are applying for jobs? **Codes: 1= Never 2=Seldom 3=Quite Often 4=Very often**		
E.1.1	In applying for jobs, I assess personal network and reach out to people that can inform me about job openings.	
E.1.2	I use knowledge learnt from working as an apprentice to apply for different jobs.	

E.1.3	I request for reference from a professional referee to support my job application.	
E.1.4	I add a person as reference to my CV, who knows me well personally.	
E.1.5	I travel outside my county to search for jobs.	
E.1.6	I add trainings received from PROSPECTS to my CV, when applying for a job.	

E.2	**Have you submitted a CV for a job before?** *(Multiple response question 2,3,4)*	1. No, I have not submitted a CV before.
		2. Yes I submitted a CV before the apprenticeship placement.
		3. Yes I submitted a CV recently after the apprenticeship placement.
		4. I have submitted several CVs to different employers.

How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Codes: 1= Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Agree 4=Strongly agree

E.2.1	I ensure when writing my CV, it is specific to the type of job applied for.	
E.2.2	I make sure the length of the CV is not more than 2 pages.	
E.2.3	The information mentioned in my CV is the truth and no false information.	
E.2.4	I ensure that there are no errors in my CV by checking for correct spelling and grammar.	
E.2.5	I check for use of correct font size and format when typing my CV.	
E.2.6	The CV is clearly written for the understanding of potential employers.	
E.2.7	I make sure my job experience is the same with the job requirements of an advert.	

		E.3: WORK MOTIVATION I will now ask you how you feel about some aspects of been employed. I am going to read you some statements, and I want you to tell me whether you strongly agree, agree, feel undecided, disagree, or strongly disagree, with each one. ***Interviewer:*** *Read each statement in turn. If the beneficiary hesitates or provides a response that is not on the scale, remind them of the instructions:* Do you strongly agree, agree, feel undecided, disagree, or strongly disagree, with each one.					
	SELECT ONLY 1 OPTION		**Strongly Disagree** **1**	**Disagree** **2**	**Neither Agree Nor Disagree** **3**	**Agree** **4**	**Strongly Agree** **5**
E.3.1	Enjoy working very much because I am hard working and finish all task on time.						
E.3.2	There is no point trying to come to work on time because there are no customers.						
E.3.3	It is difficult to dress well for work because of not enough money						

E.3.4	If I could choose another job today, I would still choose working with my current employer.					
E.3.5	In the past one year, my job has become more satisfying.					
E.3.6	Working at the business today/yesterday was boring.					
E.3.7	I try my best to work with my employer/clients but they do not help.					
E.3.8	There are too many tasks to do at my workplace.					
E.3.9	I don't always have the materials I need to do my job.					
E.3.10	I have all the support I need to do my job well.					
E.3.11	When there are disagreements at work, I intervene to make peace.					
E.3.12	I manage very difficult customers well.					
E.3.13	I am very polite to customers and colleagues and very nice to them.					
E.3.14	I plan work and ensure it is shared among colleagues.					

E.3. 15	I help work colleagues with different task happily.					
E.3. 16	The work environment is a very happy place and we make jokes.					
E.3. 17	In the past one year, my communication skill has really improved.					