

# youth for a change



## Introduction

In working through the findings of the survey, one begins to wonder whether young people are needed at all, except, maybe, as a valuable source of labour to implement decisions made by their elders. For this they require minimal education to be able to understand what they are required to do. Rarely in the survey did we find any commitment to developing independence of thought, creativity and entrepreneurial skills among young people, either in school or out of school. The majority went to secondary schools with very few teachers and less equipment where they were taught two classes or less a day in a language the vast majority were not able to understand let alone use. Out of school, in spite of lip service paid to youth participation and livelihoods, very little had been done in practice to enable young people to participate effectively in the lives of their families and communities, for their benefit and the benefit of society as a whole.

## Finding One: Participation = attendance

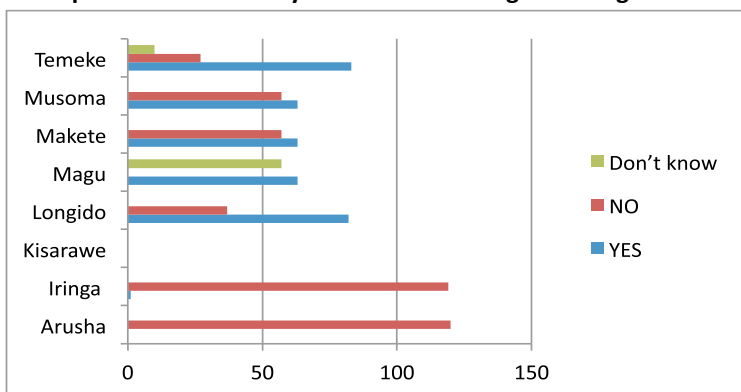
The vast majority of participants in the survey understood participation to mean the act of being present. If someone has attended a meeting or taken part in some community action, s/he is considered to have participated without any consideration of whether s/he has taken any part in influencing or making decisions, or whether their attendance was voluntary or not. Only a few young people interpreted participation to mean influencing or making decisions on matters concerning them.

*'The majority of young people claim they do not participate because they have been marginalised by the community. At ward level and even neighbourhood level there is no youth office. Even on issues of employment and access to loans to start their own projects young people are not prioritised. This is why their participation in meetings is so low'. Young person, ~Iringa*

## Finding Two: Young people rarely participate

Even by the lowest common denominator of mere physical presence, young people are not participating.

### Participation in community activities and village meetings



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If you want to know how well services are working, ask those who use them. Since the rights and needs of young people are often not prioritized in relation to these services, TAMASHA in partnership with Twaweza, trained young people to carry out a survey on a selection of socio-economic services from a youth perspective in 2010. The data and information in this brief is the result of a survey carried out in 32 villages from 8 districts of Tanzania Mainland. The districts covered in the exercise were Arusha Urban, Iringa Urban, Kisarawe, Longido, Magu, Makete, Musoma Rural and Temeke.

Less than half of young people (39%) are participating in community meetings. In districts where there are functioning youth networks, youth participation is significantly higher (53% for Makete, Musoma and Magu, 69% for Temeke, and 68% in Longido where young people participate in accordance with the traditional age set system). In Arusha and Iringa, there was no participation at all.

A few positive examples of participation were given:

- **At village level:** In Longido, young people attend meetings in large numbers and constitute two thirds of village committees where they make decisions. The elders advise.

*'In the past young people were not involved in decision making but nowadays they take the lead. The sub village leaders are young people, the 10 cell leaders are young people, so even in the village government, there are so many young people. The decisions are often made by the village government in which there are many young people so they participate 100% in decision making. And even in the implementation they participate 100% as well'.*

~Longido
- **At ward level:** In Magu and some wards in Temeke, young people are represented in Ward Development Committees.
- **At district level:** Of the eight districts in the survey, it is only in Magu that young people participate at the district level. They choose their representatives to be members of the District AIDS Committee as well as the District Advisory Development Committee. This unique situation is a product of the strength and advocacy of the Youth Network as well as the political will of the Local Council.

Participation elsewhere is minimal, due to:

- **Negative attitudes of adults**

*'Young people are not involved in any decision making because they have no contribution to make. Adult'.*

~Arusha

*'Young people are told what to do. Any young person who refuses or questions will be considered a trouble maker and punished by the elders'.*

~Longido

*'Young people are not given the opportunity to make decisions because of the gap between decision making bodies, most of which have been set up by adults/elders, and young people. There is no cooperation between these two groups and both sides have shown a lack of trust in the other'.*

~Maisha

These negative attitudes lead to negative actions, even punishment.

This has led to a breakdown in communication between young people and elders.

- **Lack of institutional guidelines:**

*'There are no guidelines for enabling young people to take part in decision making bodies, maybe through different committees, for example, Village HIV Committee, Village Facilitation Team and Defence and Safety Committee'.*

~Makete

*'Young people don't see any benefit in attending these meetings. The decisions are made by the elders who then direct the young people what to do. Bearing in mind the bad relationship between young people and elders, the young people leave all the decisions to the elders'.*

~Kisarawe

Therefore, participation remains ad hoc, dependent on the views and personalities of those in power. Youth participation is not built into the local governance.

- **Protest/rejection:** As a result of the above, young people do not participate, as a political statement of rejection for the way they are treated. For example, in Iringa young people can be fined for not participating, but even then, only 10 young people in the four Iringa villages said they participate. The other young people have decided to 'boycott' meetings as they are not involved in the decision making.

*'Young people see no reason to participate in meetings. They believe that such meetings are for old people. Young people are not listened to and they have no opportunity even to decide on matters concerning them.'*

Jangwani,  
~Iringa

*'Young people do not participate in village meetings. If you ask them, they say they are busy with their own activities such as brick making, sawmills and agriculture. Thus their participation is difficult. Even if they are invited, they do not come.'*

~Iringa

- **Livelihoods first:** Since they do not believe their participation will make any difference, young people prefer to concentrate on their own livelihoods (Kisarawe, Makete, Iringa).
- **Gender discrimination:** In Longido they stressed that young men have more decision making power than young women, even at the household level.

*'A girl is considered incapable of making decisions and even if she does make a decision it will be contradicted.'*

~Longido

### Finding Three: Volunteering = unpaid labour

Whether young people are involved in the decision making or not, there was almost unanimous agreement in all the villages and districts that young people are expected to implement the decisions made

*'Young people do not participate in decision making bodies but in implementing what has been decided upon by the leaders.'*

~Kisarawe

*'Young people do not participate in decision making bodies, except, maybe village meetings. They implement after decisions are made.'*

~Musoma

*'For the majority of young people, decisions are made for them and they are ordered to implement.'*

~Makete

Such participation is compulsory. If they do not participate, they can be fined or even beaten. In Longido there have been cases of young people being injured to the point that they have to be taken to the hospital. Others run away from the village until they feel it is safe to return.

This causes bitterness and frustration, as in Arusha:

*'Young people are not involved in decision making. They are only involved in hard labour such as making roads. Even the money which leaders are given for different projects disappears. No one knows where it goes and they are not allowed to question.'*

The issue of fines and beatings, as well as the bitterness shown by young people in each district where the survey was conducted, shows that the meaning of the word 'volunteering' has changed. For the elders, volunteering means that the young people should give freely of their labour to implement whatever they decree. Thus, although the word 'kujitolea' is used, young people actually have no freedom to decide whether they participate or not. This was clearly shown by a comment from Longido:

*'Young pastoralists often volunteer. They do not demand any payment for the work. But those in town are very difficult. They will not do any work without being paid or promised payment. The young pastoralists are just promised food and they do the job but the town youth are different.'*

In most cases, young people are paid nothing and no consideration is taken of the need for them to pay attention to their own livelihoods. Since the majority work in the informal sector, the loss of a day means loss of income. Yet the amount of unpaid labour they provide is considerable. Depending on the village, they are expected to dig trenches for water pipes and sewage, build schools and school latrines, make and repair roads, clean ponds, look after the livestock, and collect building materials, all of which require substantial investment of time.

#### **Finding Four: Very few young people have any space or institution that belongs to them**

Out of the eight districts in the survey, five have functioning youth networks; Kisarawe, Magu, Makete, Musoma and Temeke. Of these five districts, four have Ward Youth Centres in the majority of wards where youth can organise themselves, interact with the local community, and carry out peer education and recreational activities.

- **Youth centres:** Out of the 32 villages, only 12 have access to a Ward Youth Centre where young people participate in their own activities.
  - o In Temeke, there is a district youth network but it has not been able to open youth centres in most wards. Many young people participate in the network's activities through youth groups or organisations in their wards without a centre.
  - o Many villages are still a long way away from a youth centre which is usually situated where the Ward Office is. Usually, the centre is too far away for the youth to participate.
  - o In a few other cases, the youth centres are being misused.



Kukirango Youth Centre



Isangijo Youth Centre Magu

*'Young people no longer use it. Many have dropped out because it is always the same young people, the leaders, who go to the seminars and workshops run by the network. So the young people are fed up and don't see any benefit from being in the youth centre if they don't get opportunities themselves.'*

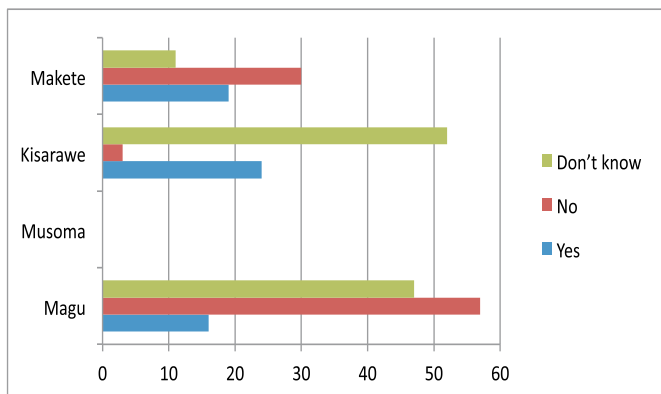
*Masaki,*

*~Kisarawe*

It seems in the case of Masaki the youth have learned well from their elders.

- **Lack of facilities:** The number of youth centres and networks in this survey is not an accurate representation of such facilities in the country. The five districts with youth networks were specifically selected so as to utilise these networks and have them provide support to the researchers. In the three other districts there were no networks and no youth centres. This means that young people have no place to meet, interact, organise, carry out activities of their own choosing, select their own leaders, work with the local leadership, and participate on their own terms in the life of their community.
- **Gender imbalance:** The pictures taken show a much higher representation of males than females in the youth centres. There is a need to follow up on what extent girls and young women participate meaningfully in youth centres.
- **Lack of awareness:** Even where there are youth centres, 45% of households said they do not know what happens at them or whether their children participate. Only 17% said that young people participate, while 38% said they do not. The reasons for non-participation are explained above.

## Participation in youth centre activities



*A peer educator from KIYODEN gives training on sexual and reproductive health to primary school pupils in Sungwi and Kitanga schools. It is believed that the number of pregnancies has decreased as a result of the work of the peer educator. In the past, it was normal in these schools for some girls to drop out before finishing primary school but since the peer education started in 2006 there has been no case of pregnancy.*

Thus it would seem that youth centres and networks do encourage greater participation of a minority of the young people, particularly young men. As a result of these centres and networks, young people are able to play a more meaningful role in their communities. Their representatives sit on the development committees and participate in decision making and the trained peer educators are seen to be making a difference.

### Finding Five: Recreation is a scarce commodity

Young people complained about the lack of recreation. Since they have little or no decision making power, and in most cases, no space of their own, it is very difficult for them to access any recreation at all.

- **No facilities:** In all eight districts, there was no specific sports centre for young people nor any specific plan for recreation and sports.
- **Football:** Football was the most popular recreation activity for young men and in most of the villages there was at least one football pitch. Still they had low priority.
  - o The pitch often belonged to the school who wanted to use it at the same time.
  - o Some pitches can only be used during the dry season.
  - o Existing sports grounds are also used for other purposes, ex. religious and political rallies which cause a conflict of interests.
  - o Some sports grounds are owned privately and can be sold at any time.
- **Young women:** No villages had any sporting activities for women although netball was mentioned in Iringa and Temeke.
- **Other sports:** There were no grounds for other sports such as basketball, volleyball and athletics.
- **Other recreational activities:** There were very few outlets for young people.
  - o Longido: Young people took advantage of different celebrations such as circumcision, weddings and visits by dignitaries to enjoy traditional dances.
  - o Theatre and traditional dance were common in most districts.
  - o In town, and some of the villages, the most common recreation places were discos and bars. Pool is very popular, but if young people want to play pool, they are forced to go to the bars. Thus, in the long run, for the majority of young men, the only recreational activity is drinking, after which they are blamed once again for misbehaving.



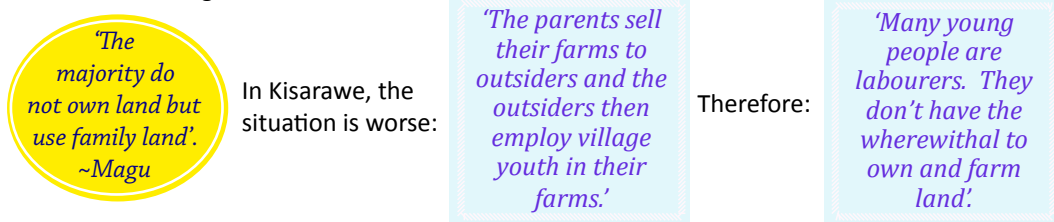
Recreation area sold to private investor

### Finding Six: Livelihoods for young people are a dream

The biggest concern of young people is to be able to make a living for themselves and their families. However, as with all other issues relating to them, their own priorities and concerns have been sidelined. They receive very little support even to make a living for themselves and their families. As a result, they continue to depend on the same resources as ever, and undertake labour intensive jobs which need little or no starting capital. There were almost no examples of innovation and/or use of technology in the livelihoods identified, although young people were the ones who were seen to take advantage of electricity and internet for business purposes in the few places where they were available.

**a) Access to resources:** The primary resource for young people (50%) continues to be land. In pastoralist areas like Longido as well as for a few people in Iringa, livestock is also an important resource. The other two resources identified the most were the forest and bricks (though bricks are not actually a resource and depend on the resource of the land again). Others mentioned by a few included fruits, water, rocks, and mining.

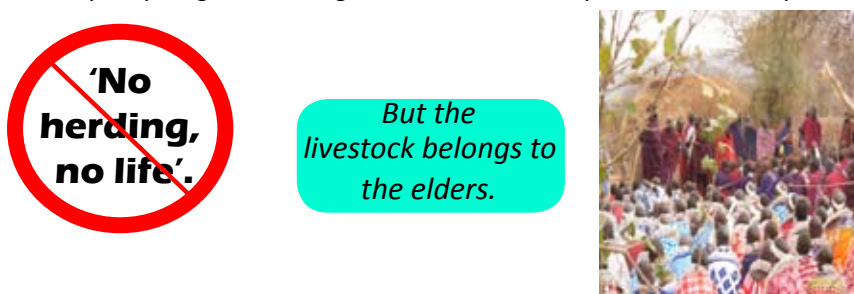
Despite the importance of it, access to land is still problematic for young people. Many young people are involved in farming but:



Even if they do become involved in farming, it does not pay because of the low price paid to them by agents. Therefore:

'It is better to work as a labourer for an outsider than to cultivate your own farm'. Kisarawe

Similarly for young men in Longido, livestock is the key resource. As they said:



### b) Preferred livelihoods

It can be seen from the livelihoods below that are all subsistence livelihoods. There is little prospect of great development for those who pursue them.

- **Agricultural livelihoods:** The most popular livelihoods remain those for which resources are freely available, without any need of starting capital. Therefore, despite problems of access to land and low producer prices, agriculture remained the most popular, followed by pastoralism (Longido). Fishing was also important in Magu. Ironically, the third most popular project was 'anything' which shows that young men are desperate to find a livelihood, but also lack entrepreneurial skills to identify other opportunities.
- **Quarrying:** In Iringa, quarrying was a popular livelihood, because, although it is hard work and dangerous (soil collapses and landslides have caused injuries and some deaths) it provides a reasonable income.



- **Artisanship:** The profitability of artisanship depended on the area. For example in Temeke, masonry was profitable because there were opportunities to build the houses of newcomers in the area.
- **Petty trade:** This was an option for both young women and young men. For young women, it was almost the only option.
- **Emerging livelihoods:** The only emerging livelihood was ‘bodaboda’ (motorcycle taxis), both in urban and in rural areas. In places like Longido, it is often the only transport available. However, it is also dangerous because most of the drivers have had little training.



- **Initiative denied:** Where they show initiative, youth are discouraged or stop trying.

*In Kisarawe, the elders said:  
‘Young people want to do their own thing without following the law or listening to their elders.’*

*In Kisarawe, Masaki the youth were in charge of collecting the levy at the bus stand. Every bus from Dar has to pay 500 shillings of which 50% goes to the village government and 50% to the youth fund. The elders felt that the youth were becoming powerful and making their own decisions so, on the pretext that they don't believe the youth, they suspended the youth and ran the project themselves. But, unlike in the past, these same village government elders refused to say how much they were collecting and sending to the village office.*

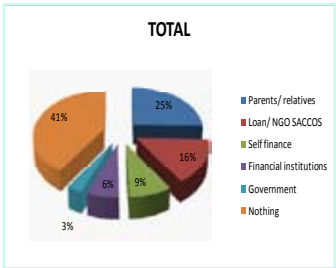
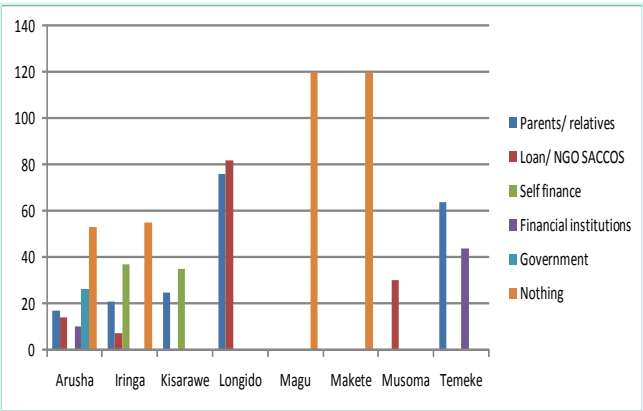
*In Musoma, where breakages of the water pipes have led to ponds, young people were arrested for using the ponds to water their vegetable gardens. They were accused of having broken the pipes deliberately.*

### Finding Seven: Loans and credit are scarce and questionable

One way of enabling young people to break out of the cycle of existing subsistence livelihoods is the availability of starting capital. Respondents were therefore asked if they received any support in setting up their businesses. The answer was overwhelmingly no.

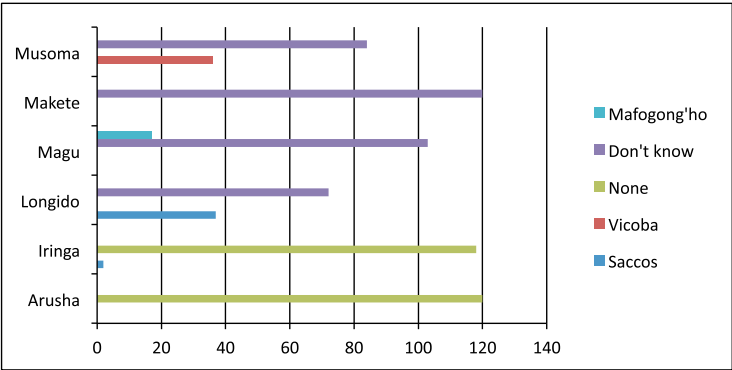
### Loans, savings and credit

#### Where do they find starting capital?



- Financing projects:** If you put together those who say they financed themselves and those who said they received no support, 50% had been left to fend for themselves, 26% had been given some support by parents and relatives, and only 22% had been given a loan by an NGO, SACCOS or a financial institution.

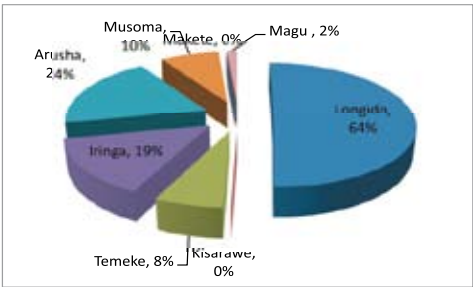
### Existence of savings and credit organisations



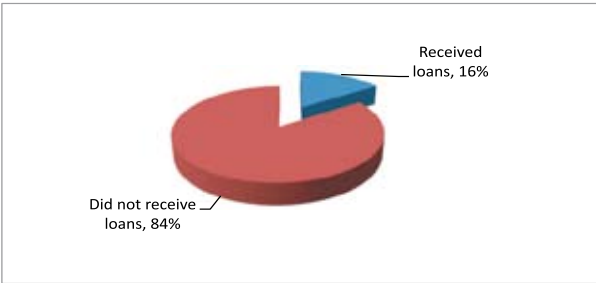
- Self help credit schemes:** Only five percent had heard of SACCOS and VICOBA, while 88% had either not heard of them or received no support from them. A very small number in Magu had their own traditional scheme.
- Loans:** When asked specifically whether they had ever received any loan, the overall percentage of those who received loans across districts surveyed was 16%. In Longido 64% received loans mainly because of the large number of NGOs working with the pastoralist communities. In Magu only 2% indicated to have received loans. In the discussions, they reiterated that there are generally no loans for young people.

### Loans for young people

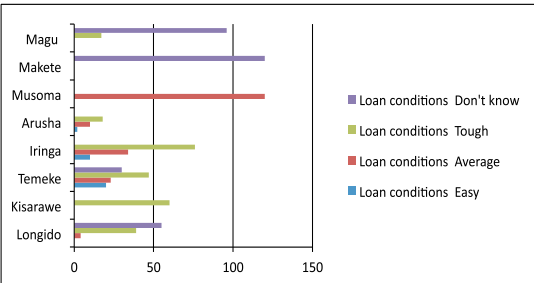
Percentage of those who received loans in each district



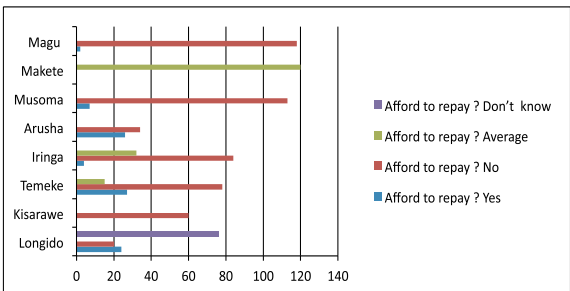
Total Percentage of those who received loans from the 8 districts



### Loan conditions



### Can they afford to repay?





- **Loan conditions:** Loan conditions were seen to be tough. If you remove the majority who say they don't know, 48% think that loan conditions are tough or unacceptable and the vast majority, 67%, think that young people cannot afford to repay the loans under such conditions. Therefore, young people are wary of loans because of these conditions. They are afraid of losing even the few possessions they have
- **Youth projects:** The lack of credit for young people goes hand in hand with a lack of projects for them. Apart from the occasional promise, no example of youth projects were mentioned.

*'Young people look for their own start up capital. No person or leader helps them to get the capital. No one gives loans to youth although Finca and Pride are there, but they have very tough conditions, ex. if you fail to pay they take all your things.'*

*~Iringa*



## Conclusion

It is difficult to understand why so little attention is paid to the needs and rights of the majority of young people. They are a very large population group in every community but their potential is largely being disregarded and wasted.

From the findings of this survey:

- Young people have few resources, and little access to loans (which is tied to their lack of resources).
- There are no projects for young people to be able to develop themselves.
- They are not expected to have a voice but only to provide, free of charge, any labour required of them.
- They are being let down by the education system. Sending them to secondary schools with few teachers and fewer books is not going to enable them to improve their lives.
- They have no institution or organisation of their own which enables them to look after their own interests and negotiate with government and other forces.
- Where young people have been given the chance to involve themselves in governance, they have proved enthusiastic and effective.

Therefore the most important finding of the whole survey is that across the board the needs and rights of young people are not being addressed at any level. If the survey does nothing more than turn people's attention to these needs and rights, it will have played a useful role.

Several key actions need to be taken:

1. National advocacy and activities to change attitudes towards young people and build a consensus that they are key players in development, not just as a convenient labour force (nguvu kazi) but as people with ideas and projects that can greatly benefit their communities if they are given the chance. Examples of effective youth participation should be published and disseminated.
2. Replace 'volunteering' or unpaid labour with a social entrepreneurship model whereby while real volunteering continues to be encouraged and young people are also supported and paid to develop their communities. They have the time and the energy to transform their communities but not as unpaid labour for decisions made by others.
3. Institutional guidelines should be developed by PORALG, together with the Department of Youth in the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Youth Development to ensure statutory representation of young people at all levels. In the long run, the push for an independent National Youth Council should be revived.

4. All communities should have a youth point/centre which acts as the hub for youth activities, organisation, training, livelihoods and recreation. These should be provided/built by the communities themselves.
5. Local councils and Constituency Development Funds should prioritise equipping and supporting these youth points.
6. The issue of loans and projects for young people should be revised and strengthened.

#### **What can be done? Youth for a change**

Young people can play a key role in ensuring their own development.

- **Youth centres:** With a little support from the community, they can build the youth centres themselves or rehabilitate existing, unused buildings. The youth centres would then act as the hub for youth activities at the community level. This would include entrepreneurial activities such as solar charging stations and internet cafes. The centres would then form a district youth network whose leaders would represent young people at district level.
- **Community resource persons:** Active young people in the youth centres should be trained as peer educators, health auxiliaries, adult education facilitators, paralegals, environmental aides etc. If they are given a basic allowance they can do this work very well. Constituency and local government funds could be allocated for this.
- **Entrepreneurship:** If trained in entrepreneurship, and given support through loans and infrastructure, young people will be able to break away from the stereotyped subsistence livelihoods which they still depend on.