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NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The case for Tertiary Education in Eastern Uganda

Path To Prosper aims to support the people of Bududa and the surrounding regions to become more prosperous by funding professional training for vulnerable young adults. The goal of Path To Prosper is ‘independence through education.’ Ultimately, we aspire to become redundant in this area, and use this model to support other areas around the world affected by extreme poverty.

Over the following pages, the case for our work will be laid out. Initially this means looking at the UN and World Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that need to be met in this area and how Uganda fits into this contextually. This is followed by the academic case for professional training and finishes with an examination of our light-touch and sustainable approach.

The UN/World Bank Sustainable Development Goals

The UN has stated an ambition to fight global poverty and to achieve this through the setting and meeting of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In their own words, these are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a global partnership. They recognize that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests.¹

We believe that the work of Path To Prosper will help achieve several of these goals.

The very first development goal is to, by 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on **less than \$1.25 a day**. In Uganda the last available data puts 41.7% of the population as living on less than \$1.90 per day.² This is in no small part due to large swathes of the population being entirely reliant on subsistence farming, where there is little to stimulate a cash economy. By giving young adults the opportunity to train in a profession that will enable them to generate an income, we can help to break this cycle. As it stands, of the 65% of children in Uganda who begin secondary education, only 24% graduate, and without further training they are often left with no ability to develop employable skills.³ Even those who do graduate are rarely fully equipped to generate these skills alone. An additional problem with subsistence agriculture that has been found in other parts of Africa, is that subsistence farmers get 42% of their calories from purchased foods.⁴ Without equipping at least some individuals

¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

² <https://databank.worldbank.org/reports.aspx?source=world-development-indicators>

³ <https://databank.worldbank.org/reports.aspx?source=world-development-indicators>

⁴ Bhavani Shankar, ‘Rural food security, subsistence agriculture, and seasonality’
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5648179/#pone.0186406.ref004>



in the community with the ability to generate an income outside of agriculture, this system of perpetuating poverty cannot be broken.

A key goal that we aim to fulfil is goal 4.4, which is to “substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship”. We are also committed to ensuring that equal opportunity is afforded to women within our program. SDG 4.3 is to “by 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university”. The wider societal and economic benefits of educating women are numerous; educated women generally have children later and in smaller numbers, their financial independence affords extra protections, and the benefits are more likely to be shared by their families and wider community.⁵ Currently, of the children who attend school in Uganda, twice as many males finish school compared to females (32.2 to 16.9%).⁶ Our intention is to achieve parity wherever possible in our programme, starting with a 1:1 gender enrolment ratio, and with continuous advocacy for gender equality and female empowerment throughout our work.

We believe that through our programme, we will assist communities in their progress towards meeting other development goals, such as goal 1.5 of reducing their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters. By not being entirely reliant on subsistence farming, the community should have greater resistance to such crises.

The case for professional training

In 2014 the UK’s Department for International Development (DfID) funded a study into the impact of tertiary education, also known as professional training, on development. Their findings concluded that the returns of Tertiary Education (TE) have been underestimated. There is evidence to suggest that TE may provide greater impact on economic growth than primary or secondary education.⁷

Professional training provides a range of broader, measurable benefits to graduates, relating to health, gender equality and democracy, among other areas. In addition, it contributes to the strengthening of institutions, and the forming of professionals in key areas, such as education and healthcare.⁸ The money that we aim to spend on professional training is going to achieve much wider societal benefits.

Path To Prosper aims to provide funding for professional training in order to help a community help itself; working on the premise that as well as the economic

⁵ p10 Emmanuel Jimenez, Harry Anthony Patrinos ‘Can Cost-Benefit Analysis Guide Education Policy in Developing Countries?’ <https://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/abs/10.1596/1813-9450-4568>

⁶ <https://databank.worldbank.org/reports.aspx?source=world-development-indicators>

⁷ p53 Oketch M, McCowan T, Schendel R (2014) *The impact of tertiary education on development: a rigorous literature review*. London: Department for International Development.

⁸ p53 Oketch M, McCowan T, Schendel R (2014) *The impact of tertiary education on development: a rigorous literature review*. London: Department for International Development.



benefits there is strong evidence that this type of education contributes towards social cohesion and greater civic engagement.⁹ If the scheme can be shown to yield results, members of the community - especially the beneficiaries of the programme - will begin to have the means and motivation to support further funding towards professional training without a reliance on aid.

Further studies have shown that investment in education from the Ugandan government may be declining, with a year on year fall in % of government expenditure. Furthermore, there are doubts about general improvements being made with regard to SDGs, which are moderate at best.¹⁰ External investment is currently necessary to make up the shortfall that exists. In an uncertain world, the slow progress of the Ugandan government in the primary and secondary school spheres will not allow for them to invest in professional training. For the short to medium term, that spending will have to come from outside, which is where we come in.

In areas of extreme poverty, Individuals are more likely to reach their full potential if equipped with an education to do so.¹¹ Our aim with this programme is to provide opportunities to members of these communities to gain an education that will enable them to fulfil their potential away from the subsistence existence that so many in these areas are tied to. A lot of secondary education can be seen as a route towards higher learning rather than the workplace.¹² By investing in professional training and vocational programmes, the benefits of the education being received are more readily seen and understood both by the individual and their community. For those for whom traditional tertiary education is unattainable or unaffordable, our programme offers an alternate path.

It is perfectly reasonable to question why this type of activity cannot be left to either the state or free-market enterprise. In the case of the state it has already been shown that they are struggling even in the provision of primary and secondary education, and the money for tertiary education funding does not exist. In the case of the market, it is true that in certain areas there is increasing investment, however in Bududa and the surrounding area, that is not the case. Furthermore, relying on the self-interest of companies means that they will often end up cherry-picking who and where receives assistance. It is fair to say that economic-led policies will miss out on targeting disadvantage.¹³ By acting in an

⁹ p29Burnett, Nicholas. "International Education Policies, Issues, and Challenges." *Education, Learning, Training: Critical Issues for Development*, edited by Gilles Carbonnier et al., Brill, LEIDEN; BOSTON, 2014, pp. 27–36. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w76wjj.10. Accessed 10 May 2020.

¹⁰ P203 Gable, Susanna; Lofgren, Hans; Osorio Rodarte, Israel. 2015. *Trajectories for Sustainable Development Goals : Framework and Country Applications*. World Bank, Washington, DC. © World Bank

¹¹ Burnett, Nicholas. "International Education Policies, Issues, and Challenges." *Education, Learning, Training: Critical Issues for Development*, edited by Gilles Carbonnier et al., Brill, LEIDEN; BOSTON, 2014, pp. 27–36. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w76wjj.10.

¹² Burnett, Nicholas. "International Education Policies, Issues, and Challenges." *Education, Learning, Training: Critical Issues for Development*, edited by Gilles Carbonnier et al., Brill, LEIDEN; BOSTON, 2014, pp. 27–36. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w76wjj.10.

¹³ Draxler, Alexandra. "International Investment in Education for Development: Public Good or Economic Tool?" *Education, Learning, Training: Critical Issues for Development*, edited by Gilles Carbonnier et al., Brill, LEIDEN; BOSTON, 2014, pp. 37–56. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w76wjj.11.



area that is receiving little government or private enterprise support, in conjunction with ensuring that the decisions are taken by local people, Path To Prosper is actively supporting disadvantaged individuals and communities with the benefits of this programme.

Light-touch approach

Charitable donation is not new to this area and is certainly not a cure for extreme poverty. In recent years, many studies have been done into why the huge amounts of charitable money spent has failed to yield substantial results on the ground. It has become increasingly apparent that models that seek to be overly prescriptive, involve direct foreign presence on the ground and treat symptoms of poverty fail to achieve results.¹⁴ Our aspiration is that by funding professional training, delivered locally with community buy-in, means that all money donated can be used directly on the ground, in a way that empowers local people to effect change in their own environment. There is a theory that states that education should be delivered on the basis of local need and for fulfilment of individual potential.¹⁵ By giving the local community final say over who benefits from the programme it is demonstrably the local need that is being fulfilled and should simultaneously build local trust in the benefits of professional training. This in turn should lead to it becoming more valued and eventually locally funded, allowing us to take the same model elsewhere.

The way charities are currently funded has led to substantial amounts of charity's time, effort and money to be generated in pursuit of further funding and ensuring their own existence. With our model nothing would please us more than to become redundant in the communities in which we are working. Independence through education should mean exactly that, an end to reliance on aid.

Conclusion

The above is a very short introduction to a few of the underlying statistics and theoretical basis for the journey we have embarked upon. Development theory is a complex subject and the huge amount of competing views can muddy the waters. The evidence submitted in this document shows the key SDGs that Path To Prosper aims to help meet, and why we believe that professional training, in conjunction with local empowerment and selection of students, will lead to meaningful, long term change in this area and hopefully others in the future.

¹⁴ p54 Oketch M, McCowan T, Schendel R (2014) *The impact of tertiary education on development: a rigorous literature review*. London: Department for International Development.

¹⁵ IVAN ILLICH(1926-)Marcelo Gajardo, *Prospects:the quarterly review of comparative education* (Paris, UNESCO: International Bureau of Education), vol. XXIII, no. 3/4, 1993, p. 711–20.©UNESCO:International Bureau of Education, 2000 quoted in Draxler, Alexandra. "International Investment in Education for Development: Public Good or Economic Tool?" *Education, Learning, Training: Critical Issues for Development*, edited by Gilles Carbonnier et al., Brill, LEIDEN; BOSTON, 2014, pp. 37–56. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.1163/j.ctt1w76wjj.11.



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