

**CAN UGANDAN YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT BE SOLVED BY EARLY EXPOSURE TO
TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL SKILL ATTAINMENT? A CASE STUDY OF “WATOTO’S
ALUMNI” IMPROVING EMPLOYMENT STATUS FROM 2021-2023**

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LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**

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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
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Declaration.

I, **OPITI John Nicholas**, declare that the work in this Field Research Project report was done with my knowledge and ideas. My original work has never been submitted by any other student at the University or any other institution of learning.

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Abstract.

Youth unemployment is a significant challenge in the developing world. The African continent has especially been hit hard. This is partially due to the growing young population, the improved literacy, stability of the economy and political atmosphere in most developing countries in Africa, except for those still struggling with civil war and political unrest. Uganda's youth plight of unemployment is no different from other African countries. According to UBOS (2021), nationally, 60% of the population aged 5-30 years attended school. That means the bigger population of Uganda spends their time in schools and subsequently workplaces.

The working-age population is a central concept in labour statistics. The government must take youth unemployment as a serious challenge in social and economic development. Peter Magelah and Barbara in their report to ACODE (Peter Magelah, 2014) stated that youth unemployment in Uganda stands at between 64% and 70%, and about 400,000 youth are released annually into the job market to compete for approximately 9,000 available jobs in public service.

The research emphasized studying the early exposure of children to skilling in Technical and Vocational courses and observing if it can be a solution to youth unemployment in Uganda. The studies were done in Watoto Childcare Ministry's recipients 2021-2023 who have completed studies and are now out of the Childcare's support. The current beneficiaries of WCCM commonly known as Watoto Alumni are more successful compared to their previous lot. 94% of those who did technical courses are gainfully employed, and those from other academic courses also registered 45% employment improvement compared to 19% of previous Watoto Alumni of 2014-2019.

The studies also showed that the Ministry, through its Education Directorate, introduced vocational skilling in 2021 in the Watoto Schools. This is an initiative that children exposed to skilling programs right from primary 5 to Senior 3. The program was keenly tracked using a developed skills index for each child. The children were attached to workplaces and were expected to write reports. Termly report cards are designed to accommodate 30% skills attainment, 20% leadership development, and 50% academic performance. At the end of the day, the report was to measure a child's performance in all three aspects. At Hope Vocational and Technical Institute, an institute owned by Watoto Childcare Ministry, students get attached to continuous apprenticeships with companies in Kampala City and surrounding districts. These students are expected to work 2 days a week and study 3 days in class. The initiative

showed tremendous improvement in students' attitudes toward technical courses and henceforth soft skill development. 94% of the students were retained in their places of apprenticeship, and 30% were booked by employers while still studying. The major reasons for retention according to the Human Resource survey were, flexibility to learn and a positive attitude, the ability to relate to the vision, mission, and values of the organization, and the ability to learn and accept correction.

Another finding that was so crucial was the youth's lack of soft skills. The mismatched skills talked about were more of soft skills than hard skills much as hard skills were also the challenge. Many Human Resource personnel believe that hard skills can be learned as they are working with the organization. Once the employee has a positive attitude and is willing to be corrected by their supervisors.

These challenges of Ugandan youths' unemployment from the research, showed more poor parenthood and Uganda's education system that emphasises more academic excellence, with little emphasis on practical and attainment of soft skills. Parents are so busy looking for money and have left their children in the hands of maids and schools. Youth lack family and personal values that they should have developed from home, low attachment to family, and low character that make them manipulative, dishonest, and ungodly. Family principles are not passed on to them.

Early exposure of children to skilling helps build some of these gaps with continuous mentorship and guidance. Still, a skilled person with good character is the pride of the community because he/she is fruitful, while a skilled with is character is a community problem. He/she is dangerous.

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May God Bless you all

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List of Acronyms.

“Watoto Alumni”: A person who has been under the care of Watoto Childcare from childhood.

“Watoto mothers”: Watoto female employees who care for Watoto’s children in the different houses in Watoto Village.

“Watoto Celebration Centre”: This is a Watoto Church building where people come to pray on Sunday.

“Father hearts”: The men who are walking with the Watoto children as a father figure.

Gainfully employed: For Watoto Church standards, a gainfully employed person can afford the comfortable lifestyle of the community he/she is residing. The average earning is 400,000 Uganda shillings per month.

Post-institutional syndrome: Deficits or disabilities in social and life skills, which develop after a person has spent a long period living in mental hospitals, prisons, or other remote institutions.

UBOS: Uganda Bureau of Statistics

OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

ILO: International Labour Organization

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.

ACODE: Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment.

EPRC: Economic Policy Research Centre.

HVTI: Hope Vocational and Technical Institute.

SDG: Sustainable Development Goal.

DIT: Directorate for Industrial Training.

UCE: Uganda Certificate of Education

Chapter One: Introduction.

1. Situational description.

Economic growth and employment growth are not always linked, but jobs are crucial for ending poverty and promoting shared prosperity. For people living in poverty and those who are vulnerable, employment is the primary way to escape poverty. However, more than one billion working-age individuals are not part of the formal labour force. Most of them are women who, even when they are employed, are often placed in informal, unsecured, and low-paying jobs. Additionally, they are expected to perform unpaid care work. 200 million people are unemployed, including 75 million youth worldwide. At least an additional 600 million jobs are needed globally by 2030 to keep employment rates stable and to keep up with population growth (World Bank Annual report, 2015)

Youth unemployment is a significant challenge in the developing world, as a growing number of young workers struggle to secure jobs in sectors that are mainly made up of small-scale firms in manufacturing and services (Livia Alfonsi, Oriana Bandiera, Vittorio Bassi, Robin Burgess, Imran Rasul, Munshi Sulaiman, Anna Vitali, 2020). As stated by Livia Alfonsi et al,¹ the two questions must be answered. On the supply side, why don't workers acquire the skills that can help them secure jobs? On the demand side, what prevents firms from hiring these workers? Answering these questions is important. How development proceeds in the coming decades will be largely determined by whether these young workers can be employed in good jobs.

Uganda's total population was estimated at nearly 43 million people of which 51 percent were female while 71% lived in rural areas² (UBOS, 2021). Nationally, 60 % of the population aged 5-30 years attended school. That means the bigger population of Uganda spends their time in schools and subsequently workplaces. These young populations are crucial for any government development and poverty alleviation. It contributes to achieving the Uganda Vision 2040 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Specifically, no poverty (SDG1), it promotes well-being for all (SDG 3), quality education (SDG 4), advances gender equality and

¹ [Tackling Youth Unemployment: Evidence From a Labor Market Experiment in Uganda - Alfonsi - 2020 - Econometrica - Wiley Online Library](#)

² [11_2022NLFS_2021_main_report.pdf \(ubos.org\)](#)

empowerment of women and girls (SDG 5), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), industry, innovation, and improved infrastructure (SDG 9), reduces inequality (SDG 10), and promotes inclusivity at all levels (SDG 16)³

Youth employment must remain a top priority in Uganda to ensure meaningful youth participation. Young people's voices need to be heard, and their needs must be addressed and considered for the country to achieve its dream of becoming a middle-income economy and reach the 2040 goal while contributing positively to the SDGs 2030. Therefore, it is the responsibility of all stakeholders, including education institutes, researchers, policymakers, curriculum developers, development partners, and parents, to address youth unemployment and its impacts on society. This issue must be handled with a sober mind for the sake of political stability and economic growth in the country.

The working-age population is a central concept in labour statistics. The government must take youth unemployment as a serious challenge in social and economic development. Peter Magelah et al in their report to ACODE (Peter Magelah, 2014) stated that youth unemployment in Uganda stands at between 64% and 70%, and about 400,000 youth are released annually into the job market to compete for approximately 9,000 available jobs. The report by Hildah Namuleme in the Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC), indicates that youth unemployment in Uganda increased from 6.54% in 2021 to 6.58% in 2022 and UBOS conducted a labour force survey in 2019/2020 that found that about 30% of the youth who are qualified in Uganda are unable to find gainful employment⁴.

The Ugandan constitution defines “the youth” as those between the ages of 18 and 35 (Uganda, 1995). Young people who are unemployed or not fully employed often engage in risky practices such as drug abuse and gambling. Uganda has the second youngest population in the world, with more than three-quarters (78 per cent) (Makumbi-Oola, 2020) of its citizens below the age of 35⁵. This youthful population is projected to double in the next 25 years, putting pressure on the government to create more investment projects and programs that generate jobs and absorb the unemployed youth.

³ [List of all the Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\) \(jagranjosh.com\)](https://www.jagranjosh.com)

⁴ eprcug.org/blog/youth-unemployment-the-case-for-vocational-training

⁵ [U-Report | UNICEF Uganda](#)

As stated by Albert Rees and Wayne Gray⁶ (Albert Rees and Wayne Gray, 1982) youth unemployment can be divided into two principal components. One of these arises from the high turnover among young people. Most young adults' unemployment is often observed to come from dissatisfaction with the available job options, a gap between expectations or aspirations, and the realities of low wages and poor working conditions that result in high turnover even when jobs are available, therefore, unemployment is high. The second principle comes from job mismatch. The skills attained by most young people do not match the market demands.

Besides, the burden of caring for the young Ugandan population is on the shoulders of a few working population. The Employment to Population Ratio (EPR) in the year 2021 indicates that 43% of Uganda's population is employed⁷. This has caused issues of increased corruption, and embezzlement of funds to care for family, and relatives by some individuals. These factors have led to slow country development, moral degradation, deteriorating social services to the communities, and hence health complications for some parents, due to work, social and family demands on them.

The government is struggling to eradicate poverty in Uganda, and despite several efforts toward poverty eradication, unfortunately, only a few educated youths are benefiting. Despite the growing population of Uganda, most of the youth population is either incompetent or does not want to work because of their high expectations and undermining of jobs, The majority of youth do not want to start from a low level of life due to the high cost of education spent on them, and false hope that leads them to undermine low paying jobs, technical and vocational jobs. There are high expectations, despite incompetence, mismatched skills to work markets, and insufficient soft skills to match the working and social environment. The effect of these is seen in an increase in the percentage of crime cases, violence and some even joining terrorist groups.

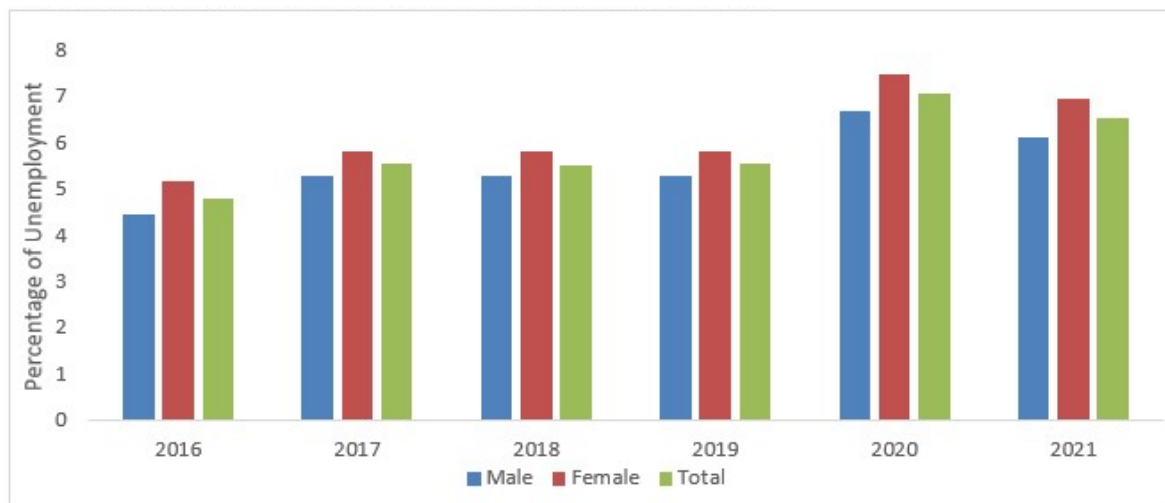
This trend of youth unemployment has left parents, civil organizations, and other stakeholders wondering. After spending a lot of money on educating children, what are the values of education in Uganda? Although the Government introduced free education in Uganda under universal primary education and universal secondary education, students must have uniforms and supplies that often parents struggle to get in rural schools. Parents who are not convinced with the quality of UPE and USE, often take their children to private schools which are far more expensive, but children come up with good grades. Averagely for a Ugandan child to

⁶ [Family Effects in Youth Employment \(nber.org\)](https://www.nber.org/papers/w10000)

⁷ [Uganda profile - Uganda Bureau of Statistics \(ubos.org\)](https://ubos.org/uganda-profile)

complete an education the combined cost is 22,325,000 Uganda shillings⁸. This cost goes higher with children studying in private and international schools. Yet after completion of school, children are not employed. Those who are employed are either in different fields that pay far less the cost of their education or working in informal sectors that do not need their qualification. Uganda Daily Monitor Newspaper, December,06,2022 reported that 60% of Ugandans earn 200,000 Uganda shillings or less per month⁹. Yet, the unemployment status is on the rise as seen in the graph extract below.

Graph 1. shows Uganda's youth unemployment rate from 2016-2021.



Source: Authors' computation using data obtained from the World Development Indicators (2021)

It is evident from the graph that addressing youth unemployment in Uganda is crucial. Youth Unemployment in Uganda: A Worsening Plight)¹⁰

Unemployment poses a bigger challenge for young adults raised in institutional homes, who lack parental care, guidance, mentoring, and networking opportunities. This was evident in what Sheron and Julia stated in the Journal of Child and Adolescent Behaviour (Sheron Gomera, Julia Mutambara, 2020). Orphanages offered opportunities for graduate orphans to survive effectively and independently after being reintegrated back into society. However, they face challenges with emotional and psychological adjustment to the new environment which

⁸ [How Much It Cost To Go To School In Uganda - 2024/2025 \(ugandafact.com\)](https://ugandafact.com/2024/2025/how-much-it-cost-to-go-to-school-in-uganda/)

⁹ [60% of Ugandans earn Shs200,000 per month | Monitor](https://www.monitor.co.ug/news/60-of-ugandans-earn-shs200000-per-month-|monitor)

¹⁰ [issue15_A3.pdf \(acode-u.org\)](https://www.acode-u.org/issue15_A3.pdf)

was influenced by the way they socialize. It emerged during the same study¹¹ that orphanages had challenges with locating relatives, failure to bond, bitterness, isolation, self-identity, unforgiveness, dependency syndrome, securing employment, cynicism, and lack of support system. These children in most cases are the target of crime, and exploitation because they lack attachment and belonging to or people they account to. But more sadly, they are always marginalized, and tagged names. In some of these challenges, children always find themselves so difficult to get employed in the formal job market and many people find it difficult to work with them due to their unique post-institutional syndrome characteristics. Watoto childcare is not different from the other institutional childcarers in Uganda. Some of the challenges mentioned above have been exhibited by the children called Watoto Alumni. These are adults who have been Watoto beneficiaries and are now out of the Watoto childcare support system.

This study was carried out in the Watoto Childcare Ministry on how they have overcome the challenge of the post-institutional syndrome and improved the Watoto Alumni 2021-2023 employment.

Watoto Childcare Ministries, commonly known as Watoto Community Care Ministry (WCCM) is a faith-based organization under Watoto Church with a clear mission statement to empower vulnerable women and children through Christ-centred holistic care for Community transformation. Watoto Childcare is a non-organisational arm of Watoto Church. The Watoto Church has a strong philosophy of being a “family”. “The belief that Watoto is a family made up of people from all over the world who work together to celebrate Christ and care for the community has made the church strong and vibrant. This has enabled it to support the community, leading to social transformation all while keeping Christ at the center of its activities. “The above statement is framed from the strong vision of Watoto church. *“We are an English-speaking, cell-based community church, celebrating Christ, growing and multiplying as each one reaches one; touching those around us with the love of Jesus, bringing healing to the cities and the nations.”*

Founded back in 1984 by Gary Skinner and his wife Marilyn Skinner, Watoto is a global family of people working together to celebrate Christ and care for the community. The current mission operations of Watoto Church are in Uganda and South Sudan with support from various international offices in the USA, Australia, Canada, Brazil, Japan, Hongkong, the UK, and

¹¹ [When Home is Not Home: Challenges Faced by Children from Orphanage after being Reintegrated Back into Society | IFE Psychologia \(ajol.info\)](#)

Germany among others. Watoto Church currently has 16 celebration centres in both Uganda and Juba where more than 71,000 committed church members congregate for their weekly worship and fellowship. Watoto Church has focused on the mid-term future to reach 36 celebration centres reaching and transforming more than 100,000 members with the love of Christ. The growth and expansion shall be within the urban centres where God has called the church to minister to his people. As a Church, Watoto Church expresses its love for Christ by caring for the community through Childcare Ministry and Neighbourhood programs where orphaned and vulnerable children and women are cared for. Watoto Church restores dignity to the defenceless, poor, and rejected women, and Children in the community.

So far, Watoto Church has rescued, raised, and rebuilt the lives of more than 5000 orphaned and vulnerable children and more than 4000 women across Uganda and South Sudan. Watoto Church believes that these women and children do not just need material provisions, but they need love and a family where they belong, are loved, and cared for, and where their needs are met. Therefore, God through the founders, pastor Gary Skinner and his wife Marilyn Skinner created families for these children where the child lives and grows normally together with a mother and other siblings. This started in 1994 to care for orphans, and widows from HIV/AIDS burden and civil war that Uganda was coming from. This led to the birth of Watoto Childcare as an NGO branch of the church to take care of the vulnerable in the community.

The Watoto Church believes in a family setting, and these children are kept in a normal family setting of a home with a mother, who comes with two biological children and is given six other rescued children to care for in a normal family setting. The rescued Watoto children are kept in a normal home setting in Watoto village, similar to a family home but without a father present. The village is organized with a circle of 10 houses, each housing 8 children and a mother. The circle is supervised by a senior mother who reports to the section mother. These mothers are also vulnerable women who are rescued from the community. Some were abandoned by their husband, victims of lengthy periods of civil war, and HIV/AIDS affected or infected.

There are three Watoto children's villages with 392 recruited caregivers called "Watoto mothers" with 3136 children living within the villages under the care of the "Watoto mothers." The children are identified by social workers with the support of District probation offices and police to bring them under Watoto care. These are abandoned children between the ages of 0-12 years. Within these settings, Watoto raises an all-round child by holistically meeting their primary and secondary needs.

Watoto Childcare Ministry has another program called “the Neighbourhood program”, formerly Living Hope, in response to the dire need of other vulnerable women in the community. After lengthy periods of civil unrest and HIV AIDS in Uganda, a large pool of women who were always the victims of war were forced into deplorable inhumane conditions in slums without decent shelter, income, medical care, and education for their children. Without anyone or anywhere to turn to, they were forced to do menial jobs with their children surviving on garbage and scrap metal collection. They were exposed to all forms of environmental hazards yet without adequate finances to support their medical care. Watoto Church through the Neighbourhood program, responded by embracing them and enrolling them into a two-year program that eventually transformed and restored them to dignity. Through the “Keep a Girl in School” program- KAGIS, Watoto Church supported the education of girls from poor backgrounds who cannot afford basic items like sanitary pads to remain at school. Watoto Church leverages the KAGIS program to holistically meet other areas that cumulatively promote the education of girls in schools. These areas include the WASH program where water, toilets, and general health and hygiene needs are met. Watoto Church seeks to grow and expand this program to reach and support more girls in other schools in both Uganda and Juba-South Sudan.

Lastly, as Watoto Church, through Watoto Childcare Ministry expanded its operation of caring for the vulnerable children and women in the community, the needs for the children’s education became prominent. Watoto schools were opened in all the Watoto villages to allow these children to acquire an education. Watoto Church believes that a transformed leader is someone who carries a Christ character and lives as a responsible Christian and a productive citizen. This is done through nurturing and raising leaders through relevant training tracks for both academic and non-academic programs. Watoto Education Directorate which oversees the education of these children is one of the sections of Watoto Childcare Ministry with the mandate stated in its mission statement of “raising the next generations of Uganda leaders by pursuing excellence in academic and practical skills, integrity in conduct, and moral values so that each one becomes a responsible Christian and productive citizen of Uganda”. And the vision of “We are a Christian School raising godly leaders for transformation”. Due to the high need for education in the war-affected areas, Watoto Childcare had to open schools in 2 Watoto villages in Mpigi and Wakiso districts, and open other schools in Watoto village in Laminadera, Omoro districts. Additionally, Watoto supports children in Juba and surrounding areas in South Sudan, and other children who do not fit into the categories of children brought in Watoto

villages but are vulnerable in other schools through a Neighbourhood program called Keep a Girl at School (KAGIS) for vulnerable girls specifically. Other academically bright but vulnerable children in the community are supported by yet another program called “seed project” in the scope of 10 10-kilometre radius of the Watoto villages. These vulnerable children are identified with the support of community leaders, and the community schools to support the community where the churches are planted and for the community to buy in the vision of Watoto church.

Watoto Education Directorate operates 3 primary schools, and 3 secondary schools in the three Watoto villages and 1 technical institute within Watoto village in the Mpigi district.

Watoto education directorate schools offer Uganda’s national curriculum in secondary schools and Accelerated Christian Curriculum (ACE) in primary. This approach is to give children core Christian values and competent skills which are inadequate in the national curriculum at the lower level of Uganda education. To foster competence, teaching and learning are integrated with biblical principles, emphasizing leadership, skills, and talent development. This ensures that the children come out of school with excellence in their leadership ability, skill, Godly character, and productivity in whatever place they will be.

Watoto Childcare Ministry through the Watoto Education Directorate believes that these components and Watoto education pathways will give a child a holistic education and the child will become a productive and responsible citizen of Uganda.

Depending on the duration of the courses, these students are expected to graduate and enter the marketplace as professionals in different fields. However, as per a 2019 survey carried out by the leadership of Watoto Ministry, most of the children struggled after graduation. Yet the majority were on private scholarships in higher institutions of learning. The Ministry invested heavily in their education. They failed to enter University on merit through Government scholarships because of their performance at either the Ordinary Secondary or Advanced Secondary level. Of those who graduated, it was found out from the survey that only 19% had gainfully employed jobs. Even for those who got the jobs, there was found to be a mismatch between the field studied and the job they were doing. Some had changed their course completely. Further surveys indicated that the children were at a disadvantage in the marketplace. Those who came out of the schools, commonly known as “Watoto Alumni” were found to have inadequate networking ability, they were isolated, incapable of coping with external pressure, entitled, and lacked work ethics. Many had not built the resilience that their

fellow youth in the street had developed. These factors forced some of them to come back to Watoto Village for assistance while some came seeking volunteer opportunities at Watoto Celebration Centres at a rate as low as 230,000 Uganda shillings per month to survive with the hope that with time they would be absorbed into the system.

While the issue of unemployment is national, and both the government and civil organizations are battling it, it was imperative for Watoto Childcare Ministry to address it since these youths are homeless or rescued from extremely impoverished families. The hope was that, through education, they could improve their family's status and transform their community. Seeing a child rescued from a mother who was hawking on the street, or a homeless youth coming out of university without a proper job, was discouraging both for the poor mother and Watoto Childcare Ministry. The way these children were brought up in Watoto Villages made it difficult for them to fit back into the communities they were rescued from.

Subsequently, some of these children became bitter toward both Watoto and their parents who abandoned them to the extent that some of them did not even want to be identified as “Alumni of Watoto” after transitioning out of Watoto Village. They felt disappointed after failing to get the job and failing to fit in the community. Typically, the post-institutional syndrome was exhibited in some of the Watoto Alumni, yet some were doing well and appreciative of Watoto's support.

This situation is not different from most Ugandan youth. Most Ugandan youths are bitter against the Government, universities, and their relatives for not helping them acquire the right skills. The Uganda education curriculum is outdated and does not prepare youth with the required skills needed in the market. It is so common to find a graduate riding a motorbike commonly known as “boda-boda” in Uganda, or a graduate youth hawking on the streets of Ugandan cities. In worse situations, some youths have been seen collecting rubbish on streets with university gowns. Much as this could not be verified whether he is a graduate of the university or not, the point he sent was clear. Their discontent with the education system is that it does not allow them to get jobs after graduation¹². Some youths are earning as little as 200,000 Uganda shillings or even less from private companies that want to manipulate them. This makes them remain in poverty despite working. This is due to low wages and the absence of social networks and social benefits. Such earnings do not translate to the heavy investment

¹² [PHOTO: Jobless Kyambogo Graduate in Gown Spotted Collecting Garbage on City Streets - Campus Bee](#)

parents/guidance put into their education, especially in the era of commercialization of education in Uganda where some schools charge as much as three million shillings termly, and with little government effort to regulate the fees, since Uganda operate in free economy society. The problem of poor attitudes, laziness, and job mismatch in the workplace is frequently reported, but it appears that it is not being taken seriously by many. It may be necessary for policy reviews to closely examine the informal sector and integrate appropriate skills and methodologies to assist young people in acquiring the necessary competencies for the job market. Yet many are so entitled. They feel it is their right to be taken care of by the Government. The government must give them jobs. Some youths have gone to the extent of selling their parents' land after school to get better lives in urban areas. Parents are forced to obey, or risk being beaten, or to some extent killed by these angry and bitter youth¹³. Some of these causes of children killing their parents over land are many. But frustration and yearning for better lives in the urban areas after education cannot be underrated.

Many people fail to understand why some "Boda bodas" and taxi drivers are often so reckless on the roads. What they don't know is that some of these young drivers are educated graduates who have been unable to secure their dream job and are now resorting to driving taxis or riding boda bodas as a means of survival. These individuals are often frustrated, and this frustration manifests itself in their driving behaviours. Unfortunately, this frustration can also lead to a loss of critical thinking skills, which may explain why many of these young drivers can be found at political rallies and pressure group meetings. Sadly, this recklessness on the roads results in many deaths, violent incidents, and an increase in crime rates across the country, with some drivers even turning to radical religious groups as a result. This incident has led to questions about why parents invest heavily in their children's education only for them to end up working as barbers or street vendors. Instead, why not consider taking the children for skilling courses so that they can become professionals in fields such as cosmetology, culinary arts, or any other skill they may be interested in? This could potentially save the parents from spending money on professional degree courses that may not guarantee jobs for their children. Are parents doing enough to guide their children toward the right path of education and help them develop their careers, skills, and talents from an early age?

To answer the above concerns, Watoto Childcare Ministry leadership carried out several restructurings, especially in the Education Department in the years 2018-2021 intending to

¹³ [Two Siblings Arrested for Murdering Their Father Over Land in Kibaale – The Black Examiner](#)

improve the system with the sole aim of producing quality students who meet market demands, transformative leaders who use their skills and talents, nurtured to be productive citizen and responsible Christians. Several initiatives were introduced at the Education Directorate, among them was “work placement”, the continuous apprenticeship, where children are attached to work from the age of 16 years in different offices and report on credit hours. Children are attached to mentors at schools, and the father figure “Father Heart” walks with them as the father, a lovely mentor at school who follows their academic, skills, and talent development. Each of these initiatives is measured using developed indices and intentionally reported in their termly report cards. This clearly states the student’s scores in academic areas were out of 50%, skills acquisition was out of 30%, and leadership development was out of 20%. Watoto Education Directorate is the only institute with a unique report card developed that caters for holistic child development in academics, skills, and leadership.

At the tertiary level, the technical institute (Hope Vocational and Technical Institute-HVTI) introduced a study program work placement in which a student studies three days in class and two days is placed in different workplaces. These students are supervised by both the employer supervisor and the instructors weekly until they are done with their studies; contrary to a normal internship where a student goes for a one-month internship.

The summary of the initiative led to the Watoto education model as stated in the Education Framework. Attached below is the Watoto education pathway with an emphasis on skilling and talent development at all levels.

Table 1. Watoto education core foundation.

Foundations	
Christ-centered teaching & learning	Education is provided in a manner that all subjects draw out the Lord Jesus Christ as the foundation of knowledge. Learning is bible based.
Character & Leadership development	A teacher is the model to the child and, demonstrates, trains, and teaches leadership and character to each child

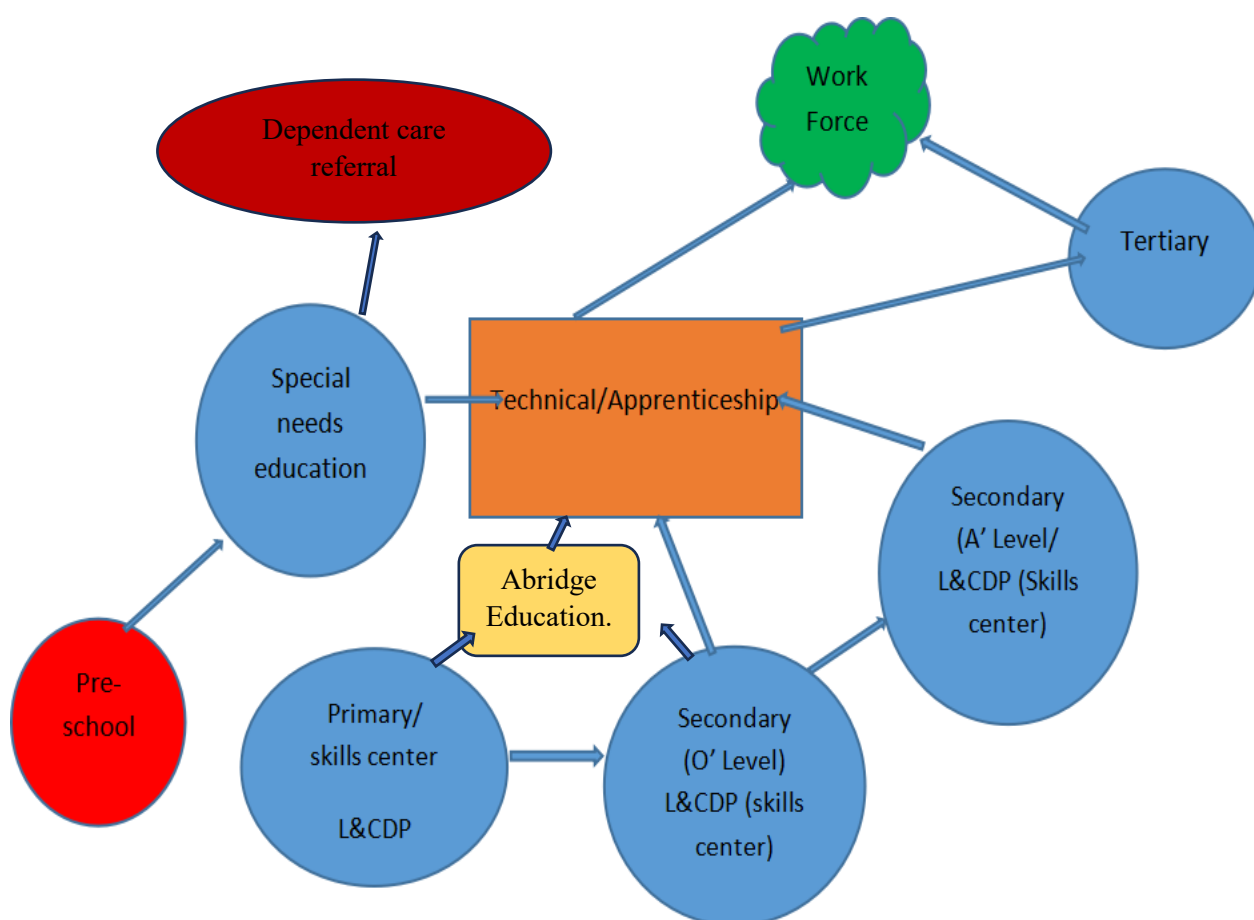
Gifts & Talents	Each child is uniquely gifted and, therefore a Watoto school is well-resourced, to draw out the unique gifts and talents of every learner
Teaching & Facilitation	A teacher is a facilitator of learning, drawing out the foundational understanding of each child and nurturing their full potential to become what God wants them to be.
Learning Community	A school is a learning community and, each child is encouraged to embrace a culture of learning. Both teachers and learners are students of each other.

Table 2. The education components of Watoto schools are structured as summarized in.

Components of Education	
Pre-school	All children start school and acquire the foundational knowledge necessary to support their future learning needs such as literacy, numeracy, language & social skills
Special needs	A child identified with learning difficulties is supported with special education and, assessed for unique gifts that are then, nurtured & enhanced.
Primary	A child goes through elementary education according to the Watoto curriculum and is introduced to skills to attract & identify gifts
Abridged Education	Abridged classes are provided for children whose entry age is above the class level. Tests & interviews are used to match the child to a class
Secondary	A child who progresses normally is introduced to secondary school learning and, matched to a skills & innovation hub according to their skills report from primary

Vocation	All Watoto schools' students go through vocation training to attain mastery of skill which they may pursue to attain accreditation or, carry out a 1-year apprenticeship
Tertiary	Students wishing for Watoto tertiary scholarship shall have acquired and mastered a skill, exhibit leadership & character with, consistent academic milestones
Skills, talent development & Experiential practice	Elementary & secondary schools acquire a report on skills. All post-secondary students will acquire a 6–12-month volunteer & apprenticeship certificate.

Fig 1. Watoto education pathway/module.



Watoto education pathway. An extract from Watoto Education Framework 2020

With continuous tracing and tracking of performance based on the initiatives put together, there has been great improvement in performance, bonding between the father's heart to children, mentors, and children, and employment status improvement from 19% of students who were gainfully employed in 2019 of the first survey to 48% by 2023 employed. 94% of the HVTI students are retained at their companies of work placement and almost are absorbed within the first year of their completion.

1.1 Major Research Questions

1.1.1. My Action Question:

Can the Government of Uganda improve employment among the youths by adopting the education model Watoto Childcare?

1.1.2 The insight questions.

What are the major gaps in Uganda's Education Ministry and Sports that are making most youths unemployed?

1.1.2.1 Subsidiary questions.

1. What skills are missing in the Ugandan youth for them to be employable in the 21st-century market?
2. How can these skills gaps be bridged to better prepare youth graduates for the job market?
3. Is high unemployment among youths in Uganda because of inadequate skills, poor attitudes, or inadequate networking?
4. Have parents, counsellors, and teachers played their roles in building children's skills, and characters necessary for adulthood productivity?

1.2. Literature Review.

1.2.1 Introduction

Uganda has one of the fastest-growing and youngest populations in the world. While this can be a good foundation for economic growth, it also poses an immense challenge to the country in the form of widespread youth unemployment, which has threatened the political stability and the sustainable development of Uganda. These are seen by the number of youths flocking to informal businesses and joining the unhealthy venture, being hired to assassinate political rivals, at as low as 50,000 Uganda shillings¹⁴. Many are joining terrorist groups, and pressure groups due to distress after failing to find work to do (Sibena, 2022).

According to OECD data, the unemployed are people of working age who are without work, are available for work, and have taken specific steps to find work. The application of this definition results in estimates of unemployment rates that are more internationally comparable than estimates based on national definitions of unemployment. This indicator is measured in several unemployed people as a percentage of the labour force, and it is seasonally adjusted. The labour force is defined as the total number of unemployed people plus those in employment¹⁵.

In most African countries, including Uganda, unemployment levels have continued to increase and have remained extremely high despite considerable efforts to educate both children and adults. Skills mismatch is adding to the youth employment crisis. Skills mismatch in youth labour markets has become a persistent and growing trend. Over-education and over-skills coexist with under-education and under-skills, and increasingly with skills obsolescence brought about by long-term unemployment. Such a mismatch makes solutions to the youth employment crisis more difficult to find and more - time-consuming to implement (ILO, 2013).

¹⁴ [Street teenagers paid Shs50,000 to kill, rob | Monitor](#)

¹⁵ [Employment - Labour force - OECD Data](#)

According to Peter and Barbara's report to ACODE¹⁶, about 400,000 youth are released annually into the job market to compete for approximately 9,000 available jobs. Of this, only 30% of the youth who are institutionally qualified in Uganda are unable to find jobs, and the situation is even worse for semi-skilled and unskilled youth. Youth who remain unemployed or underemployed and do not exploit their full potential are often associated with high incidences of drug abuse and gambling. The National Planning Authority further compounded this problem by stating that 700,000 people joined the job market every year regardless of qualifications, but only 90,000 got something to do which shows that 87% of people are ready to work but cannot find jobs. Mr. Patrick Kaboyo, the Secretary for Education of Non-State Education Institutions in a Daily Monitor's article further stated that an individual who invests in education expects to harvest some dividends. However, graduates armed with degrees step into the professional arena with high hopes and expect a high-paying position without the practical skills that today's employers seek only to get hit with the harsh reality. Many of these graduates resort to criminal activities like prostitution, and robbery due to idleness and trying to look for a means of survival. However, the report contradicts what Philemon Okillong said in his report. According to Okillong's report (Okillong, 2021), the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) revealed that youth unemployment (for persons between 18-30 years) increased from 12.7 per cent in 2012/13 to 13.0 per cent in 2019/20, despite a reduction in the overall national unemployment rate from 11.1 per cent to 10 per cent during the same period. This implies that as Uganda's youth attempt to transition to the labour market, they face increasing uncertainty about finding employment despite gaining an education (especially secondary and tertiary education). Yet still, many youths in Uganda engage in jobs that they do not desire but they have no option (Ssembajjwe, 2020). According to the State of Higher Education and Training in Uganda 2018/19 report, more than 90 per cent of the students who enrolled in higher institutions can complete their programs successfully, with the number of students graduating increasing by 1.03 per cent to 78,300 between 2017/18 and 2018/19.

1.2.2. Skills gaps in the Ugandan youth for them to be employable in the 21st-century market.

Global competition, the internet, and the widespread use of technology all indicate that the 21st-century economy has brought about new challenges for both employers and employees.

¹⁶ [infosheet26.pdf \(acode-u.org\)](#)

For the African youth to effectively compete in this new global economy, they must acquire the necessary skills demanded by today's job market, which has evolved. After graduation, students often realize the importance of transferable skills. Mastery of skills in their discipline was not enough to secure a post-graduation position (Anna Petra Whitehall, Laura G. Hill, Denise M. Yost and Kimberlee K. Kidwell, 2016). Still, according to many, people graduating from colleges and universities often lack the skills needed in the world of work (Kay A. Hodge, Janet L. Lear, 2011). According to Halah Ahmed Alismail, and Patrick McGuire, (2015) survey, many employers believe that higher education is failing in its role to adequately develop needed skills in students. In higher education, professors can influence students by promoting the skills businesses are seeking in future employees and helping students achieve these skills through course activities. EconoTime critics agreed with Halah and McGuire by stating that children are educated in a system that was designed for a world that no longer exists. There is a gap between what individuals expect they will require and what they have been taught in school among students. Just 27% of students say they are well-equipped for future positions, while 22% say they are not at all prepared¹⁷. According to a 2019 survey, (Cope, 2019) two out of five employers believe school and college graduates are unprepared for employment. One-third say they are dissatisfied with the quantity of relevant work experience young people have. High schools, according to critics, are not doing enough to equip students for life after graduation and in-demand careers. Some teachers believe that an effort to improve career and technical curricula would engage more students in learning and better equip them for the high-demand occupations and adaptability that the future will need. However, the curriculum isn't focused enough on offering the sort of learning that will better prepare students for life after graduation. The market demand has changed yet students are being trained in outdated skills that were only relevant to the colonial era. I cannot agree more with Professor Augustus Nuwagaba, director of Reeve Consults Uganda, who believes the problem lies in the education system. He says the country is stuck with the colonial education system that trains students to be clerks, teachers, and lawyers. Times have changed, the country needs metal fabricators, carpenters, and mechanics. Foreign investors also bemoan the lack of skilled workers in Uganda. The International Labour Organization (ILO) says training institutions continue to produce graduates whose skills do not match what the market wants. This mismatch makes it harder to tackle youth unemployment (ILO, 2013). No wonder the UNICEF Education Commission

¹⁷ [Are schools preparing students for the real world of today's workforce? - EconoTimes](#)

reported that around 3 in 4 youth lack skills needed for employment. Students are not trained through a broad range of abilities from the beginning of their education. They are not introduced to a diverse set of job preparation programs, and school systems are not focused on effective career and social outcomes. With mismatches in the markets, most of these youth are stressed and frustrated. Skill mismatch between the education system and employers' expectations. The mismatch between the type of education provided at schools and the requirements of the labour market is a reason that has been mentioned by the academic literature (Nebil Kellow, Gezahegn Ayele, Ph.D. Hayat Yusuf, 2010) the youth from the PYC that participated in the interviews and the focus group discussions (e.g. the interviews with Denis, Immaculate, William as well as both focus group discussions) as well as the observations by Nebil. It has been stated that the Ugandan (or more generally the "African") school system is far too theoretical and is not preparing the students in an adequate way to find a job after graduation as they lack employable skills, even though the job falls into their field of study. As it is observed, most of the unemployed youth in urban areas went through the best education system that their parents could afford which is a sign that the education and skills provided at school are not relevant enough for employers. Kellow urged a similar conclusion as he shows that an increase in education like high school or higher comes with higher unemployment rates for this youth (Kellow, 2010 P.11). Universities put emphasis on producing good grades in exams and have given too little attention to the labour market requirements. Even though Uganda made massive improvements regarding educating its population over the last 2-3 decades and more and more youth are enjoying a high level of education, this education is not relevant enough in the labour market for the youth to find a job.

1.2.2 Skills gap to be bridged to better prepare youth graduates for the job market.

As technology has taken over many routine tasks, it has also created new job opportunities requiring non-routine cognitive and social skills such as creativity and emotional intelligence. In today's fast-paced world, workers need to keep up with the latest developments and continuously acquire new skills. This requires a flexible mindset, a positive attitude towards lifelong learning, and a curious nature. With the rapid advancement of technology and artificial intelligence, it is becoming increasingly challenging for young people who lack computer literacy to secure employment. The days of being able to rely on traditional roles such as secretarial work and clerking are over. More soft skills like communication, collaboration, and critical analysis among others are needed to be retained at the workplace. As Professor Augustus

Nuwagaba stated above, the much-needed skills by the country besides soft skills are technical skills such as metal fabrication, carpentry, mechanics, cosmetology, electrical installation, fashion design, and machine operation, among others. These skills are in constant demand. There shall be people who need builders, new fashion clothes, and their cars to be repaired daily. Besides, students must be taught key qualities such as analytical thinking, innovation, creativity, and interpersonal skills, communication skills, entrepreneurship which are in high demand by businesses. The skillset is generally understood to encompass a range of competencies, including critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, meta-cognition, communication, digital and technological literacy, civic responsibility, and global awareness (Sharon Kim, Mahjabeen Raza, and Edward Seidman, 2019). These skills are critically missing in most Ugandan youth today. As stated by Robert Jenkins, the UNICEF Director of Education, “An inspired, skilled generation of children and young people is critical for the prosperity, progression, and success of societies and economies. Yet, most children and young people across Uganda have been failed by their education systems and parents. Leaving them uneducated, uninspired, and unskilled the perfect storm for unproductivity. Investment in cost-effective, proven solutions to fast-track learning and skills development for today’s generation and future generations is urgently needed to address this crisis. These skills both soft and hard are critically needed in the work market today. Failure to possess them leads to youth struggling to get employment. However, the OECD added a very important component for youth to be easily employed. Attitudes and values are key components of learning that help students navigate toward well-being and the future they want (OECD, 2019). These are the fundamental principles and beliefs that influence one’s choices, judgments, behaviours, and actions on the path toward individual, societal, and environmental well-being. Strengthening and renewing trust in institutions and among the community hinges on developing core shared values of citizenship (respect, fairness, personal and social responsibility, integrity, and self-awareness) at school to build more inclusive, fair, and sustainable economies and societies. Knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values are not competing concepts; they are developed interdependently. As schools, workplaces and communities become more ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse, it will be more important than ever to emphasize the inter-relatedness of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values.

The argument by Econo-time continues that although education is important, it is not the same as a working environment. Education equips people to learn and adjust, whereas training prepares them to work. This, therefore, means students ought to have time to experience the

working environment before completing school. The argument further went on that the education system is failing to educate children with the required skills as technology changes the labour market and solid middle-class jobs vanish (Krishnan, 2020). Schools and employers ought to form a relationship so that the journey into the workplace is aided by the professional experience obtained via work experience while still in school (Huseth, 2023). This argument was confirmed by Nakato Nanungi, a social worker student from Makerere University in Kampala, who interviewed disadvantaged youth from the Kisenyi 1 parish, one of the poorest slums in Kampala, where 32.5 % of the interviewees blamed the too theoretical education system and 12.5 % the mismatch between skills and the labour market as the main reasons for youth unemployment (Nakato, 2011). This over-reliance on theoretical education and the neglect of practical training often leads to employers being uncertain if a candidate with a degree is capable. The capability of a potential employee must be established in time- and money-consuming application interviews and tests. Another important lesson learned by the author while working in Uganda is that soft skills are much more important than the hard skills necessary for the job. Soft skills are not usually tied to specific professions, rather they relate to our personalities and, as such, they are highly transferable skills. As quoted by Future Learn¹⁸, “Although they are less tangible than hard skills they can still be learned and developed, and employers will value any qualifications you have that demonstrate a willingness to improve them. Some fundamental soft skills for the workplace include creativity, persuasion, emotional intelligence, and collaboration.” There is a gap between the theoretical approaches to soft skills and the practical realities that ask not only which capabilities job seekers need to have but also where to acquire them. This has been acknowledged in the article by Ruban and Hellen that the gap exists, and research and reports are scarce on the topic. It is often overlooked in developing countries. This fact was witnessed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The provision of soft skills can meet both the requirements and capabilities in developing countries if people are given the chance to learn and master both professional knowledge and soft skills. The improvement of soft skills not only helps individuals and businesses but entire sectors of the economy if emphasized by learning institutes and parents who are the first educators of the children through informal education. In the opinion of the authors (Helen Akolgo-Azupogo, 2021), a documental presentation with “life stories” often provides more benefit to the readers

¹⁸ <https://www.futurelearn.com/info/blog/soft-skills...>

than an anonymous statistical analysis. Honesty, loyalty, hard work, and reliability are the basis for any kind of job. The best vocational or technical training (e.g. plumbing, civil engineering, electrical wiring) is useless if the person is not able to be on time or to be honest with his/her customers as well as the employer. This is why authors Ruben, Helen Akolgo-Azupogo, and Roland Bardy almost uniquely recruit new staff for Fontes Foundation based on attitudes and not on skills: While the latter is still trainable on the job, the former is very difficult to teach a person once he or she is in the working process.

This problem can also be observed by looking at the vocational training institutes that are becoming more and more popular in Uganda: While the government has realized that vocational training is key to fighting youth unemployment, their approach is very often not holistic enough as it focuses too much on vocational training, neglecting other equally important “soft” skills like having a positive attitude or entrepreneurship skills. A balance must be found between hard and soft skills to equip the Ugandan youth appropriately before entering the labour market.

1.2.4. Is high unemployment among youths in Uganda a result of inadequate skills, poor attitudes, or inadequate networking?

Uganda has one of the fastest-growing populations in the world. The high population growth rate as well as the high fertility rate led to today’s situation where more than 50 % of the population is below the age of 18, and 78% are below the age of 35. Mwesigwa, in his article “Uganda's Unemployed Graduates Held Back by Skills Gap”, and *Gaps in Youth Policy and Programming in Uganda* published by ActionAid, put youth unemployment at 62%, although the Africa Development Bank says it could be as high as 83% (Alon, 2014). However, it is also puzzling that some youths are getting jobs, and they cannot retain the job while others want to get a particular job only. There is a need for attitude change among youth to inspire entrepreneurial energy and appreciate a culture of personal savings and longer-term financial growth (Andaleeb Alam, 2019). While we acknowledge high unemployment among youth because of inadequate skills, it is becoming clear that some have attitude challenges. Many youths undermine work and are discouraged with little payment. This cannot be stated better than what (Gemma Ahaibwe, Swaibu Mbowo, 2014) stated. “For instance, a large proportion of youth have given up the search for jobs and are more likely to be discouraged.” Even those who got jobs find it hard to retain jobs due to poor attitudes toward work and lack of work

ethics. Avshalom Caspi et al in the article “Early Failure in the Labour Market: Childhood and Adolescent Predictors of Unemployment in the Transition to Adulthood” (Avshalom Caspi, Bradley R. Entner Wright, Terrie E. Moffitt and Phil A. Silva, 1998) stated that unemployment reached back to early childhood, suggesting that they began to shape labour-market outcomes years before these youth entering the workforce. In addition, these effects remained significant after controlling for the duration of education and educational attainment. They further suggest that many early personal and family characteristics affect labour-market outcomes, not only because they restrict the accumulation of human capital (e.g., education), but also because they directly affect labour-market behaviours. Failure to account for prior social, psychological, and economic risk factors may lead to inflated estimates of the effects of unemployment on future outcomes (Markus H Schafer, Kenneth F Ferraro, Sarah A Mustillo, 2011). Besides, the impact of parent’s job history and perception, personal lives play a vital role in children's career development and behaviours at the workplace (Shazia Nawabi, Muhammad Qasim Javed, 2019). As indicated further by Gamariel and Blaise, parental variables affected students' professional choices. These variables included the parents' greatest level of education, their employment, their beliefs and expectations, and their parent-child connections (Mbonimana Gamariel, Byishimo Blaise, 2021). Before enrolling in higher-level courses, parents, teachers, Counsellors, and children should discuss and emphasize the learner's strengths and preferences to minimize potential difficulties. This enables students to make informed job choices based on their educational attainment and professional goals. However, there is no significant difference between children from educated homes towards Education if given the necessary motivation toward education. This is because a considerable number of children live without parental support, as in orphans, children living in the streets, displaced, and refused children who on account of the poverty of their parents are subjected to inhuman and sadistic ordeals.

1.2.5. Conclusion.

Studies have shown that there is a high rate of youth unemployment in Uganda, which has led to an increase in criminal activities in various cities. This situation is partly caused by the mindset of some youth who believe that they must acquire a white-collar job that pays highly and allows them to buy cars and build houses in just one or two years. When they fail to secure such jobs, they feel frustrated, stressed, and depressed. Many young people migrate to urban areas due to push and pull factors, leaving their parents in rural areas without support. This has led to an economic imbalance and put too much pressure on the country's economy. Another piece of evidence shows that there is a mismatch in the education system and the skills needed

in the market. Universities and high schools are focusing more on producing good grades, but students come out when they are not able to utilize what they have learned in the market, and with inadequate soft skills. Most of them have bad attitudes toward work and loyalty to employers.

2. Chapter Two: Methodology

2.1. Introduction.

Youth unemployment remains a serious policy challenge in many sub-Saharan African countries, including Uganda. In 2013, youth (aged 15 to 24) in sub-Saharan Africa were twice as likely to be unemployed compared to any other age cohort. For Uganda, in 2012, the Uganda Bureau of Statistics revealed that the share of unemployed youth (national definition, 18-30 years) among the total unemployed persons in the country was 64 per cent. Given the rapid growth of the Ugandan population, three-quarters of the population is below the age of 30 years—coupled with the fact that the youth are getting better educated through higher access to primary and secondary education, a stronger focus on job creation for this cohort of people cannot be overemphasized (Gemma Ahaibwe and Swaibu Mbowe, 2014).

The focus of this research was on the "Watoto Alumni" who were raised in family-setting institutions, which were different from other institutional orphanages in Uganda. These children had access to sufficient resources and a good standard of living. They were provided with almost everything needed and were encouraged to pursue courses of their choice at various universities in Uganda. Some even studied abroad on sports scholarships. However, after graduation, many of these children struggled to secure gainful employment and those who did often found it challenging to retain their jobs. Some exhibited post-institutional syndromes despite efforts to provide them with a real family setting.

It became apparent that the support provided to these children was not always beneficial. The leadership realized that by giving them everything they wanted, they were being bad parents and overprotecting them. These children needed to learn to earn some of the things they desired in life to avoid becoming a burden to society with an entitlement mindset. Unfortunately, some of them did not want to work and felt timid because they had been in an isolated environment, which was different from the real world. As a result, many struggled to cope with the harsh realities of the world outside the Watoto Villages.

In conclusion, only a few of them were able to adjust to the real world outside the Watoto Villages. Many wanted to return to the villages, and some resorted to unhealthy lifestyles to cope with the world outside.

In 2020, Watoto Childcare's leadership decided to provide its students aged 16 and above with work placements in various departments. To take this initiative further, the Hope Technical and Vocational Institute (HVTI) collaborated with companies to offer a unique apprenticeship program. Under this program, students worked for two days a week and spent three days studying in class. The institute partnered with various companies, hotels, and organizations to provide students with hands-on work experience.

A mentorship program has been established for students, with each child assigned a mentor to meet with at least once per week. The mentor, known as the "father heart," acts as a parental figure and is responsible for monitoring the child's academic progress, social behaviours, and discipline.

Skill classes were introduced in primary, and these continue up to secondary school, with each child required to complete at least one skill set. These skills are tracked using a skills index and are assessed through exams at all levels. In Senior Three, students are required to take a practical national DIT exam (Directorate of Industrial Training) in the practical skills they have been offering right from Senior One. After the students complete their Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE), students would have the option to pursue a national certificate or DIT 2 based on their performance, or they can choose to attend Advanced education and sit for the Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE) at various Watoto schools.

The strategy implemented has resulted in a significant improvement in the employment status of children. It has also positively influenced the attitude of children towards work. Approximately 94% of those who underwent apprenticeship were retained by employers, with some being hired before completing their studies. As the well-known saying goes, "Those who seek, find", compared to the previous batch of alumni, many of the children showed a more vigorous effort in searching for jobs.

This dissertation analysed the reasons for unemployment among the first batch of Watoto alumni compared to the current Watoto Alumni. Changes that took place leading to Watoto Alumni being employed and their improved performance. Skills attained that made them more employable compared to their previous brothers and sisters. Why did their attitude change in this short time, yet they were considered lazy, entitled, and undisciplined? Is it early exposure to the skill training and workplaces, interaction, and networking with father hearts, mentors, workmates, supervisors, and intentional right counselling that made this drastic change? To get

these answers, I used various research methods for gathering data and analysing the data to come up with permanent solutions that might help the parents, and Ugandan Government in solving youth unemployment. I believe this research outcome will help Watoto Ministry reduce the cost of operations and meet the goal and mission of “Raising the next generations of Uganda leaders by pursuing excellence in academic and practical skills, integrity in conduct, and moral values so that each-one becomes a responsible Christian and productive citizen of Uganda”.

I gathered both qualitative and quantitative data from my survey respondents by conducting interviews and distributing questionnaires. To ensure I received relevant information, I employed both random sampling and stratified sampling techniques. While collecting research data from the field, I used three primary methods: (1) Survey questionnaires, (2) interviews, and (3) focus group discussions. Additionally, I reviewed official records and documents to supplement these three methods.

I chose a data collection method that allowed for the comprehensive gathering of data from the field. I used survey questionnaires to reach respondents who were far away or too busy to participate in person. The participants were able to read and understand the instructions and fill in the form accordingly. The survey was conducted with the "Watoto Alumni" and their employers to obtain sufficient data. To achieve this, I planned to reach out to 80-100 "Watoto Alumni" out of 1209 accessible and obtain the data from the Tertiary Desk for sampling. The questionnaire was designed in two forms. Those for supervisors and Alumni sent differently to each group of people in a Google survey online form. The plan was to reach out to 80-100 Watoto Alumni, 15-20 human resources. I used sampling techniques in this app <http://andrew.hedges.name/experiments/random/>. I got the required number of Watoto alumni needed for the survey and sent them a questionnaire via email and WhatsApp numbers. For their Human Resource personnel, I had planned to use Snowball. However, I ended up using convenience sampling. It was so hard getting access to the Human Resources personnel because the Alumni were not willing to share their contacts.

I used interview techniques for Watoto Childcare leadership, including the pastoral leadership of the Church. These leaders have in-depth knowledge of Watoto Church's history, and how the children were brought in, the vision and mission of Watoto Church. These are the people who were actively involved in the restructuring of the Education Directorate, developing a 5-year strategic plan for the Education Directorate and Watoto Education Framework. By using interviews, I was able to ask more questions and get clarity on certain issues.

There are more than 500 leaders of Watoto Church including board members and deacons. I used different sample methods to get the right people. I needed to interview 3 village pastors, the Education Directorate Team Leader, the Principal HVTI, the Tertiary Co-ordinator, the three village managers, and 6 headteachers of Watoto schools. For these respondents, I used non-random sampling, specifically purposive/judgment sampling. They were the right people with the information I wanted.

While for the Fathers' Hearts, counsellors, Watoto mothers, and mentors, I used focus group discussions. I used stratified sampling (random with group target) to get each group represented in the discussion.

These data were analysed using simple Excel to get the mean, median, and percentage comparison of respondents.

Using Excel, I quantified qualitative data and analysed it using a descriptive approach for non-quantifiable observations.

2.2. Target population.

The target groups were the Watoto Alumni of 2010- 2023, and Watoto leaders which included the Education Management Team (EMT), Home Team Leaders, Home's Core Team (HCT), Village Pastors, Watoto Mothers, and the Watoto Alumni Human Resources personnel. I preferred to carry out the research in the Watoto Ministry environment because of the accessibility and the improving employment of the Alumni compared to the previous batch. I believe the findings will help the country's plight of youth unemployment. The only extension of this research was to the employers and employees of the companies, and firms where the Watoto Alumni were working or doing apprenticeships to get what is required of youth to be employed easily.

2.3. Strategy for selection.

2.3.1 Respondents to survey questionnaires.

I used convenience sampling for human resources, and systematic random sampling for "Watoto Alumni". This group of respondents was scattered across the country yet can be contacted online and because they are literate, I sent an online questionnaire for them to self-administer. There are approximately 1209 recorded alumni of Watoto. I had planned to get at least responses from 80-100 of the "Watoto Alumni" through a self-monitored online Google

form, after contacting them on the phone first. However, by the time of analysis, only 30 Alumni had responded to the form and only 7 human resources filled in the form out of the expected 15-20 respondents.

2.3.2. Respondents for interview.

I selected the Watoto leaders; the three Village Pastors, three Village Managers, Education Team Leaders, Departmental Team Leaders, Pastoral and Discipleship Team Leader, Neighbourhood mothers, the Education Management Team, the Watoto Monitoring and Evaluation Team, the Homes Team Leader and the Headteachers. I planned to use 20 of the Watoto leaders to be selected for interview from the list of leaders. I used purposive sampling because these are the experts in the field. They have a wider view, skills, and experience in raising these children. Some of the leaders have worked with the Watoto Ministry for more than 10 years, hence they have been in the lives of these children for some time. I structured the questions in a way that I used an average of 45 minutes with each of these leaders. Within the villages, like the village pastors and village managers, I chose to interview these leaders because they could give detailed information when probed that helped to get to the root cause of this overwhelming unemployment among youth, and how Watoto leadership has managed these challenges among the “Watoto Alumni” in a short time.

2.3.3. Respondents for focus group discussion.

I used focus group discussions for mothers. Watoto has three campuses in Wakiso District, Mpigi District, and Omoro District. I used Stratified Sampling to get 9 mothers to participate in the discussion group. I used a group of 9 people. 3 mothers, senior female, and male teachers, 3 Fathers’ Hearts, and a counsellor in each village, and discussed for one hour. This was done in the three Watoto Villages; Laminadera in Omoro District with 74 mothers, Bbira with 134 mothers, and Suubi with 174 mothers. I got the house numbers from Village Managers and then used stratified random sampling to select 4 mothers from each village using house numbers who have spent more than 7 years in Watoto Village. I used purposive sampling to get the rest of the respondents, and simple sampling to get the Father’s Hearts.

I chose this method because some of the women and fathers could not easily interpret questions well but were experienced parents. This allowed them to share experiences on how they have raised their children which helped to compare results. Mothers and fathers were crucial in this research because they were the ones who stayed with children from childhood up to the time

they left for university. The kind of lives they have implanted in these children affects the quality of lives these children would have after school. The Counsellors and teachers were always with these children when they were growing up, and some of them were parents too.

2.4. Ethical issues.

The Watoto mothers, and Fathers' Hearts, and all other respondents were adults who come from different cultural backgrounds. I respected their views. They were busy people and their time for discussion was not taken for granted. Where the names of children were mentioned, I did not write them down for the sake of children's confidentiality. I acknowledged that some of these Watoto mothers, and Fathers' Hearts have not gone far with their education. Thus, the questions were designed in simple English, and some were helping to understand the questions by translating them into the languages they understood. I had planned to use a translator in Suubi and Bbria villages where I am not familiar with the Luganda language. However, this did not happen. I used those same people in the FGD to translate to their colleagues who did not understand the question. This was partially because of time.

2.5. Informed consent.

I took time to introduce myself and explain to respondents what the research was about, why it was being done, and how I planned to treat the information. The respondents were free to withdraw anytime they felt uncomfortable with the questions being asked or answer only the questions they were comfortable with when asked.

2.6. Confidentiality and privacy.

I assured the respondents that their information shall not be shared with their names as they may want to remain anonymous.

2.7. Not harm.

I carefully ensured that the information provided by respondents was not shared with their employers. This was to avoid jeopardizing their relationship and to allow openness during interviews and focus group discussions.

2.8. Dignity.

It is important that that respondents are treated with dignity and assured that the value they add to this research, the Watoto children and youth employment is vital. Their time was respected

and treated with respect. I provided refreshments to the people that I interviewed and the ones I had focus group discussions with.

2.9. Biases

There was also concern that some interpretations may alter the actual meaning. I stuck to the selected respondents so that data would be purely random and representative of the sample. Except for human resources, I changed the data collection technique from snowball to convenience since I was not getting the data on time.

There was the likelihood of some mothers not disclosing the techniques they were using to raise their biological children for fear of disciplinary action since they were required to raise all the children equally. I made the environment friendly, and all the responses anonymous, but also used observation to read the facial expressions of the respondents when they were not comfortable answering certain questions to allow me to change the questions or ask them differently.

I put various measures in place to avoid bias during the research process. I objectively recorded the responses from respondents and avoided asking questions that would satisfy the already existing bias. I allowed them to express their opinions freely.

I took time to prepare the surveys and interview questions in such a way that the questions asked were clear and left no room for misunderstanding so that respondents' own biases were minimized.

3. Chapter Three: Findings.

3.1. Introduction.

The Republic of Uganda is experiencing one of the fastest population growth rates in the world. This growth, coupled with high fertility rates, has resulted in over 50% of the population being under the age of 18 years. Unfortunately, this has also led to a sharp increase in youth unemployment in recent years. With such a large proportion of the population being under 18, the number of unemployed individuals in Uganda is very high. This is concerning as youth unemployment could destabilize and disrupt the economy and society of the country in the future. History has shown that the youth are often the source of revolutions and political turmoil, such as the Arab Spring (Schwartz, 2011)¹⁹. However, population growth is not the only factor contributing to youth unemployment in Uganda. General poverty, an outdated education system, and corruption are also major contributing factors.

The high levels of youth unemployment and the youth bulge require immediate attention and innovative solutions. Young individuals have expressed their concerns about the lack of access to formal job opportunities, the futility of graduating from university, and the high costs associated with finding employment (Irene Among, 2019). The research team collected the views of young people through surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions on youth unemployment, family, and school roles in addressing the issue, to inform employment policies and programs.

The research found out the causes of high unemployment among the Watoto Alumni. I went to the field to carry out research through questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions, I had the following questions as hypotheses for the unemployment among the alumni.

When collecting data, I planned for 80-100 survey questionnaires to be filled by Watoto Alumni, but I received replies from only 30 respondents by the time of analysis. 15 respondents to fill the human resource survey but only 7 responded.

The reason for the low response by some of the respondents was,

- i. Some respondents were not comfortable sharing the contact information of their workplace due to fear that they might lose their jobs that they struggled to get.

¹⁹ [Youth and the "Arab Spring" | United States Institute of Peace \(usip.org\)](https://www.usip.org/publications/youth-and-the-arab-spring)

- ii. Some Watoto Alumni just refused to fill the form with the view that they are tired of being surveyed.
- iii. So many surveys have been carried out on them, but no report has been given to them or any improvement seen in their lives.
- iv. Some respondents just ignored the questionnaire even with constant follow-up.
- v. The time frame for filling out the survey seems too short for some people to respond. To get the required numbers, the survey period needed a minimum of one month.

I was able to interview the 20 Watoto leaders. I set and discussed with three sets of focus groups in Suubi Watoto Village, Bbira Watoto Village, and Laminadera Watoto Village. Each group consisted of 3 Watoto mothers, a counsellor, 3 Fathers' Hearts, and a senior male and female teacher.

The average time for each interview was 45 minutes contrary to the 30 minutes I had recorded in the pilot interview and the longest time recorded was 1:20 minutes.

In the focus group discussion, time spent on average was 1:30 minutes and the longest time was 2 hours in Suubi village. While the planned time was 1 hour, with probing questions respondents wanted to express their frustration, and I could not stop them so as not to close them emotionally.

After gathering the data, I sorted the questionnaire at the questions to see if they had been answered. Analysed the data separately, cleaned the data by selecting the unfinished questions, and wrongly answered questionnaires created the code, for each question, and put them in the data set. Out of 30 questionnaires returned, I set up a code book for each question, and through it, and came up with a data set, that I used to develop a frequency table used for data analysis in the Excel sheet.

For Qualitative data in the questionnaire, interviews, and focus group discussion, I sorted the responses to similar points and coded them in the code book before transferring them to the data set and analysing them. I grouped similar points and tabulated them to get the frequency of each answer as stated in the interview, discussion, and survey.

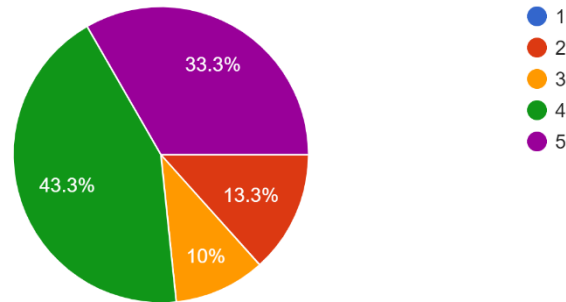
Generally, from the pattern in the analysis, the unemployment among the Watoto Alumni was due to poor parenting, negative attitudes toward jobs, lack of guidance, and poor work ethic, which came due to children not being exposed to work while in the villages. Other factors

include too much freedom and inadequate disciplinary measures on children that make them undisciplined. From the survey, interviewing, and focus group discussion, the major theme that came out was the parenting problem. 80% of the alumni and 90% of Watoto leaders do acknowledge the model of home setting used by the Watoto Ministry of putting children in normal home settings is better than other institutional childcare systems in the country. The major problem is not the home model. Some youths have become successful in the same home setting. The Biological children of the mothers and other youth who grew up in the hands of mothers who were tough but lovely came up successful. The unsuccessful Alumni were attributed to their indiscipline, and lack of seriousness while growing up within the Watoto Villages.

All respondents agreed that the father figure in the life of children is crucial. Those who had a father figure that they accounted for were more successful and well-adapted to society's demands than those without a father figure. The research also found out that these children are taken care of by mothers who are recruited in most cases from a failed marriage or are widows. Some of these mothers have not been good mothers to their children. This was witnessed by their relationship aftermath. The 13.3% of the Alumni surveyed indicated that their relationship was not good with the mothers in the home. This percentage was still confirmed by Watoto mothers during FGD. 30% of the mothers testified that these children would not mind coming back to check on them after leaving Watoto villages. Further investigations were found to be due to a lack of attachment and mistrust because of frequent changes of mothers. On average each child should have stayed in the hands of 5 Watoto mothers before leaving Watoto village. Some mothers were not good to them.

Figure. 2: Pie chart showing the Watoto Alumni's relationship with their Watoto Mothers.

How was/is your relationship with your mother been? Rate 1-5 by ticking the box. where 1. Poor. 2. Fair. 3. Good. 4. excellent.
30 responses



Qtn. 8 Watoto Alumni Questionnaire N=30

Since most of these children are abandoned children, they grow up with mistrust, fear, and bitterness. However, some mothers raised successful children who are prominent people in the country.

Another dominant theme still related to parenting that came out too was much protection of children. Watoto Childcare Ministry showed too much love to these children by overprotecting them. Children have been given everything and they do not know how food is got. They did not get involved in any manual work while in the village. The kind of work they did while in the village was housework did not orient them for lives outside the villages. Even at school, caretakers are employed to clean their school compound hence they have no opportunity to learn work. These affected them in adulthood. Many grew up with no resilience and inadequate work ethic. The Children Protection Policy was implemented without differentiating the rights and responsibilities of the children. This led to mothers, and other staff being disempowered. Children became manipulative, lazy, and entitled. Some of the Watoto Alumni brought those habits to workplaces which became undesirable. Even the Watoto Ministry that cared for these children did not want to employ most of the Watoto Alumni because they were tagged as non-performers and entitled.

However, the research also found out the most successful Alumni were the staff, mothers' children, and children who had someone they account to within the village, a passionate father's

heart, or an outside uncle who taught them. This was evident in their performance at school. Looking at the UNEB results 2023, $\frac{3}{4}$ the best-performing children were staff or mothers' children. The $\frac{1}{4}$ Watoto 3:1:1 children who performed well were the children whose mothers were following their performance at school, and even those absorbed in different workplaces majority were mothers' children. Most of the pure Watoto Alumni "311" were struggling with identity crises and belongings. They found it hard to accept that they had no biological relative, or why they were abandoned by their parents. Some who finally traced their family were either disappointed with their parents for allowing them to grow up in a family setting where they were not real, and hence bitter, or were happy that finally, they had where to belong.

It is evident from research that providing children with skills at an early age is vital in preparing them for employment. The Watoto Education Directorate has seen significant improvement in both the soft and hard skills of children since they started skilling them. According to records from both HVTI and tertiary desk, to date, 94% of the alumni from HVTI were absorbed into the job market, and 70% of them were retained in their places of apprenticeship, while the others were referred. The employment status of other Watoto alumni from various universities has also greatly improved, with 48% being employed, compared to a previous survey where only 19% were employed. However, it was also observed that 39.5% of the Watoto Alumni of 2021-2023 are working within Watoto Ministry in various departments with Pastoral and discipleship absorbing 17 Alumni out of 78 Alumni working within the ministry. The shocking point is these people come as volunteers and are absorbed into the system as full-time staff within one year. The numbers are likely to increase with time. It is the question of time to predict whether this is a good indicator or not.

Below is the analysis of the different research questions.

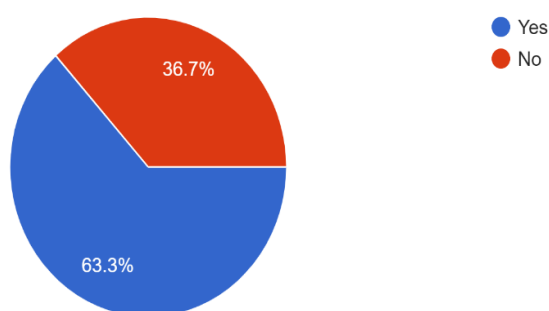
3.2. What skills are missing in the Ugandan youth for them to be employable in the 21st-century market?

When Alumni were asked whether they felt they were skilled for the job after school, 36.7% of Alumni said they felt they were not skilled, and 63.3% said they were skilled.

Figure 3: Pie chart presenting the percentage of Watoto Alumni attached to skills program while at school.

Were you attached to any vocational skilling program while at Watoto schools?

30 responses

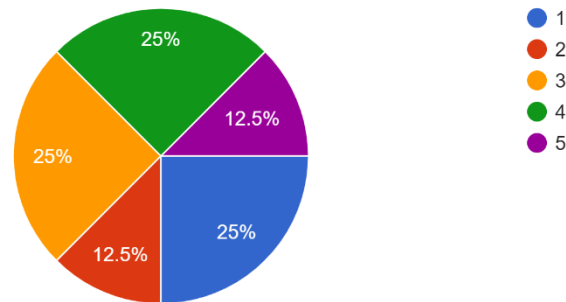


Qty. 18, Survey questionnaire N=30

However, when asked further, if the attained skills benefitted them at the workplace, of those who said they were skilled, 12.5% said they benefitted much and earned from the skills, 25% said they benefitted a lot though not earning from it, but the skills are helping them. Another 25% said they fairly benefitted from the attained skills. But still, all agreed that they suffered at the workplace because of a lack of soft skills. This came due to a lack of exposure while at Watoto Homes. Except for those who had strong relationships with their external home, and those who were involved in volunteering work within the village and developed soft skills.

Fig. 4: Pie chart representing the percentage of benefits on vocational skills after graduation.

If yes, rate the benefit of the vocational skill training attained while at Watoto schools to your post-school lives. Tick one. Where 1-5 1. Not benef...om it. 5. Benefited much and I am earning from it.
24 responses

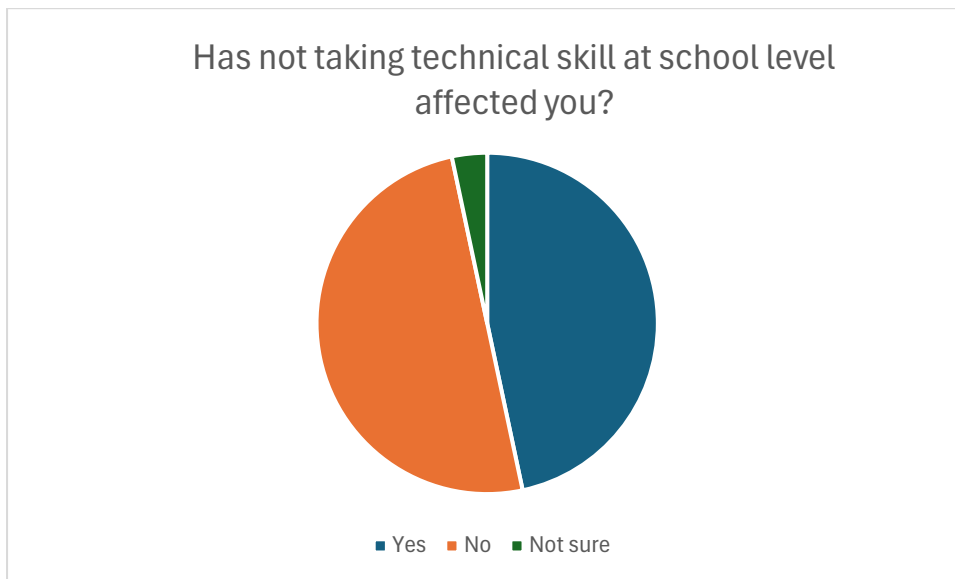


Qtn:22, Survey questionnaire N=24

The education of children at Watoto has been unbalanced, with a heavy emphasis placed on academic achievement. While the Watoto Education Directorate has done its best to educate the children, alumni have reported a lack of soft skills such as conflict management, communication, and collaboration. This has made it difficult for them to work effectively with colleagues and supervisors in their first job, causing challenges during the first three months of employment. Additionally, the parenting system at Watoto has been said to isolate children from the realities of the world, making it difficult for them to adapt later in life.

According to the survey, 47% of respondents who did not have access to vocational skilling programs at their schools felt that it negatively impacted them. Specifically, they struggled with certain soft skills that they could have developed through such programs. On the other hand, 50% of respondents said that they were not affected at all because they took the initiative to learn these skills on their own, while 3% were unsure. The survey also revealed that the most important skills that respondents believed they should have developed through vocational skilling programs were critical analysis, collaboration, communication, teamwork, self-leadership, and time management.

Fig. 5: presenting how not taking technical skills affected children's lives after graduation.



Qtn.23 Survey Questionnaire N=30.

From FDGs, interviews, and Alumni surveys when asked what skills are missing when children are growing up within the village. All respondents at least have skills identified as missing in the children's lives that affect them in adulthood that they should have developed if they were growing up in a normal family with parents.

When Watoto leaders were asked if they could be confident that their child/children would grow up to be the desired person they would want, 13(65%) respondents said no, while 7(35%) said yes, but were quick to say when certain things are put right. Things like mothers' empowerment, children being held accountable, and being given work to do with constant follow-up. All the leaders were cognisant that some children were successful in the home while others were not. To them, it is not the home environment that is spoiling the children, but the system the home is operating in which does not give the mother rights to discipline her children, and so many voices speaking in the life of a child that is leaving them confused and deceived.

Fig. 6: Willingness of Watoto leaders to have their children stay in Watoto Village under the same conditions.

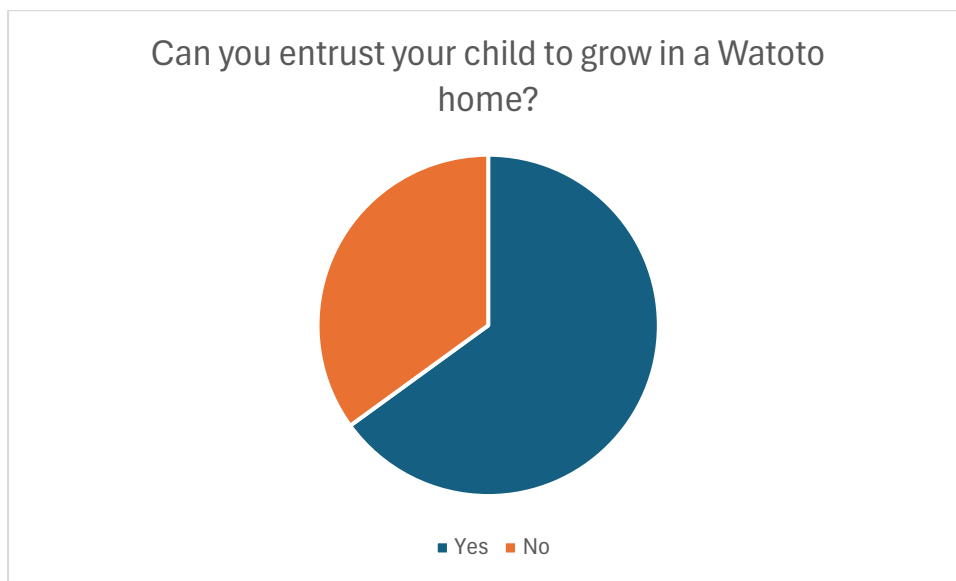
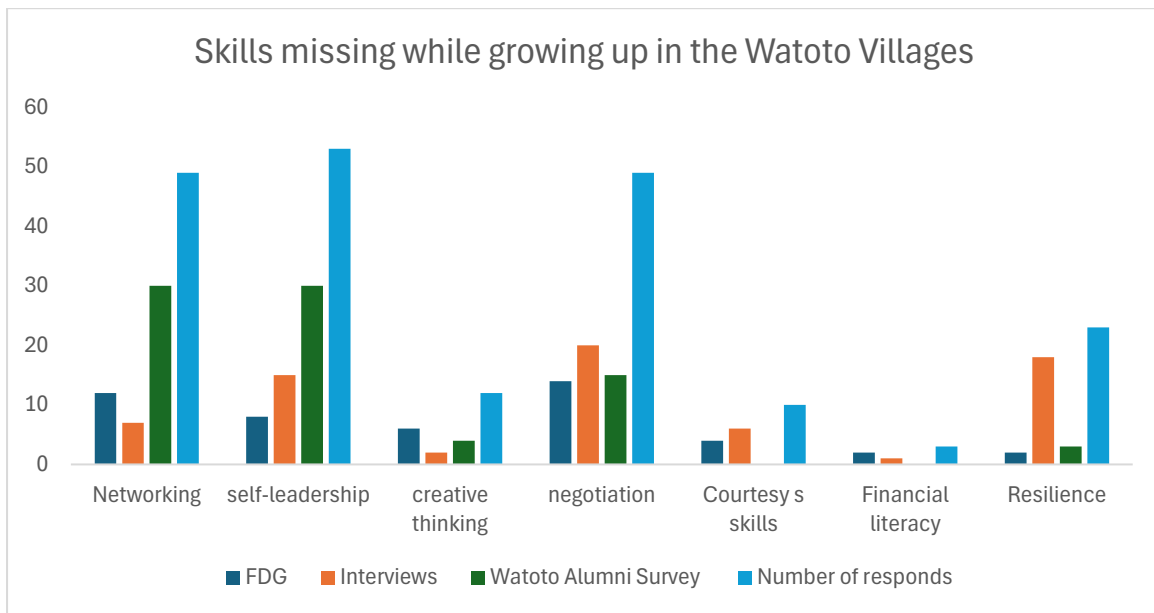


Table 3. Skills identified as missing in the lives of children when growing up in Watoto Village.

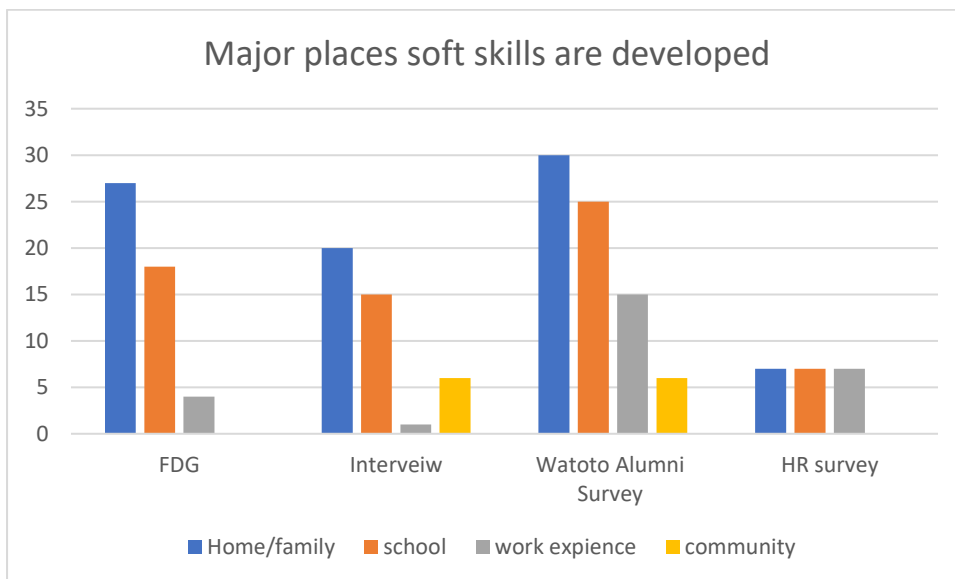
Skills missing while growing up in the Watoto Villages				
Missing skills	FDG	Interviews	Watoto Alumni Survey	Number of responds
Networking	12	7	30	49
Self-leadership	8	15	30	53
Creative thinking	6	2	4	12
Negotiation	14	20	15	49
Courtesy s skills	4	6	0	10
Financial literacy	2	1	0	3
Resilience	2	18	3	23
Total responses	48	69	82	199

Graph 2: Skills identified as missing in the lives of children when growing up in the Watoto Villages.



Based on the graph, Self-leadership, networking, and negotiation skills were lacking in children's lives, followed by resilience. It appeared that their lives were structured during their time at Watoto Villages. When asked where and how these skills are developed, three places stood out as significant in their lives for developing soft skills: family, school, and community.

Graph 3. Major places where soft skills are developed.



Children's upbringing at home plays a critical role in their lives. Parents are the first point of contact and, therefore, the first teachers in their children's lives. If children do not have quality time with their parents, they may grow up to be a menace to society. This issue can be addressed in schools that value holistic education. Unfortunately, in Uganda, most schools prioritize academic performance due to the commercialization of education. Schools focus on academic performance to attract more children, but the quality of education and the child's life after education is not a concern for anyone. Parents take their children to boarding schools as young as three years old to allow them time to work, and some children are taken to school as early as 5 am and brought back by 7 pm. Parents barely have time for their children to instil family values and survival skills. Teachers are left with the heavy duty of teaching children formal and informal education, but they are not able to do it well because of pressure from school owners who grade them based on academic performance. Some parents and teachers are involved in examination malpractices for their children to pass well, and these are done when the children are observing. The outcome is a dishonest society, a lack of integrity, and children with high academic grades but little knowledge and skills for adulthood survival. We are quick to blame corruption in society, yet parents have not done their best to bring up their children the way they desire society to be.

3.3. How can we better prepare fresh graduates for the job market?

All respondents (100%) interviewed leaders, (100%) FGD participants, (100%) Watoto Alumni who filled survey questionnaire, and 7 human resources who filled out the survey questionnaire agreed with Watoto Education Directorate on enforcing skilling in children at an early stage, and all believed this can be effective education model Government of Uganda should adopt to solved youth unemployment in the country.

With the improving employment status of the Watoto Alumni, when the skilling program was made compulsory, everyone started to see that it was long overdue. The initiative would have been implemented a long time ago instead of taking children to university for mainstream academics.

Over the past two years (2022-2023), 154 Watoto Alumni have successfully graduated from various universities. Out of these graduates, only 45% (69) have been able to secure employment, while the remaining 55% (85) are unemployed. The investment made in their education amounts to UGX 4.2bn.

In contrast, during the same period, only 32 students received education in technical and vocational skills, along with continuous apprenticeship. Out of these, 94% (30) have been able to secure employment, with only 6% (6) still unemployed. The investment made in their education amounts to UGX 330m.

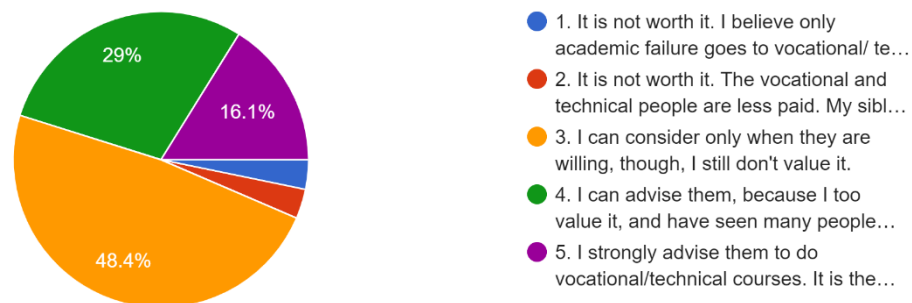
From this simple comparative analysis, it is evident that the continuous apprenticeship initiative is proving to be highly effective in saving the Watoto Ministry a significant amount of money that would otherwise be spent on educating children who come out unproductive.

However, when asked if they believed in it and would recommend their children, and siblings for technical /vocational skilling courses, the responses of the Watoto alumni varied.

Fig.7: Pie chart representing alumni mindset on skilling.

Do you advise your siblings/children to go for technical or vocational training after completing high school rather than to do a course at university? Rate this 1-5. (Be as honest to yourself as possible).

30 responses



Qtn:26. Survey question. N=30

Many participants in the FDGs and interviewed leaders have expressed their belief that technical education is still a valuable path to pursue. However, they are hesitant to encourage their children to pursue technical courses. When asked why, they stated that children must make their own choices. Nevertheless, it was evident from their facial expressions that people still have the stereotype that technical education is only for those who are not good at academics. Most people take pride in their children completing university and organizing celebration parties, even if they won't get a job. In contrast, allowing their children to pursue technical courses is seen as a failure and stupidity, which is a common country-wide stereotype of

skilling. Africa has a negative mindset on technical education, but it is only recently, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, that some people are developing an interest in technical courses.

However, technical institutions are struggling to attract students because of a lack of relevance in the field. Most technical students are still more theoretically skilled than practical, and they come out with only a few practical skills, struggling to adapt to the continuously evolving world where technology keeps changing. Furthermore, the inadequate infrastructure at most technical institutions and Polytechnic makes it even worse, where students practice on outdated machines and are taught by instructors who are too theoretical. It is no wonder that people have little hope in technical education in Uganda because they have seen that most of the products are not helpful.

The Watoto Education Directorate has adopted an education model that if taken up by other institutions in collaboration with employers, could potentially change the narrative around technical skills. This could lead to more job opportunities for youth. Despite the high demand for skilled labour both in Uganda and internationally, there is a shortage of skilled labourers. Meanwhile, Uganda has a surplus of graduates, but many of them lack the necessary skills for employment.

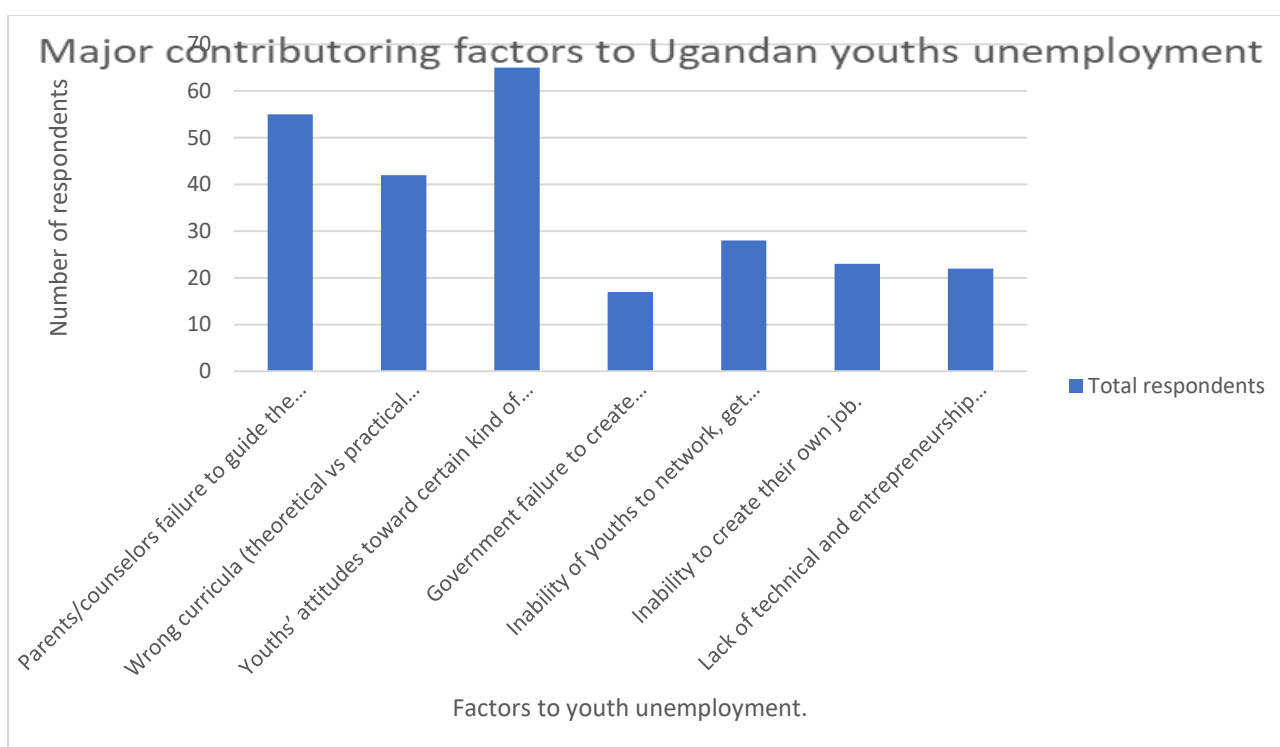
3.4. Youth unemployment in Uganda as a lack of skills, poor attitudes, inadequate networking, or a combination of these factors.

Table 4. Major contributing factors of Ugandan youth unemployment.

Major contributing Factors of youth unemployment in Uganda.	Survey Alumni	Survey HR	Interviews	FDGs	Total respondents
Parents/Counsellors fail to guide the children in the right way	15	4	15	21	55
Wrong curricula (theoretical vs practical approach) that lead to skill mismatch in the market	14	6	14	8	42
Youth's attitudes toward certain kinds of employment	21	3	16	25	65

Government failure to create employment opportunities for youth	9	1	2	5	17
The inability of youth to network and get information on job opportunities.	12	4	2	10	28
Inability to create their job.	9	0	5	9	23
Lack of technical and entrepreneurship skills that are required in the market.	10	3	6	3	22
Total responds.	90	21	60	27	

Graph 4. Showing major contributing factors to youth ‘unemployment.



Based on the graph above, it is evident that the leading cause of youth unemployment is negative attitudes towards certain types of jobs. This is often linked to the social expectations of parents, teachers, and society. Ugandan culture places a high value on white-collar jobs, which are often seen as the only path to success. This attitude is instilled in children from a

young age, leading many to believe that any other type of work is unacceptable. Additionally, many young people who wish to start their businesses struggle with a lack of entrepreneurship skills.

The government has been attempting to address this issue for a long time, but the education curriculum has not been effective in solving practical problems in the community. Recently, the Ministry of Education and Sports introduced a new, competency-based learning curriculum that aims to address this problem. However, this new curriculum has yet to be widely accepted by the country.

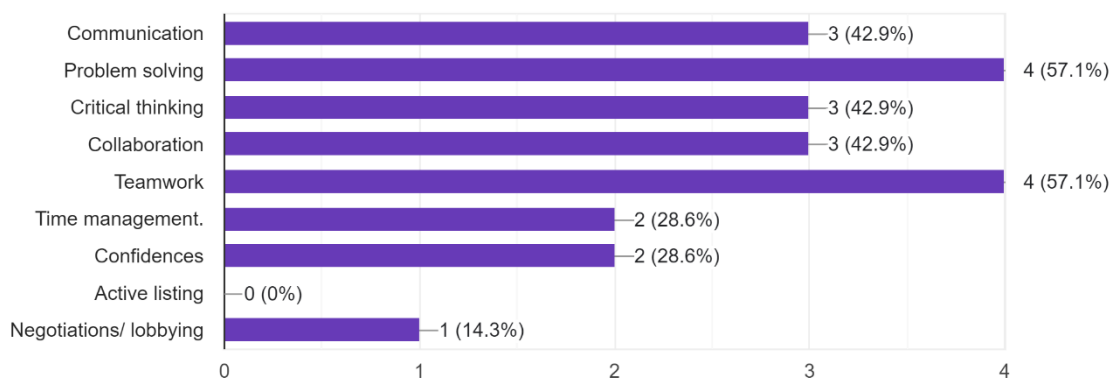
One solution that has been overlooked is the Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT), which promotes practical skills for industrial development. The DIT has the potential to be a powerful tool in reducing youth unemployment and driving economic development in Uganda. Unfortunately, it is currently being undermined and underrated by both the government and citizens.

In general, while technical skills are necessary, human resources departments believe that having strong soft skills is crucial for employees to get hired and retained. Examples of important soft skills include teamwork, problem-solving, communication, critical thinking, and collaboration. These skills are typically developed through life experiences and exposure to different learning environments.

Graph 5: Indicating skills highly needed for employees to be retained or employed.

Among the soft skills that are needed for job, which one do you value more when reviewing employees' probation/ contract renewal. Select the most critical soft skills to you for youths' employment.

7 responses



The findings were still accompanied by social values that youth are expected to develop. From the Watoto Alumni, integrity, and Christ leads to authentic honesty and love and hence building durable characters is crucial for any workplace. Every employer wants an excellent person, an employee who works with excellence, honesty, and godliness. Unfortunately, these values are lacking in most youth. In Uganda, most youth technically skilled, have problems with their character. That is evident in why many people have a specific mechanic for their vehicle, despite many mechanics in the country, and they still stay around when their vehicle is being fixed for the fear that some spare part will be stolen in their absence. With the common phrase, technicians are untrusted. This is perhaps the reason why some of them are struggling and they hate the course. Characters are not well developed in most youth. As stated by Ben Sternke, an Episcopal priest, leadership coach, and writer living in Indianapolis, a highly skilled person without developed character is very dangerous to society (Sternke, 2012). There is a greater need for society to develop values in children so that when they gain skills, they become fruitful and productive citizens.

Fig 8: Extract from “How I Make Disciples: Character & Competency”.

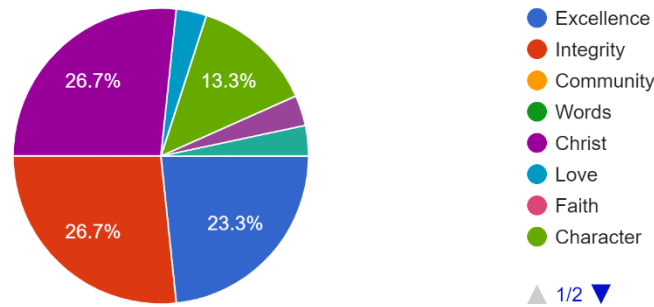


<https://bensternke.com/how-i-make-disciples-part-1/>

Fig 9: Pie chart showing which Watoto values have impacted the lives of Watoto Alumni as by Alumni Survey.

What Watoto's values did you gain while at Watoto schools/villages that are helping at your workplace? Select the three important values that have impacted your life most.

30 responses

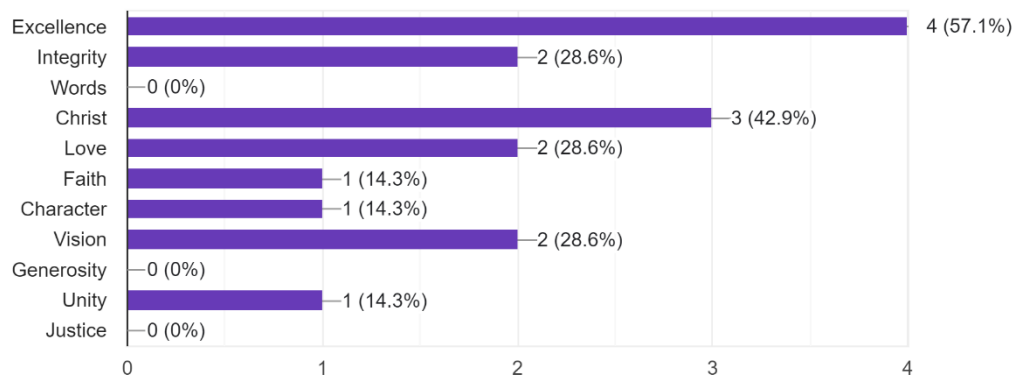


These findings were the same when Human resources were asked what values make them employ or retain an employee.

Graph 7: Graph showing the major values exhibited by Watoto Alumni while at work.

Which of the following values do you see exhibited by Watoto students during apprenticeship or those still working with your organization.? Select the most three visible values seen in them.

7 responses



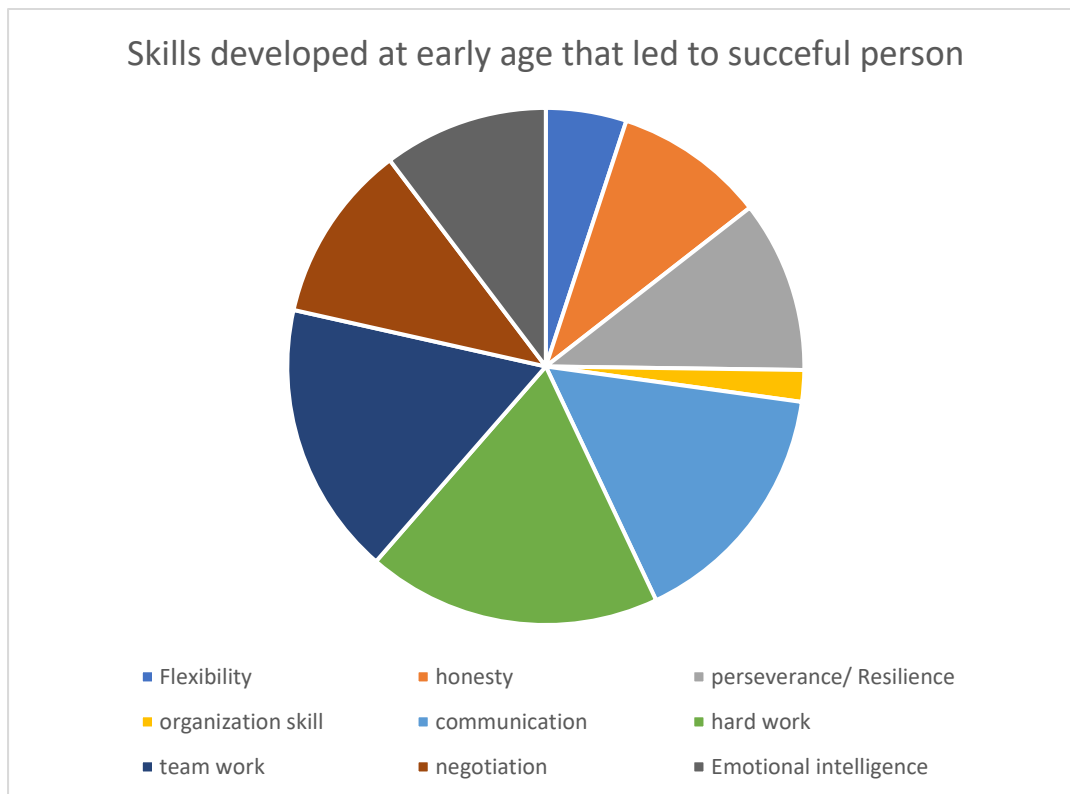
3.5. Roles of parents, guidance Counsellors, and teachers in improving a child's employability.

When respondents were asked what 3 skills were passed on by parents, and teachers that lead to youth success in life, the response was as below. Soft skills still become more crucial for youth's success in life, that are developed when they are young either in school or in a family with parents. The 10 soft skills came up with all most equal percentages as stated in the pie chart below. That means they are all crucial and must be developed in a child's life as they are growing.

Table 5: Showing skills to be developed early in life necessary for youth employment.

Skills	Alumni Survey	HR survey	FDG	Interviews	Total respondents
Flexibility	13	1	4	18	36
Honesty	15	4	3	5	27
Perseverance/ Resilience	15	0	5	8	28
Organization skill	2	1	0	0	3
Communication	14	5	4	5	28
Hard work	15	2	5	8	30
Teamwork	7	5	3	0	15
Negotiation	8	3	2	6	19
Emotional Intelligence	1	0	1	10	12
	90	21	27	60	198

Fig.10: Pie chart presenting skills developed early in lives that led to successful person.



It is the responsibility of parents, Counsellors, and teachers to raise the country. As the saying goes, it takes the whole community to raise a child, it is the responsibility of all stakeholders, religious section, education, government, and political and family to take their part in raising the person they want to see in the next generation. Parents must take centre stage in the drive to build family values and connect their children to community gatherings. It is at home that children learn the magic words like, ‘I am sorry, pardon me, excuse me, you are welcome, yes please, no, thank you’ among others that are crucial for adulthood life and character development. The same applies to teachers at school, if this is not developed in children when they are growing, we witness a corrupted, liars manipulative s, and ungodly society. As a narrated inspirational story by Dr Joel Ying “The cow does not give milk”, you must milk it. You must get up at 4amin the morning, go to the field, walk through the corral full of manure, tie the tail, hobble the legs of the cow, sit on the stool, place the bucket, and do the work yourself. That is the secret of life: the cow does not give milk. You milk her or you don’t get milk. (Ying, 2021) It’s a very inspiring story that parent need to echo to their children. Things

are not on silver plate. The culture of hard work must be developed in children when they are still young so that when they are grown, they can survive even without formal jobs.

After reviewing all the gathered data, unemployment among Watoto Alumni was mainly due to a lack of skills, poor work attitude, and Watoto's home model system of parenting for vulnerable and homeless children. This system often created a sense of entitlement and a poor work ethic in students. However, further studies showed that early skilling exposure and continuous apprenticeships, where students were attached to work in different workplaces, improved their employment prospects. This was because they developed soft skills, networking, and improved competency in their field of study while working with modern machines and improved interpersonal skills at the workplace. Additionally, it was found that for external students, a reduction in their upkeep and accommodation money motivated them to work while studying. This led them to develop networks and competencies that helped secure their first employment opportunity after graduation.

3.6. Major challenges identified, that Watoto leadership needs to work on to raise more productive citizens were.

1. Disunity among the team,
2. Many people speak in the lives of the children, and some are misleading them.
3. Watoto mothers felt disempowered and hence emotionally resigned.
4. High sense of entitlement among the Watoto children/Alumni, and Watoto staff
5. High levels of indiscipline.
6. The phrase 'Watoto Church/WCCM is pastorally led' is not being fully understood by the Watoto team.
7. Staff members are detached from the system. Some of Watoto's staff have not yet bought into the vision, mission, and values of Watoto Church/WCCM. 80% of the leaders disagreed when asked if they be confident to have their children raised in the Watoto system, and only 20% agreed with improved policy standards, and accountability.
8. Some Alumni exhibit post-institutional syndrome. The external world becomes hostile to them because they have been living in an unrealistic world. Thus, they felt deceived, and lack of belongings.

3.7. Areas Watoto Church/ WCCM are doing well.

The family model is the second-best option after family adoption. The vision of placing children in a family setting is still okay. It has a greater impact on the lives of children than the orphanage homes. Children grow up with love and a sense of family. When respondents were asked to give four Watoto values that are fully exhibited in the lives of Alumni from the research.

Major values exhibited average.	Excellence (%)	Integrity (%)	Christ (%)	Visionary (%)	Character	Others
Human resource	45.6	15.6	23.9	24.5	13.0	7.4
Watoto Alumni	23.3	26.7	26.7	9.9	13.0	10.3

There must be more emphasis on character development, and the other values. Watoto Church/WCCM has developed the desirable brand of excellence which is appreciated by both external and internal stakeholders in the lives of Alumni, Alumni are visionaries, but character development is still low.

On average, Watoto’s impact on the community through the Alumni is 60% according to the research. 100% of the respondents agreed that Watoto is doing a great job in transforming the community. However, due to disunity in the departments, disempowered Watoto mothers, and misinterpretation of phrases, some children are manipulative and entitled. These Children who become undisciplined fail to have an impact on the community.

Watoto Ministry has absorbed 39.5% of its Watoto Alumni in the season of 2021-2024. This is a good indicator that the youth released are employable, but it can also be a bad indicator when the recruitment process is neutral. It may also be an indication that the youth are not competitive enough to get jobs outside Watoto.

4. Chapter Four: Conclusion.

From the Central Research Question, **what is Uganda's Education Ministry not doing right that makes the youth unemployment rate so high?**

For decades Watoto Church/Watoto Ministry has given support to vulnerable communities. Through helping women, and children who have been abandoned due to so many factors by the community and marginalized. Watoto Childcare's mission of raising the next generation of Ugandan leaders by pursuing excellence in academic and practical skills, integrity in conduct, and moral values, so each one will become a responsible Christian and a productive citizen of Uganda. Most abandoned children and vulnerable women have been rescued and given dignified lives. The research indicates Watoto's mission was achieved by 60% on average from both interviewed leaders, Surveyed Watoto Alumni, and focus discussion groups. The beneficiaries are grateful for the contribution of the Watoto ministry. The value of integrity, love, introducing Christ to them, and excellence that they have learned while still in Watoto homes is helping them in adulthood.

The findings further indicate an improvement in the productivity of the Alumni in 2021-2023, with 19% to 45% external and 94% internal tertiary students gainfully employed after completion of their education. These improvements were attributed to the introduction of high standards, progression policy, reduction of living allowance to students, and exposure of children to skilling, not forgetting continuous apprenticeship, mentorship, and discipleship that have led the children to develop good characters through anchoring on Watoto values. The three values that came out as highly exhibited by the Alumni at workplaces were Integrity (26.7%), Christ (26.7%) Excellence (23.3), and the other values make up 23.3%. Family values and community values should be emphasized to children when they are growing at all costs. These values help them to develop characteristics like honesty, excellence, integrity, and compassion among others that are developed at home, and school. They are crucial for youth employability and retention at workplaces.

The contributors to improved employment of the Watoto Alumni were the improved soft skills. Communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, teamwork, negotiation, creativity, courtesy time management, and resilience that students build while at home, in schools, or because of lack of exposure to skilling activities should not be underrated.

Research findings further showed that most of the factors leading to unemployment of these Alumni are due to their attitudes towards work, high expectations, lack of work ethics, unmatched skills, lack of social network and parents' failures to guide children in the right direction. In the case of Watoto Alumni, most Watoto mothers and teachers who should have played vital roles as parents in the Alumni's lives have emotionally resigned. They felt disempowered due to child protection policy (CPP). Watoto mothers started concentrating only on their biological children. This was evident from the document review, the most successful Watoto Alumni working, $\frac{3}{4}$ are Watoto mothers' biological children. Even in the 2023 National examination results, the best-performing students were $\frac{3}{4}$ biological children of mothers which was an indicator that the assumption was right. The other Watoto Children 3:1:1 who were successful were either attached to a passionate father's heart or a strong and tough mother who followed their skills, leadership, and academic development keenly. None of the respondents mentioned the incompetents of teachers, but the education system did not allow children to be innovative, collaborate with others, and make decisions on their own.

After analysis of the findings in the context of Uganda, it becomes clear that the lack of practical skills and soft skills is the main reason behind the high rate of youth unemployment.

There has been too much emphasis on academic achievement, and children are graded based solely on their ability to pass national examinations and graduate from universities with degrees. The quality of education has been compromised with the introduction of private schools as school proprietors focus on producing high grades to get their schools featured on the front page of newspapers. Consequently, all efforts have been directed towards producing academic giants, leaving character and skill development to whoever is interested. Some parents and teachers have even resorted to engaging in examination malpractices. As quoted by Jennifer Kalule, the Principal Relations Officer of UNEB in a press release on Monday, November 20, 2023. (Oluka, 2023) "There were a few forms of malpractices like impersonation, external assistance to candidates, destroying of examination materials mainly security envelopes carrying examination papers as well as unauthorized possession and electronic sharing of content or information purported to be UNEB examinations"²⁰ This is further supported by Pamela Achom who said examination malpractice remains one of the challenges to the education system in Uganda and has been attributed to several factors including commercialization of education which result in stiff competition between schools

²⁰ [UNEB Reports 25 Cases of Exam Malpractices in PLE, UCE Exams - Nexus Media](#)

among others (Achom, 2021). Unfortunately, the culprits when checked involved teachers, parents and school proprietors who are supposed to show a good example to children. These children develop dishonesty, and lack of integrity because they think it is okay to bribe your way out in life. Some of these practices are carried out in universities where they would rather bribe lecturers for good grades than work hard to gain the competency needed in the course. These kinds of graduates are everywhere. With good academic papers but few skills, but worse of all they bribed their way to offices and are corrupt, and they want to use money and their bodies to get everything they want in their lives. As stated by Ben Sternke, skilled individuals with low character are dangerous to society, and unskilled individuals with low character are irrelevant. Unfortunately, this is where Ugandan youth are found. They cannot be easily employed because they have low skills and low character development. Those who are skilled are with low character are causing the country more harm. The outcome of this is seen with corrupt officials, nepotism, rampant embezzlement of funds, frustrated youth, and high employment for the unlucky who cannot afford to bribe their way to different offices.

On the other hand, those who fail to succeed are frustrated and bitter with their parents, the government, and anyone who seems to do well. To survive, some are riding motorbikes, commonly known as boda-boda on the streets of Uganda, driving commercial trucks and minibuses and engaged in informal businesses. As the saying goes, “Wounded people hurt others”. These are evident in how these youth are unruly on the streets and involved in many criminal activities. Many are involved in betting and dropped out of school/ university. Their critical thinking ability was not developed. They could be easily swayed by any activity without thinking of the consequences.

Many young people and their parents do not take technical and vocational skilling seriously. Technical institutes are often seen as a last resort for those who have failed to proceed academically due to financial constraints or academic challenges. The technical curriculum is also perceived as being more advanced and difficult for academically challenged students as it requires a solid foundation in Mathematics and mechanics. Unfortunately, most of these technical and vocational institutes lack practical training and relevant machines needed to train students in the relevant skills required in the modern market. The theoretical instructors themselves often lack practical skills, and the exposure of both instructors and students to modern technology is inadequate. Due to these factors, many students who graduate from these institutes are not adequately skilled for the modern job market. This outcome reinforces the

negative bias towards technical and vocational education making many parents hesitant to enrol their children in technical institutes even though there is a high demand for skilled labourers in the market.

Despite the establishment of the Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT), the public seems to have little interest in it. The purpose of DIT is to equip students with practical skills that are needed in the job market. Learners are trained in a specific field until they become competent enough to be considered experts in that skill. Unfortunately, both schools and parents have not taken DIT seriously, and the government has not invested much in empowering this body. As a result, employers do not give much value to the DIT certificate. However, some DIT graduates are competent enough to be employed.

Many Ugandan parents are facing a common challenge in raising their children. Instead of taking responsibility for their children's upbringing, they have delegated this task to schools and maids at home. Some parents send their children to boarding school as early as three years old, while others rely on school vans that pick up their children at 5 pm and drop them back home at 6-7 pm. As a result, parents have little quality time to spend with their children. Children grow up relying on social media and unchecked TV programs for entertainment and guidance. Fathers, who should be providing emotional support to their children, are often absent from their lives. These children grow up without a sense of family or personal values, making it difficult for them to adjust to the workplace or find employment. They lack attachment to their parents and often turn to friends, rather than their parents, for advice and support.

5. Chapter Five: Recommendations.

From the Central Research Question, **what is Uganda's Education ministry not doing right that makes the youth unemployment rate so high?**

There are a variety of factors that contribute to the production of unqualified Ugandan graduates who are not employable. These factors include inadequate soft skills, lack of values, job mismatch, incompetency, and indiscipline among some youth. The root causes of these issues can be traced back to overprotection by some parents who do not allow their children to explore the world, misinterpretation of child protection rights, and children's responsibilities. This has led to many children becoming bosses in their families. Children are more aware of their rights than their responsibilities and they lack parental figures in their lives. Additionally, too many contradicting voices in the lives of children and youth have made them unaccountable, undisciplined, and entitled in some cases. These factors, which can be traced back to poor parenting, have led to undesired consequences. Children find it hard to adapt to the natural environment and often live in a bubble of an unrealistic environment in boarding schools. When they leave school, they lack social networks, social ethics, and morals. They have no attachment to their parents and lack personal and family values.

Parents who implant positive values and good parenting practices in their children often see them succeed in life and gain respect in their communities. The key contributors to a child's success in life are strong character and valuable skills. Unfortunately, the world is experiencing a shortage of leaders with both qualities. Those who are crafty, manipulative, and unskilled are often rejected by society, but in Uganda, they are sometimes promoted to leadership positions, indicating a loss of moral values in the country.

The current Uganda education curriculum is criticized for being outdated and irrelevant in today's technology-driven world. It was designed by colonial masters to promote Western culture and produce clerks with little consideration for Uganda's context and culture. As a result, many people find it difficult to see the relevance of Uganda-educated graduates in solving modern challenges. The education system in Uganda lacks practical skills and entrepreneurship training, which has led affluent families to opt for international curriculums for their children. Moreover, the privatization of schools has done more harm than good to the country's education system. Since the government left private schools unregulated, many

schools and universities have produced half-baked graduates who lack critical thinking skills and struggle to solve problems. These graduates have received outdated courses that are not necessary in the job market. Some schools have even resorted to unscrupulous activities to make their students perform better in national examinations. This approach produces graduates who are dishonest, exam-oriented, and unable to apply the knowledge they gained in school to real-life situations.

Based on these findings, I recommend these actions.

1. Family to take centre stage in raising children to install family values, soft skills, resilience, and a sense of responsibility and belonging in children. These are things that make them successful in their lives. Encourage children to participate in community gatherings and problem-solving so that they become productive and responsible in the community they will live in when they become adults. In the case of the Watoto Childcare Ministry, there is a need to empower Watoto mothers to do their instinctive mothering roles. Many are willing but due to child protection policy, many of them are scared and work only to retain their job and educate their children. They have now become target workers. The target is now for their children to be educated by Watoto, and once the children complete their education, they resign.
2. Strengthen Father Heart Ministry in Watoto ministry. The children lack a male figure in their lives and hence their development is imbalanced. Father figure helps them in so many ways. Right from disciplining, emotional development and support, developing social networks, and some even offering job opportunities among others. Besides, the children learned how loving husbands should take care of their wives and homes through interaction with a caring father. Most often, children are surrounded by venting mothers in the house who have been disappointed with men. This impacts the children negatively toward men and marriage which has affected their emotional development and developed mistrust. This was evident in the number of married Watoto Alumni but also at the national level, the number of increasing single motherhood which is affecting the family structure. A child raised in a dysfunctional family comes up with dysfunctional characters and hence an ineffective community.

Similarly in Uganda, fathers need to be present in the lives of their children. The absentee fathers have caused more problems in the country. Every child deserves quality time with the father and mother for their smooth development.

3. Much emphasis has been put on Academic excellence leaving practical skills, yet development and economic growth are driven mainly by skilled individuals in the informal sectors. The Government of Uganda must take the initiative to empower technical institutes and promote technical skills at all levels. Each person must leave the education system with at least a set of technical or vocational skills with a DIT certificate as a minimum in skill. DIT and UBTEB bodies should be accorded support to skilled Ugandan youth. There are more job opportunities in technical fields and sciences than in humanities. As the Government promotes Sciences, Technology, and mathematics (STEM) on paper, it should be practical in the field and all stakeholders rally to support the initiative.
4. Emphasis on DIT level one to be integrated into secondary schools. The setting of DIT at senior three should be echoed more in schools. The Ministry of Education needs to facilitate it to allow the students to come out of lower secondary with a set of employable skills. These students should be allowed to work during holidays and graded based on credit time spent at work, and mandatory for them to write a report on their work experience. After DIT level 1 those who wish to continue with technical skills should be allowed to go for a National Certificate course with the DIT level 1 acquired, or to take DIT level 2, sequentially to DIT level 3.
5. A 1 to 2-month internship in a technical course program should be abolished and continuous apprenticeship be adopted where students are attached to workplaces. It is more effective in producing skilled technicians. This has been tested and seen in Watoto Education Directorate's youth employment due to the work placement initiative of 2 days of work and 3 days in class. The government can adopt this and make it a policy for other technical institutions. This kind of apprenticeship not only increases the chance of the apprentices being retained at their places of apprenticeship but also allows the students to develop soft skills needed in life and work. This would see a great reduction in youth unemployment and speed up the achievement of the 2040 goal.

6. The Watoto initiative has set a strong example that the government can follow to promote holistic education. In today's world, we need individuals who are not only highly educated but also possess leadership skills, practical skills, strong character, and a sense of morality. To achieve this, a grading system that considers academic achievements, skill attainment, and leadership development should be implemented. The Watoto Education Directorate has already started reporting on these aspects of a student's life, with a 50% weightage given to academics, 30% to skill development, and 20% to leadership development. The government should adopt this approach and implement it in other schools across the country. The Watoto childcare mission of raising the next generation of Ugandan leaders who are academically, and practically skilled, morally upright, and responsible Christians is highly relevant to Uganda's context. We need leaders who are not only competent but also have integrity, and this approach can help achieve that goal.

7. There is a high need to train the public on alternatives to corporal punishment and enforce instilling discipline with clear responsibility to the children while they are still young. Many parents fear disciplining their children because of children's rights. The issue of children's rights is misunderstood by many Ugandans and is making children unruly. Children know their rights 100% and 0% of their responsibilities.

In conclusion, the family is at the centre of youth unemployment. Parents need to take their roles seriously and produce the desired children so that the country can be absorbed in the market. Schools can only do much with the support from parents. Soft skills development and values start from home. A skilled person with poor character is dangerous to society. Unskilled people with poor character are irrelevant to society, unskilled people with good character are limited in what they can do in society while skilled people with good character are very fruitful in society. All of us would want to associate with fruitful people in the community and would wish our children to be one of those. There is a high need for a change in mindset regarding technical and vocational skills for country development.

Finally, exposure of children to technical and vocational skills at an early age is a remedy for youth unemployment. This skill enhances soft skills, personal values, and personal vision and teaches goal setting in life. Engagement in projects, allows them to develop project management skills, and report writing which are hardly taught at school. Most importantly work ethic is necessary for adulthood employability

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Appendices.

Appendix 1: Survey questionnaire for Watoto Alumni.

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE - ALUMNI.

Title: Can Ugandan youth unemployment be solved by early exposure to technical and vocational skill attainment? A case study in Watoto's "Alumni" improved employment status from 2021-2023.

This is academic research for a master's program at Uganda Christian University purpose, but the findings will be shared with the leadership of Watoto ministry, the Education Directorate management team, the Community core team for their leadership improvement, and the university research institute of postgraduate for consultation by researchers and policymakers. Your response is confidential.

This survey seeks to find out what are the root causes of unemployment.

The questionnaires take about 10 minutes. I am grateful for your time.

A. General questions.

1. Gender: **Tick in the box.** Male Female

2. Age group category: **Tick your appropriate age in the box**
18 -24
25-29
30-35
36+

3. At what age did you join Watoto Childcare? 12Yrs

4. Marital status. **Tick in the box**
Married
Single.

5. How did you join Watoto Schools? **Tick in the box**
Watoto fully sponsor
Mother's child

Staff's child

Seed child

Private sponsored.

Neighbourhood child

6. Village attached to (**Tick in the box**)

Suubi village.

Bbira Village

Laminadera village

7. How many Watoto's mothers have you been attached to, while at the Watoto Village? Tick one.

1. 1-2

2. 3-5

3. More than 5

8. How has your relationship with the mother been? Rate 1-5 by ticking the box. where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent.

1	2	3	4	5
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. How has this affected your performance while at school and workplace?

10. Were you attached to a father's heart? Yes. No

a) If yes, has the presence of a father figure in your life helped you in your pursuit of your career?

b) Give an example of a lesson learned from your father's heart.

c) If not, who was holding you accountable?

d) do you have any challenge in your career development that you relate to the absence of parental guidance? Tick one. Yes. No

e) Explain why.

f) Were you attached to a mentor while at Watoto Village?

11. What are some of the pieces of training given to you by a mother, Aunts, Uncle, or Father's heart that is still helping you to this age?

12. What are some of the 2-3 mentors-ship topics you had with your mentor that you think would be beneficial to all youth in Uganda?

13. What is your highest level of education: **Tick one.**

Primary.

Secondary

Tertiary.

14. Were you attached to any vocational skilling program while at Watoto schools?

No

Yes.

15. Rate the benefit of the vocational skill training attained while at Watoto schools to your post-school lives. Where 1-5 (1. not benefiting. 5. I am earning from it.)

1	2	4	5

16. Tertiary education Alumni tracking shows there is great employment status. 50% of the Alumni are gainfully employed between 2021-2023 compared to 17% employed by the survey carried out in 2019. What do you think caused this drastic change?

- I)
- II)
- III)

17. Do you believe that exposing children to skilling at an early age will help to solve the increasing youth unemployment plight in Uganda?

Yes

No

18. Are you currently employed? **Tick one**

Yes

No

19. If employed, are you employed in line with the field of your study? **Tick one.**

Yes.

No

20. How long has it taken you to get a job after graduation? **Tick one**

Less than a year.

More than 2years

21. State three challenges you faced with your first job.

I.

II.

III.

22. If you are you advise schools/ colleges/institutions who are preparing students for employment. What are the three major skill sets to concentrate on for youth success?

23. Has this kind of work apprenticeship been beneficial to your study field?

Yes.

No

Not sure

If yes, what new skills that you learn from the two days of weekly work placement that put you at an advantage over other youth in the same field?

a) -----

b) -----

c) -----

d) -----

24. Do you recommend this kind of apprenticeship to be adopted by other schools/colleges/universities?

Yes

No

Not sure

25. Are you self-employed formerly by? **Tick one**

Self-employed Formerly employed.

26. How long has it taken you to get employed?

Less than a year.

1-2 years.

3-5 years.

More than 5 years.

27. What is your experience in the first three months of your first job after school?

28. Is / (was) your job related to your field of studies? **Tick one** Yes. No.

29. What Watoto's values did you gain while at Watoto schools/villages that are helping at your workplace? Select the three most important values that have impacted your life.

1. Excellence

2. Integrity

3. Community

4. Words

5. Christ

6. Love

7. Faith

8. Character

9. Vision

10. Worship

11. Generosity

12. Unity

13. Justice

30. How do you feel about your job?

31. Were you engaged in any kind of work while at the village apart from homework?

Yes

No

32. During holidays, what kind of work were you involved in?

(a)

(b)

33. Have those jobs contributed to your current job success?

34. If you were to be taken back into the system again, how would you want to be treated to be more successful in the job market?

35. How many workplaces have you been in so far?

1 to 2 workplaces

3-5 workplaces

More than 5 Workplaces

36. What do you think are the major causes of unemployment among Uganda youth?

37. The following are the contributors to Uganda's Youth unemployment.

Which of the following is the major contributor to Youth unemployment? Rank them from the most common to the least contributors.

(a) Parents' failure to guide the children in the right way.

(b) Wrong curricula that lead to skill mismatch in the market.

(c) Youth attitudes toward employment

- (d) Government failure to create employment opportunities for youth.
- (e) Inability of youth to network and get information on job opportunities.
- (f) Inability to create their job.
- (g) Lack of technical and entrepreneurship skills that are required.

38. Watoto mission is “Raising the next Generation of Ugandan leaders by pursuing excellence in academic and practical skills, integrity in conduct and moral values, so each one will become a responsible Christian and a productive citizen of Uganda.”

Do you think Watoto Childcare's mission was achieved? Rate from 1-10.
Where 1 not at all to 10 is fully achieved.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

39. What more should Watoto do to raise the desires of the next generation leaders as stated in the mission above?

- a) -----
- b) .-----
- c) -----
- d) -----

Thanks for your time.

Appendix 2: Survey questionnaire for Human resources.

Survey Questionnaire for Human Resources.

Title: Can Ugandan youth unemployment be solved by early exposure to technical and vocational skill attainment? A case study in Watoto’s “Alumni” improved employment status from 2021-2023.

This is academic research for a master's program at Uganda Christian University purpose, but the findings will be shared with the leadership of Watoto Childcare ministry, the Education Directorate management team, the Community core term for their leadership improvement, and the university research institute of postgraduate for consultation by researchers and policymakers. Your response is confidential.

This survey seeks to find out what are the root causes of unemployment.

Your organization has been selected because you have allowed Watoto Alumni to collaborate with you.

1. Type of organization (tick your organization type)

- a) Public service.
- b) Private Company
- c) Civil society organization
- d) Community-based organization
- e) Faith-based organization.
- f) Church.

2. How long have your organization been in existence? Tick one.

- a) 0-2 years
- b) 3-5 years
- c) 5 -10 years
- d) More than 10 years.

3. What are the three (3) major values you look for when recruiting your new employees?

- a)
- b)
- c)

4. What are the most common traits in successful candidates you always observed in an interview?

5. Research shows that Uganda youth's unemployment is majorly a result of skill mismatch. Many Ugandan youth come out of universities, and colleges but are jobless. What exact skills did they need to learn before coming out to the work field?

6. From your years of experience working with new fresh graduates, what is their level of (a) Competency in the field of their work (b) soft skills when they start working in the period of 6 months- 1 year?

May you rate them from poor to very good. **(1. poor 2. Fair. 3. Good. 4. Very good.)**

a) Competency in the field of their work		(b) soft skills	
Poor	<input type="text"/>	Poor	<input type="text"/>
Fair	<input type="text"/>	Fair	<input type="text"/>
Good	<input type="text"/>	Good	<input type="text"/>
Very good.	<input type="text"/>	very good	<input type="text"/>

7. Watoto Education Directorate developed a new initiative of attaching students to workplaces for two days on the job and three days in class. Your organization has been one of the selected workplaces. Do you believe that course jobs will help fresh graduates overcome this problem, of incompetency, and inadequate soft skills lacking in youth today?

a) Yes

b) No sure

c) No

8. Support your answers.

9. Why have you decided to retain the Watoto trainee over recruiting new staff?

10. What new skills that you strongly believe the students learned while working in your company/organization that make them stand an advantage over their fellow fresh graduates who get straight to market without this kind of contiguous entrepreneurship?

11. Do you recommend this kind of apprenticeship to be adopted by other schools/colleges/universities?

Yes

No

12. Which of the following values do you see exhibited by Watoto students during apprenticeship or those still working with your organization.? Select the most three visible values seen in them.

a) Excellence

b) Integrity

c) Words

d) Christ

e) Love

f) Faith

g) Character

h) Vision

i) Generosity

j) Unity,

k) Justice

13. The following are the contributors to Uganda's Youth unemployment.

- (h) Parents' failure to guide the children in the right way.
- (i) Wrong curricula (theoretical vs practical approach) that lead to skill mismatch in the market.
- (j) Youths' attitudes toward certain kinds of employment
- (k) Government failure to create employment opportunities for youth.
- (l) Inability of youth to network and get information on job opportunities.
- (m) Inability to create their job.
- (n) Lack of technical and entrepreneurship skills that are required.

Which of the following are the major contributors to Youth unemployment? Rank them from the most common to the least contributors.

14. Watoto mission is “Raising the next Generation of Ugandan leaders by pursuing excellence in academic and practical skills, integrity in conduct and moral values, so each one will become a responsible Christian and a productive citizen of Uganda.”

Do you think Watoto Childcare’s mission is being achieved in the Watoto alumni Watoto with you? Rate from 1-10. Where 1 is not at all to 10 fully achieved.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Thanks for your time.

Appendix 3: Focus group discussion question for Watoto mothers, Fathers’ heart. And counsellors

Can Ugandan youth unemployment be solved by early exposure to technical and vocational skill attainment? A case study in “Watoto’s Alumni” improved employment status from 2021-2023.

Focus group discussion. Fathers' Hearts, Watoto mothers, Counsellors

Background for the interview.

In 2019, Watoto Community Care initiated a restructuring process in Education based on the result of a survey conducted that indicated about 1000 “Watoto Alumni”, were absorbed in the market, there was only 17%-19% gainfully employed in the field they have studied. The report shows that some of the students struggle to retain their jobs. However, with restructuring and introduction of new initiatives in education and sport in 2022-2023. The employment trackers show significant improvement in employment status with 50% employed within the first year of their graduation. HVTI students are booked in the second year of their studies at their workplaces.

This is academic research, but the findings will be shared with the leadership of the Watoto ministry, Education Directorate management team, and Community core term. Your response is confidential,

This is academic research, but the findings will be shared with the leadership of the Watoto ministry, Education Directorate management team, and Community core term. Your response is confidential, we will not disclose your identity.

This discussion will take a maximum of 45 min- 1 hour. We are grateful for your time.

Instructions.

- **Pick the chairperson to lead the discussion, and the secretary and timekeeper.**
- **The response should be written on the flip chart, using markers available on the table.**
- **The chairperson should set ground rules for the discussion, and the Secretary to keep time during the discussion.**

Questions.

1. For the time you have worked as a mother, father's heart, or counselor in Watoto, what are the issues that you see as a major cause of Watoto's children failing in their lives?
2. There has been a report that some of the children are undisciplined and lazy and others have stolen your property in the home, or offices. How have you dealt with them? If this were your biological child/sibling, would you use the same method? Why and why not?
3. Have your roles as a mother, father, and counsellor been appreciated in Watoto?
4. What is your relationship with the children who have left Watoto's home? Are they still coming to visit you?
5. When interacting with the alumni, some of them are bitter and do not want to associate freely with their Watoto stories, yet some are so happy with Watoto. What do think causes these two categories of people?
6. Do you relate this to the parenting module Watoto is using?
7. Are you proud of being a part of the people in the lives of Watoto children? How and why?
8. Watoto Education Directorate came up with a new initiative of attaching students to workplaces for two days on the job and three days in class. Introducing work placement to 16+ years and reported in a report card, of 50% academic achievement, 30% skills attainment, and 20% leadership development. Do you support the initiative? Why?
9. The education tertiary tracker indicates that there is a significant improvement in the Watoto Alumni employment status 2021-2023. Do you believe that is because of the Watoto initiative of taking children to skill rather than taking them to university?
10. Have you connected any of these children to employment opportunities? How?
11. What critical role of a parent is not taken seriously in the lives of these children according to you?

The following are the contributors to Uganda Youth's unemployment. Which of the following are the major contributors to Youth unemployment? Rank them from the most common to the least contributors.

- i. Parents' failure to guide the children in the right way.
- ii. Wrong curricula (theoretical vs practical approach) that lead to skill mismatch in the market.
- iii. Youth's attitudes toward certain kinds of employment
- iv. Government failure to create employment opportunities for youth.
- v. Inability of youth to network and get information on job opportunities.
- vi. Inability to create their job.
- vii. Lack of technical and entrepreneurship skills that are required.

12. Watoto mission is “Raising the next Generation of Ugandan leaders by pursuing excellence in academic and practical skills, integrity in conduct and moral values, so each one will become a responsible Christian and a productive citizen of Uganda.”

Do you think Watoto's mission is being achieved? Rate from 1-10. Where 1 not at all to 10 is fully achieved.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Thanks for your time.

Appendix 4: Interview questions for Watoto leaders.

Interview Questionnaires.

Title: Can Ugandan youth unemployment be solved by early exposure to technical and vocational skill attainment? A case study in “Watoto’s Alumni” improved employment status from 2021-2023.

This is academic research for a master's program at Uganda Christian University purpose, but the findings will be shared with the leadership of Watoto ministry, the Education Directorate management team, the Community core term for their leadership improvement, and the university research institute of postgraduate for consultation by researchers and policymakers. Your response is confidential.

Background for the interview.

In 2019, Watoto Childcare initiated a restructuring of Education directorate leadership based on the result of a survey conducted that indicated about 1000 “Watoto Alumni”, were absorbed in the market, there was only 19 % gainfully employed in the field they have studied. The report shows some students struggle to retain their jobs. However, with restructuring and introducing new initiatives in education and sport in 2022-2023. The employment trackers show great improvement in employment status with 50% employed within the first year of their graduation. HVTI students are booked in the second year of their studies at their workplaces. This is academic research, but the findings will be shared with the leadership of the Watoto ministry, Education Directorate management team, and Community core term. Your response is confidential, we will not disclose your identity.

The interview will take about a maximum of 30 min-1 hour. We are grateful for your time.

1. How long have you worked with Watoto?

1-2 years

2-5 years

5- 10 year

10 + years

2. Based on the mission of the Watoto Education Directorate, on a scale of 1-10 rate the impact of Watoto education in the lives of Alumni of

a) Before 2020. With 1 being poorly to 10 being the highest.

b) Alumni from 2021 to date.

3. In your view, why were the Alumni not well accepted in the job market which led to many of them being unemployed and bitter?
4. Do you relate this to the parenting module Watoto is using?
5. If you are to have your child stay in Watoto Village under the care of the Watoto mothers. Would you be confident that your child will grow up to the person you desire him/her to be? Under the same condition, the Watoto children are kept?
6. Why?
7. What skills were missing in most Watoto Alumni before 2019 that made them unemployed?
Are these skills being instilled in the current children? How?
8. With the results from the tertiary in 2021-2023 tracker that show few Watoto children are almost absorbed in the work market, what do you think is the cause?
9. The tracker also indicates that 60% of these Alumni are recruited within the ministry. Is that a good indicator or not?
Why do these children desire to work with Watoto more than other places?
10. Do you think the Watoto Ministry education module is the best to be adopted by the Government to solve the Youth unemployment challenge?
11. If you were to redesign the policies, what would you do differently so that the current children are of the quality needed in the job market?
12. Watoto Education Directorate developed a new initiative of attaching students to workplaces for two days on the job and three days in class. Introducing work placement to 16 years and reported in a report card, of 50% academic achievement, 30% skills attainment, and 20% leadership development. Do you support the initiative? Why?

13. If you are to add one new initiative to empower children more for employable skills.

What would that be?

14. Watoto mission is “Raising the next Generation of Ugandan leaders by pursuing excellence in academic and practical skills, integrity in conduct and moral values, so each one will become a responsible Christian and a productive citizen of Uganda.”

Do you think Watoto's mission is being achieved? Rate from 1-10. Where 1 not at all to 10 is fully achieved.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Thanks for your time.