

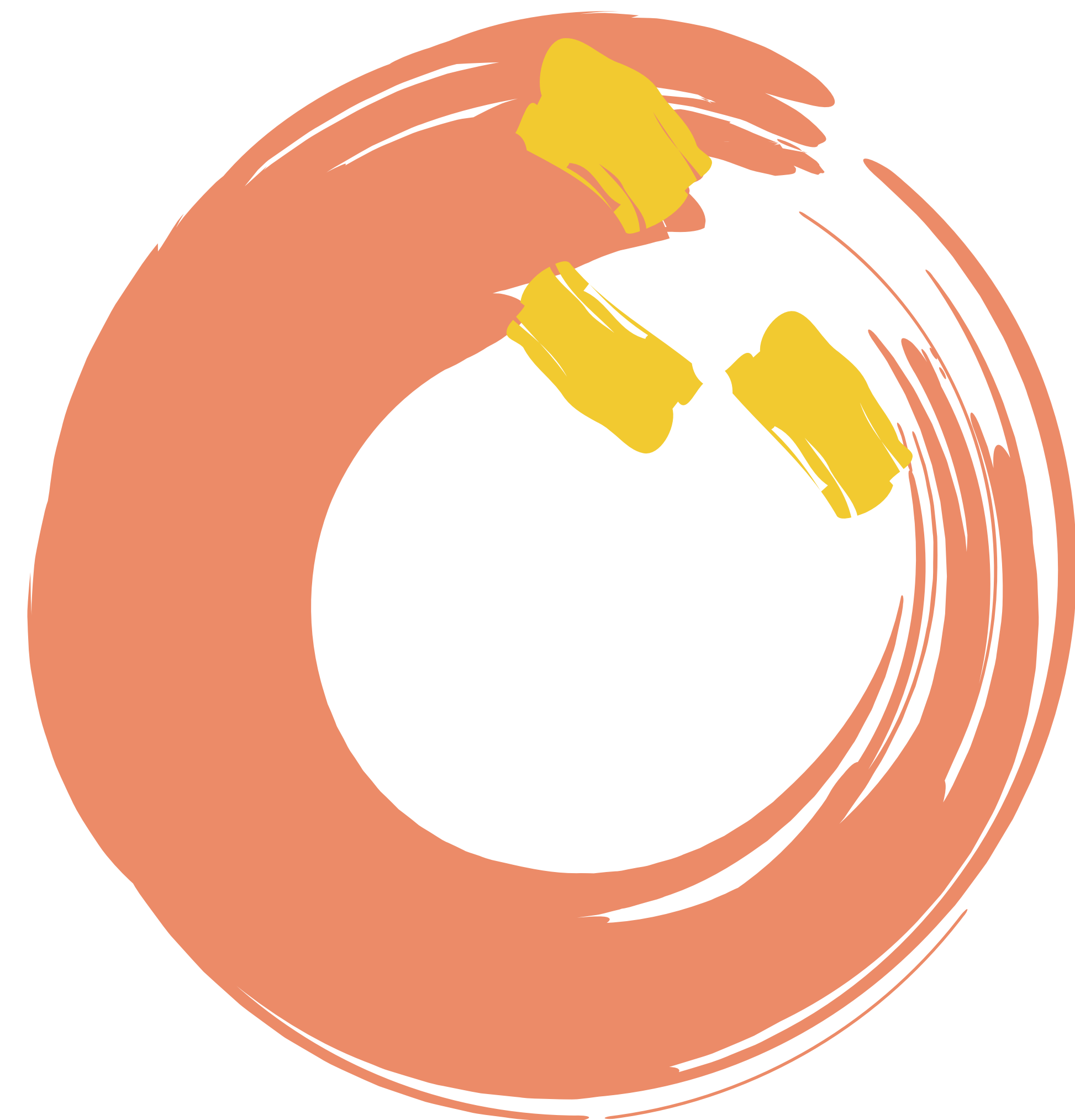
# Youth Speak

By young people. For young people.



This report contains the results of a youth survey and focus group discussions conducted with students and graduates of vocational and entrepreneurship training in Dar es Salaam, Mtwara, and Dodoma. Participants discuss their employment and self-employment dreams, the barriers they face in reaching them, and their experiences with and preferences for youth engagement. By elevating youth voices, we hope to inform the design of future programs and activities to be more responsive to the wants and needs of young people.

September 2019







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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The International Youth Foundation (IYF) Tanzania sincerely thanks everyone who participated in the preparation and implementation of the youth survey and focus group discussions which led to the findings, analysis, and recommendations presented in this report.

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Many thanks to the administration, educators, and trainers of the Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) and Tanzania Entrepreneurship and Competitiveness Centre (TECC) institutions in Dar es Salaam, Mtwara and Dodoma for allowing the data collection team to engage students for survey interviews and focus group discussions.

Special thanks to the VETA and TECC students and graduates who participated in the survey and focus group discussions. Their opinions, views, and suggestions form the main body of this report and provide invaluable insight that will benefit their peers and future youth development programs.

This research was conducted and the report written by the FXBT Health team: Dr. Charles M. Matiko, Senior Research & Evaluation Specialist and Team Leader; Sylvia Shirima, Senior Consultant; Donata Didas, Technical Officer; and Youth Research Assistants: Domina Kishashu, Nagira Losai, Stephano Imory Alex, Beatrice Otaru, Venitha Bishanga, James Ezekiel, and Athumani Msangi.



*Too often, young people are excluded from the processes that shape their future, and are treated by development interventions as passive recipients of programs rather than the assets and leaders they are.*

The International Youth Foundation (IYF) Tanzania is partnering with Mastercard Foundation to implement the Via: Pathways to Work program, a five-year initiative that seeks to improve economic opportunities for underserved youth in Tanzania through sustainable changes in the national technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and entrepreneurship systems.

After receiving additional funding from an anonymous donor for youth engagement activities, IYF conducted youth surveys and focus group discussions (FGDs) in May-June 2019 to better understand the young people they partner with and ensure programs are responsive to their actual wants and needs.

Too often, young people are excluded from the processes that shape their future, and are treated by development interventions as passive recipients of programs rather than the assets and leaders they are. This research generates data—by youth, and for youth—on the challenges, hopes, and

aspirations of Via program participants, as well as the trajectories and transformations they have experienced throughout the program.

This report contains the results and recommendations from 189 individual surveys, 14 FGDs, 6 key informant interviews (KIIs) with educators, and 3 validation workshops. These activities were conducted with Via program participants at Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) and Tanzania Entrepreneurship and Competitiveness Centre (TECC) partner institutions in the Dar es Salaam, Mtwara, and Dodoma regions.

In addition to refining and improving Via program activities over its last two years, it is hoped these recommendations will be shared widely in the youth development ecosystem of Tanzania to elevate youth voices and promote youth priorities.



## INTRODUCTION

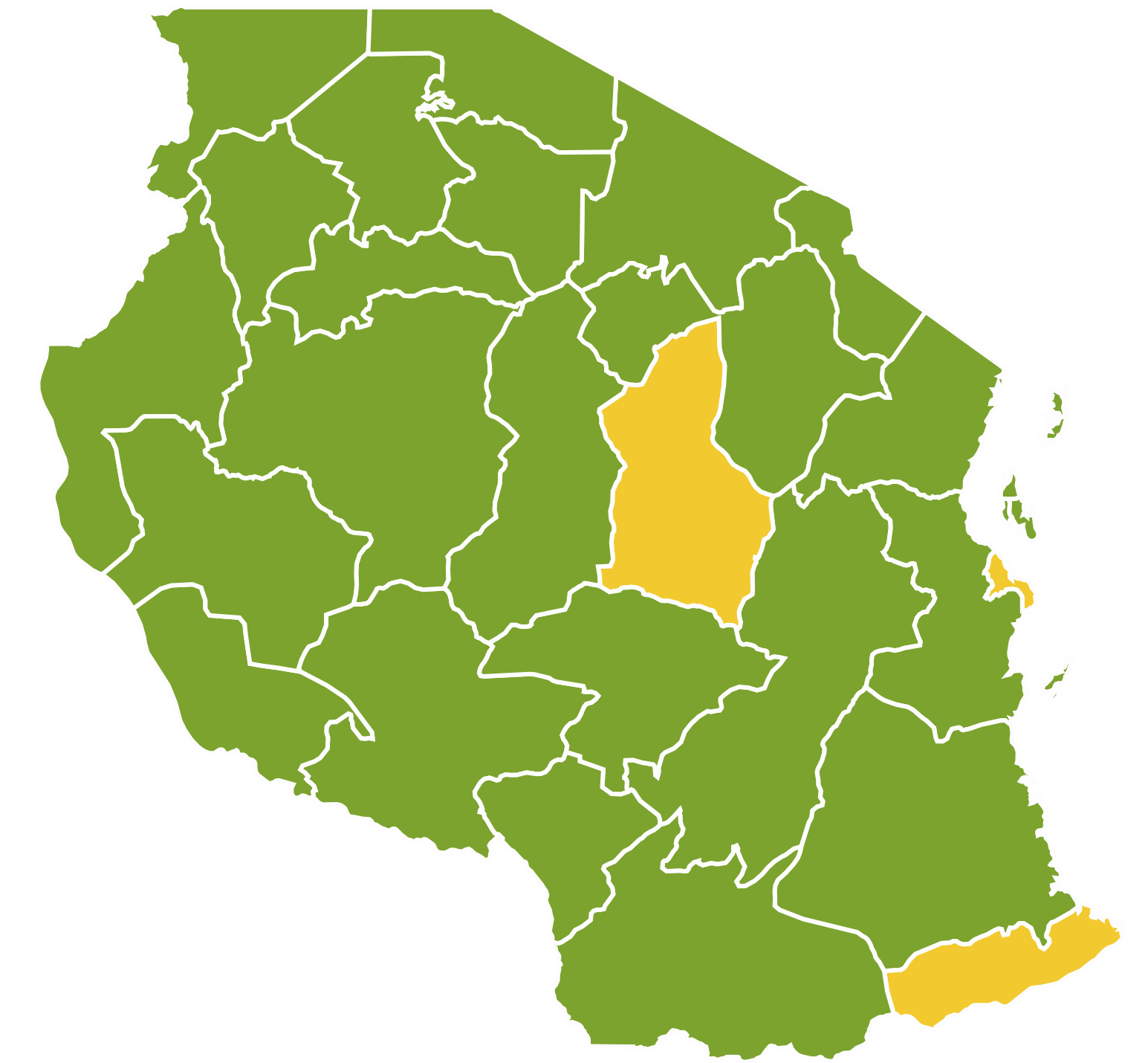




## METHODS

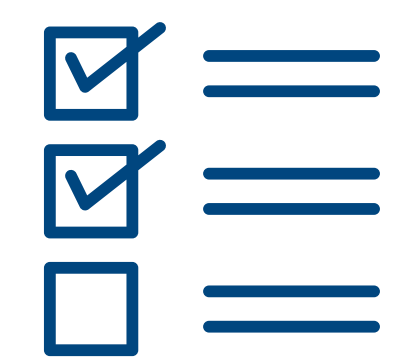
This research uses a combination of youth-led focus group discussions (FGDs) and a survey to consider the experiences of young people in all three regions of Tanzania where the Via program is being implemented: Dar es Salaam, Dodoma, and Mtwara. For the purpose of this activity, “youth” are defined as young women and men, ages 16-30, who have participated in the Via program at VETA & TECC centers in the three regions.

Survey and FGD respondents are Via program participants who were in training at the time of data collection, or had recently graduated from VETA and TECC. The research team used a convenient sampling strategy which they intentionally skewed to reach more graduates than current students in order to better understand actual outcomes for trainees exiting partner institutions.



Research activities occurred in the three regions where the Via program is being implemented: Dar es Salaam, Dodoma, and Mtwara.

## Characteristics of youth research participants



189

Surveys



14

Focus Group Discussions



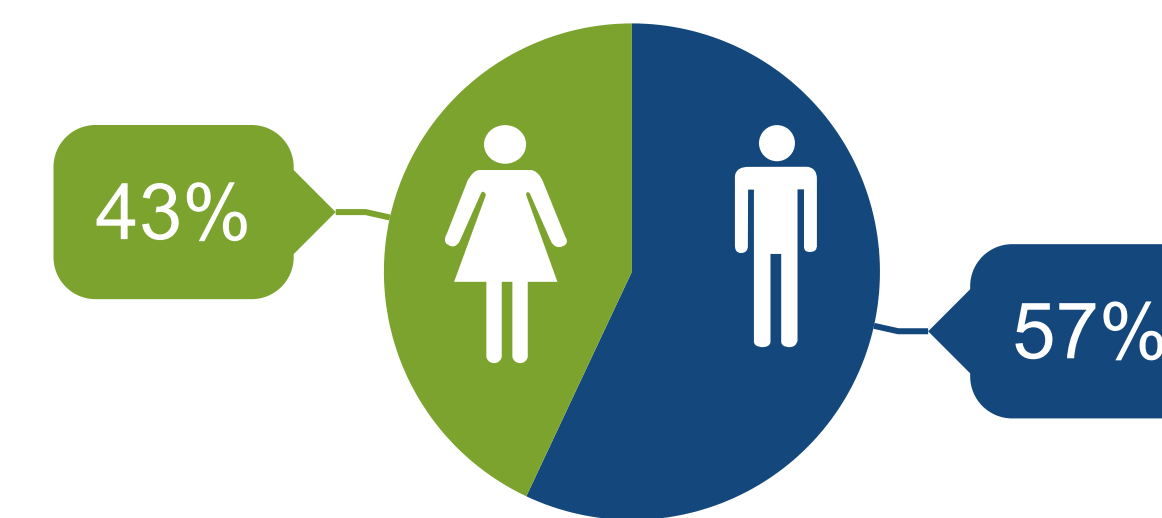
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Key Informant Interviews

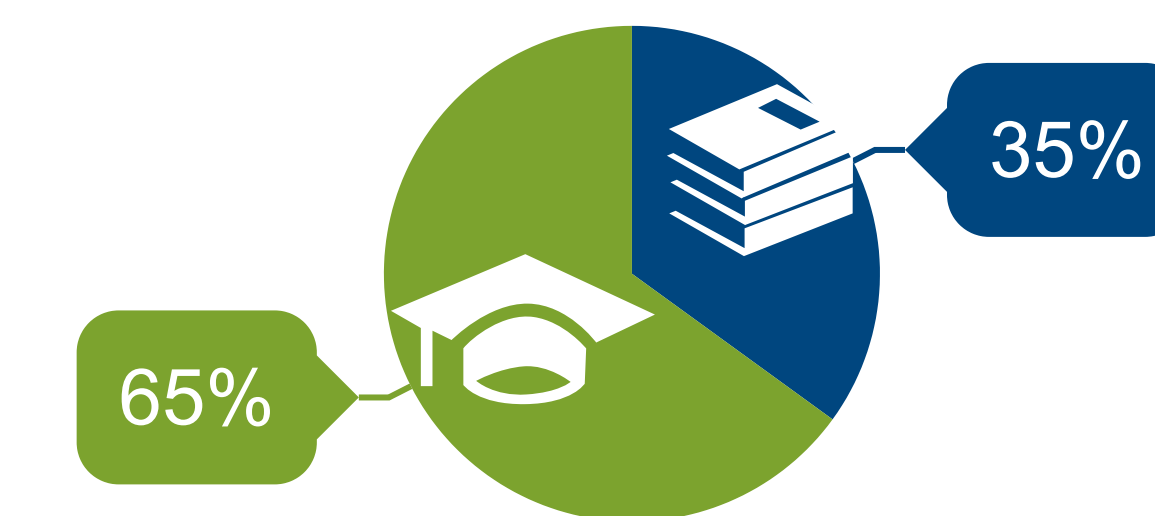


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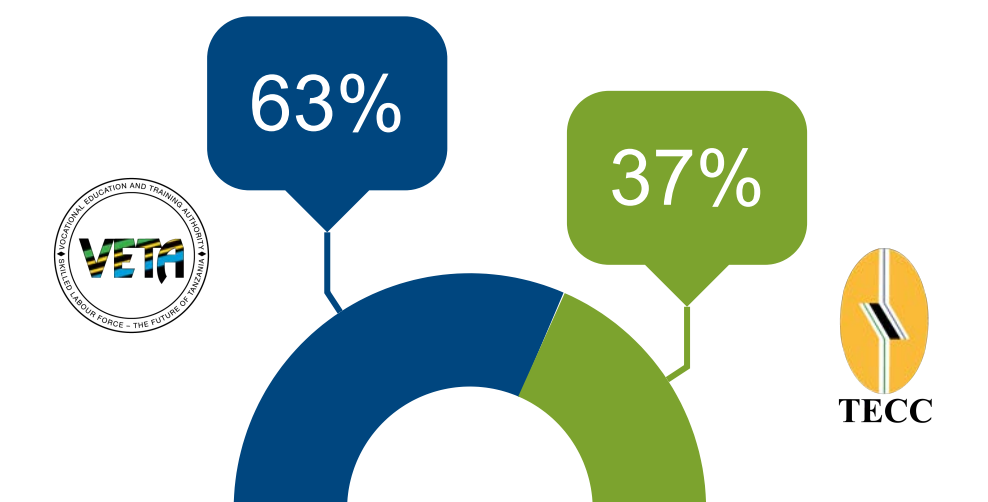
Validation Workshops



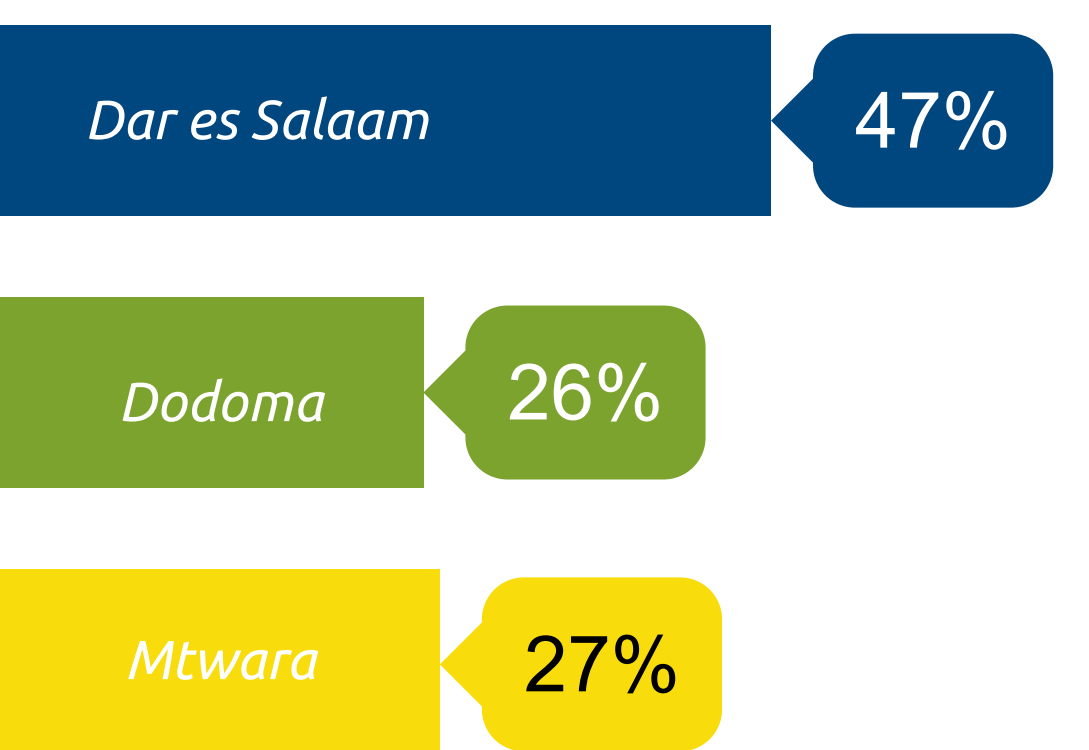
Ratio of females to males



Ratio of graduates to those still in training



Ratio of VETA to TECC youth. The Via program is reaching more VETA students than TECC, which is why the sample skewed in this direction.



Ratio of participants per region.





1. What do young people perceive are the challenges to employment and entrepreneurship?
2. What are young peoples' aspirations and the barriers they face in achieving them?
3. What do young people think are the benefits of youth engagement?
4. How do young people think youth-serving organizations could better support them?





## FINDINGS

# Barriers to economic opportunity

This research finds that young people experience many challenges in relation to securing and sustaining self- and waged employment. These challenges can be classified as: those inherent in the TVET system; personal deficiencies in skills, disposition, or experience; employers' attitudes and preferences; and a lack of financial capital or security. Young people with disabilities are liable to feel these challenges more acutely, particularly discrimination in the workplace, and both young women and men report frequent experiences of sexual harassment and requests for sexual bribes.

Many employers express an interest in recruiting people with higher education qualifications who have ICT skills and are comfortable using computers. Research participants report that most VETA and TECC graduates are not computer literate. They also feel if an employer prefers to employ people they already know, skills might not be the most important hiring criteria.

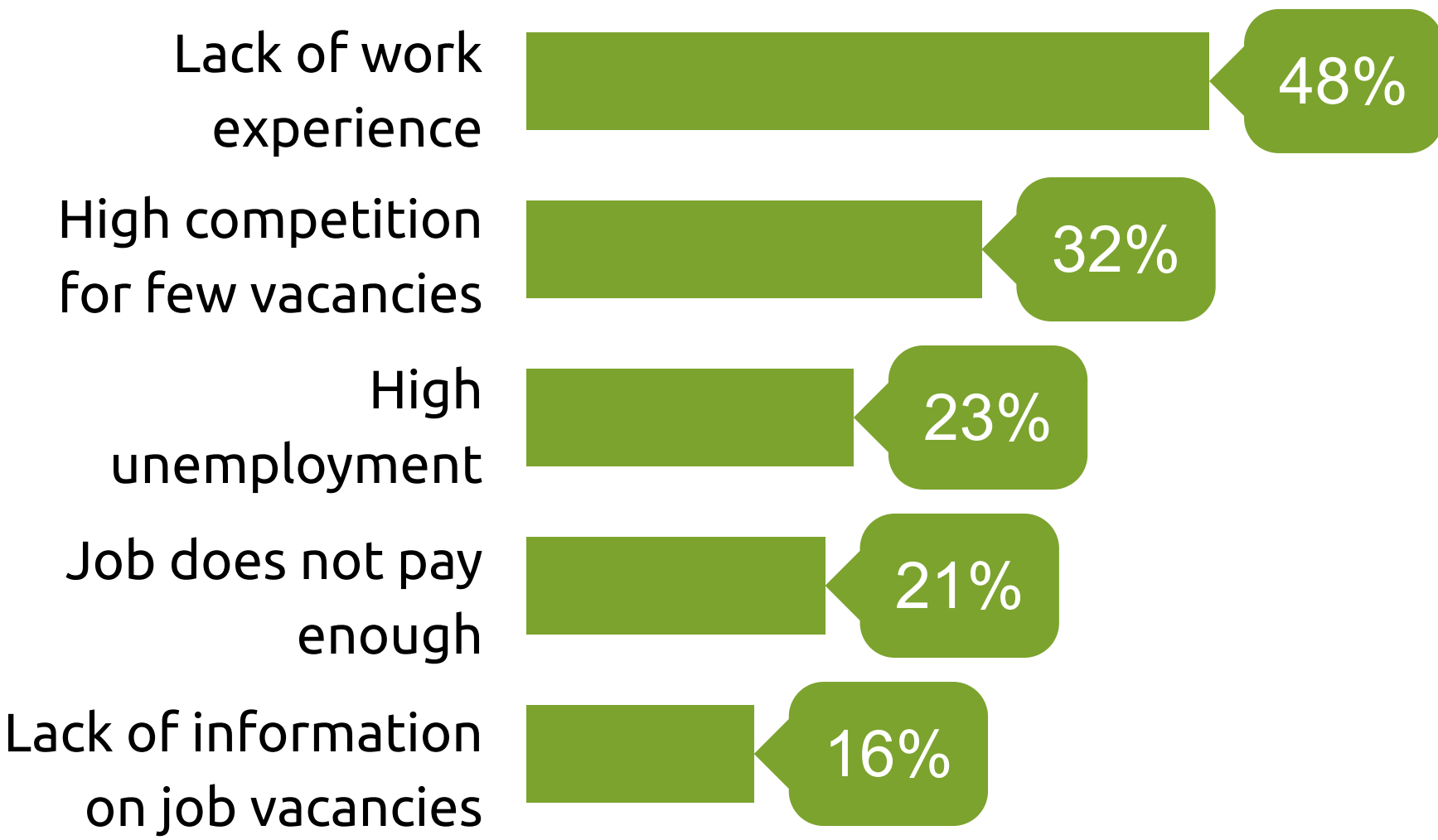
Some concerns are more pronounced for young men than women, including fears of the losses they might incur starting a business and employer expectations for previous work experience. Young women more consistently cite lack of confidence and sexual harassment as barriers to opportunity than their male peers. All express concern about finding and retaining customers and being able to express themselves well during job interviews.

Additional insights from the FGDs and validation workshops shed light on the lack of adequate business facilities and need for more supportive home and community environments.

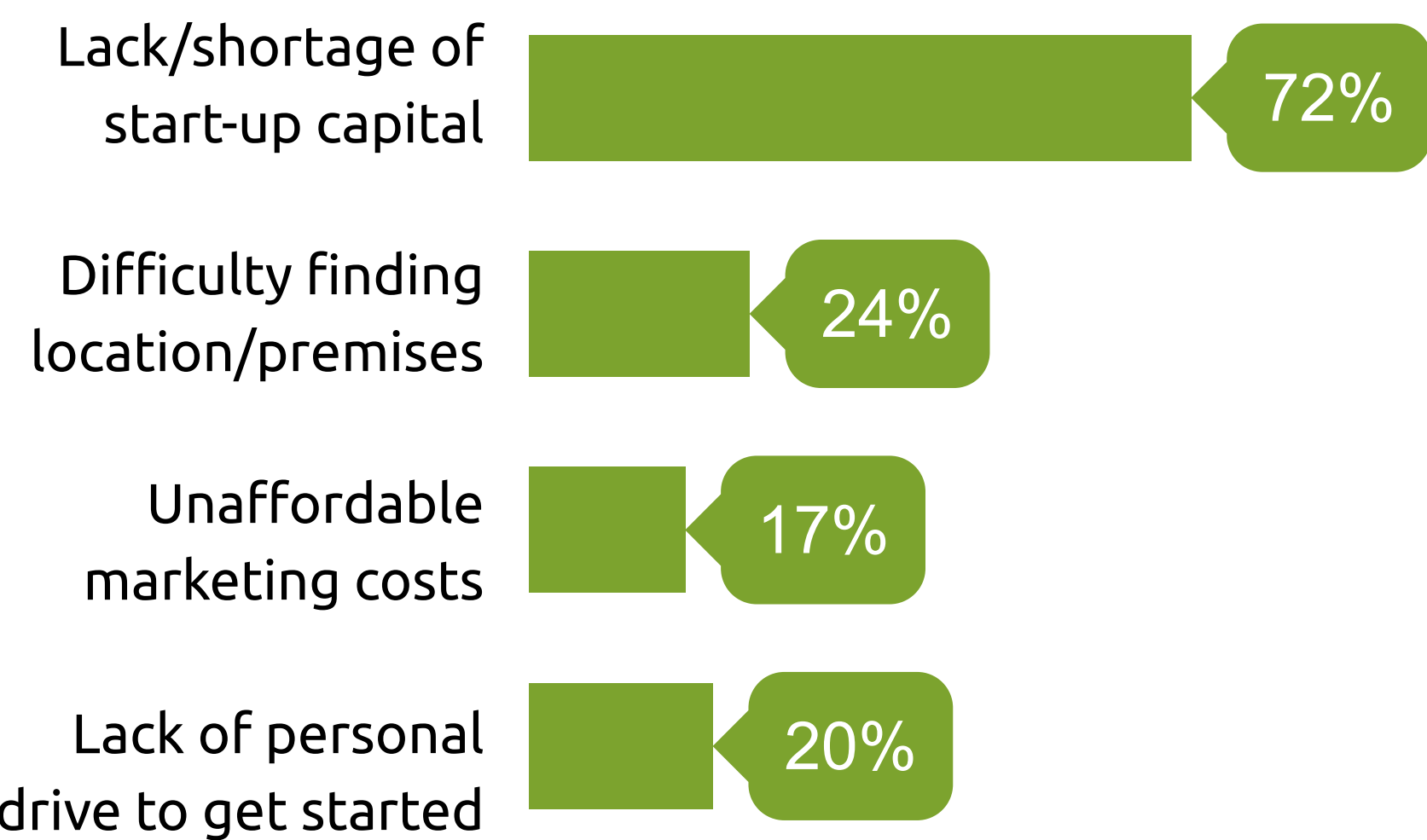
Most survey respondents, albeit able-bodied, are aware of the stigmas their peers with disabilities face. They perceive that their disabled peers are afraid they may be rejected because of perceptions that they are less capable, and that customers will avoid them for the same reasons. Other issues cited include fear and cynicism of being accepted by employers and fellow employees, and a lack of disability-friendly infrastructure in the workplace.



# What challenges do you face getting and keeping a decent job?

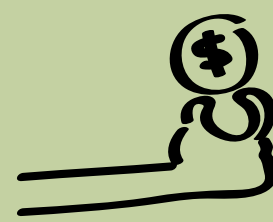


# What challenges do you face starting and running your own business?



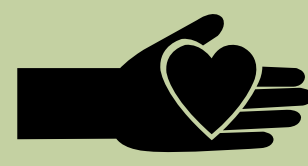
38%

of respondents feel like most employers want someone with **previous work experience**.



20%

of respondents worry they will be asked for a **financial bribe** in exchange for a job opportunity.



29%

of respondents worry they will be asked for a **sexual bribe** in exchange for a job opportunity.



32%

of respondents cite **lack of confidence** as a barrier to starting their own business.



*Sometimes you may have experience but they don't know you, so even if you have a lot of experience you will not be employed because it is all about who you know... You have to pay bribes to get a job that you don't know if you will get or not.*

24-year-old female graduate, VETA Dar es Salaam



*You may have learnt something but you are afraid to go because maybe you have low level of education, so we are scared and think that you can go there and yet seem to have low education level.*

24-year-old male student, TECC Dar es Salaam

# Top concerns related to finding jobs and starting businesses

- ✓ Lack of start-up capital
- ✓ Sexual harassment and the request for sexual bribes
- ✓ Fear of potential losses associated with starting a business
- ✓ Lack of confidence
- ✓ Employer preferences for experienced workers who have higher education and ICT credentials
- ✓ Difficulty attracting customers
- ✓ Poor communication skills
- ✓ Discrimination against youth with disabilities
- ✓ Lack of business premises or facilities





## Youth aspirations & barriers

Young people have bold and wide-ranging aspirations for their future, spanning all sectors of the economy. Six out of 10 graduates feel their work-readiness skills are improved after participating in training and almost half (46%) of these graduates have also started their own business. It is not clear from the findings if this is related to positive perceptions of self-employment or a reflection of the lack of opportunities in the formal labor market.

Most research participants are not hearing about or engaging employers directly for job opportunities. Rather, they seek this information out in their social networks, including family and friends, and through various media platforms.

These findings suggest that VETA and TECC are providing valuable services, and highlight the importance of integrating high-quality life skills training into their offerings. The barriers young people mention, however, suggest there is substantial room for improvement in connecting students with relevant labor market information and mentorships as they navigate complex and saturated markets.

### What is your dream?

- Work for the government
- Join the army
- Become an engineer
- Own a successful business
- Design clothes
- Become a counselor
- Be a photographer

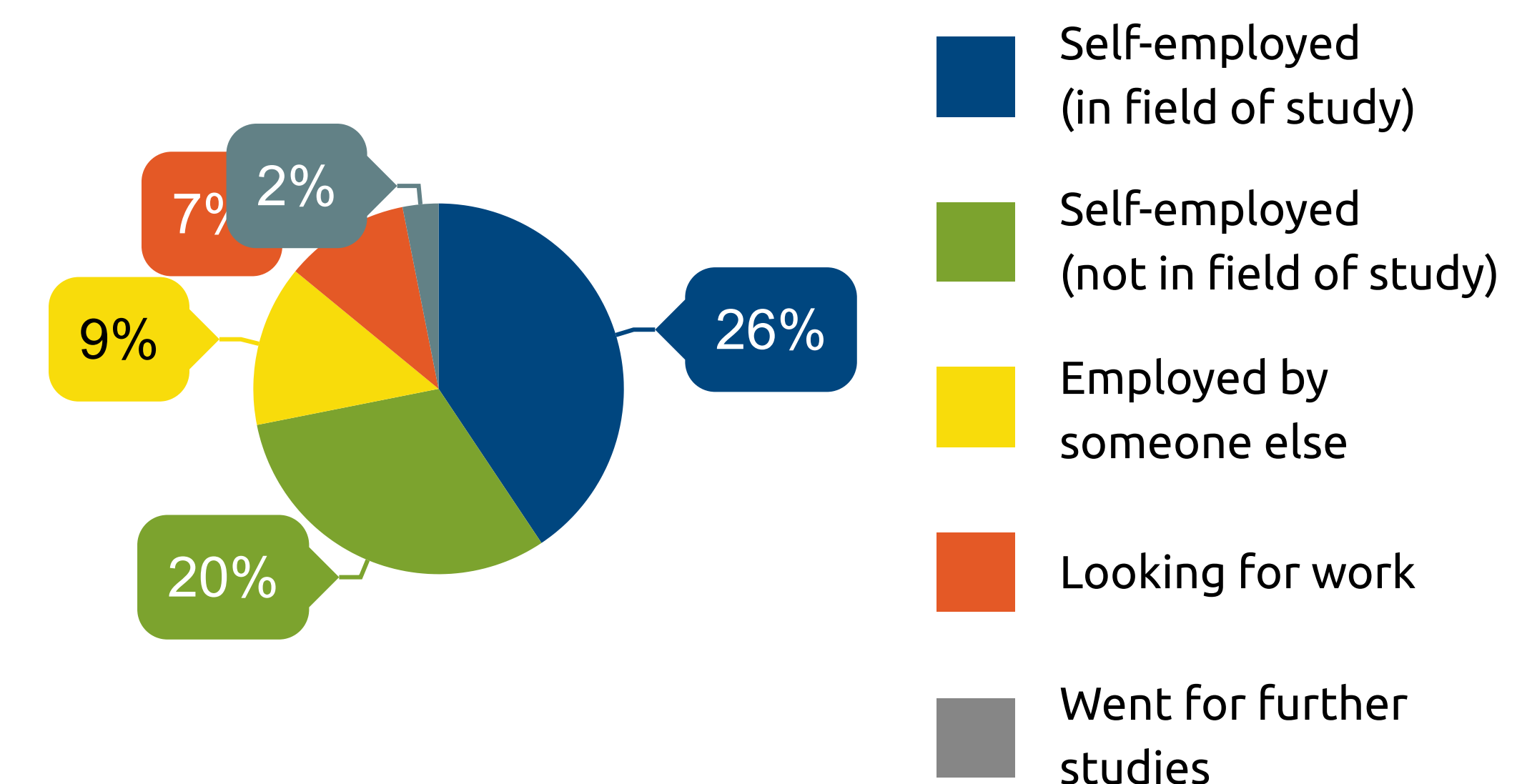
### How do you plan to achieve it?

- Be committed
- Focus
- Work hard
- Invest my personal savings
- Listen to others' advice
- Love what I do
- Continue my education

### What makes it difficult?

- Personal problems
- Lack of confidence
- Employers don't trust me
- My family is unsupportive
- I lack motivation
- The market is saturated
- I need guidance & experience

### What are those who graduated doing after leaving training?



### What did your training at VETA or TECC give to you?

*I was so disrespectful of customers but now I know how to talk with my clients, I'm ready 100 percent to do well because I have business discipline. I learned a lot of hair and beauty techniques and now I am confident and I can provide these services to customers.*

19-year-old female graduate, VETA Dar es Salaam

*I believe I can now create something new ... The training has prepared me well to make decisions in my business, and know how to set goals and save money.*

TECC graduate

*Training has prepared me to deal with anything in front of me in order to cross my goals.*

24-year-old male graduate, VETA Mtwara

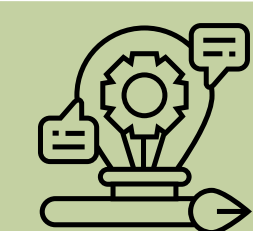


*Youth who are engaged in development activities have better income; those who are not engaged end up with bad habits like robbing and harassing those who are engaged to make them give up what they are doing. Engaged youth are independent and make decisions quickly.*

22-year-old female graduate, VETA Dar es Salaam

### Top 5 reported benefits of youth engagement

- Creates economic opportunity (50%)
- Gives young people a chance to say what they think (42%)
- Improves awareness (42%)
- Reduces dependence (41%)
- Helps young people to gain skills, knowledge, self-esteem and connection (37%)



75%

of respondents think VETA/TECC give space for feedback through **students' dialogues** and **opinion boxes**



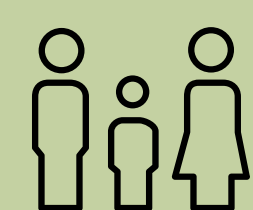
72%

of respondents think their **communities** are **open to ideas** from **young people**



39%

of respondents **do not think young people** are **listened to** by decision makers



15%

of respondents **do not think parents** **respect** the decisions of young people

70%

of respondents have worked with a group to solve a school or community problem in the past 12 months



## Benefits of youth engagement

The majority (85%) of survey respondents believe youth engagement is beneficial to them. Some of the major benefits they perceive are the creation of economic opportunities, a chance for young people to speak their minds, improved awareness, and the reduction of dependency.

Young people who are engaged in development activities are perceived by their peers as having more business and social knowledge compared to those who are not engaged, and this places them in a better position to generate new development ideas.

Almost all (96.4%) participants report challenges to participating or engaging in their own development. Examples of barriers include financial constraints, social and cross-cultural barriers, and family obligations.

While engagement is perceived as useful in all phases of life, participants urged that youth engagement should start early during childhood development at home, and even in primary school. They called on stakeholders to invest in the cultivation of parenting skills so children become accustomed to participating in the discussions that impact their lives.





## What?

Youth preferences for engagement activities

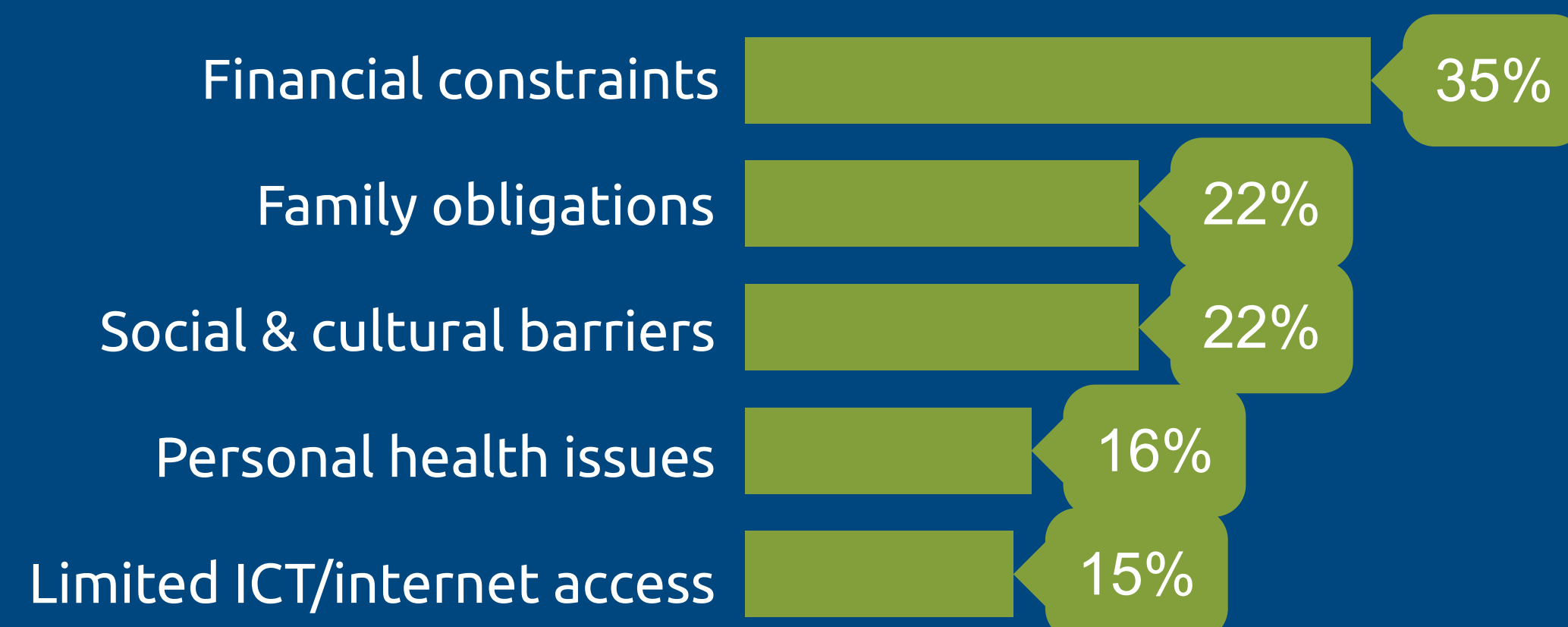
- ✓ Be **connected** with established businesses
- ✓ Receive **advice** on how to get loans
- ✓ Gain more **knowledge** about labor market opportunities
- ✓ **Network** with and train other youth
- ✓ Participate in **savings groups**
- ✓ Take part in **meetings, dialogues, and debates**
- ✓ Be provided with the **tools** needed for their trade
- ✓ Be connected with a **committed mentor**
- ✓ Establish and participate in **ward-level youth councils** to promote volunteerism and provide decision-making experience

## How?

What adults and systems can do to help facilitate youth engagement

- ✓ Intentionally **create space for** and engage young people in all types of meetings.
- ✓ **Promote youth representation** in all levels of development activity (at ward, district, and national levels).
- ✓ Engage youth in **key development decisions from and early age**.
- ✓ Promote **positive parenting styles** that can facilitate youth engagement.
- ✓ **Address existing norms and cultures** that hinder youth engagement.

### What challenges to your engagement do you face?\*



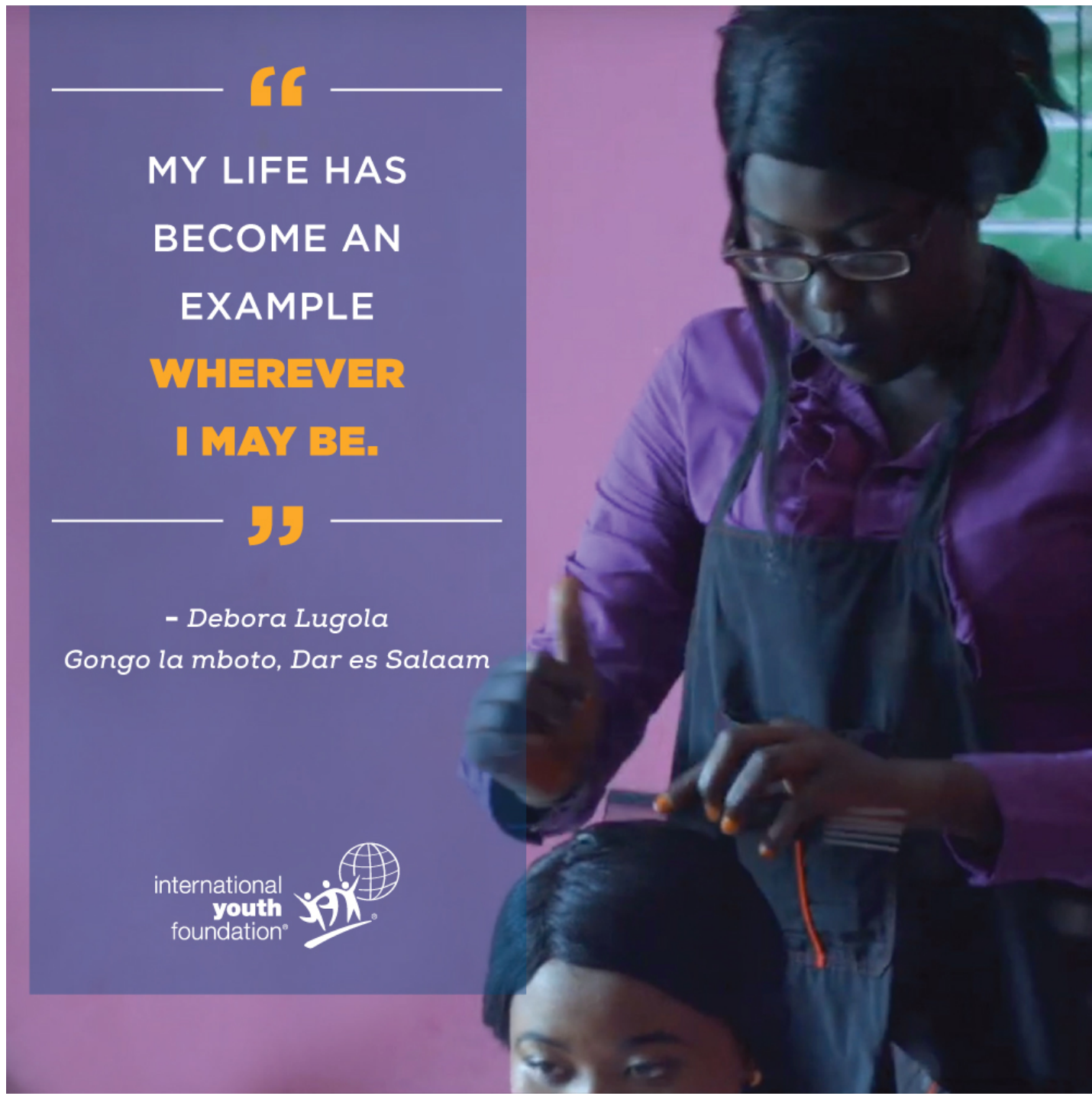
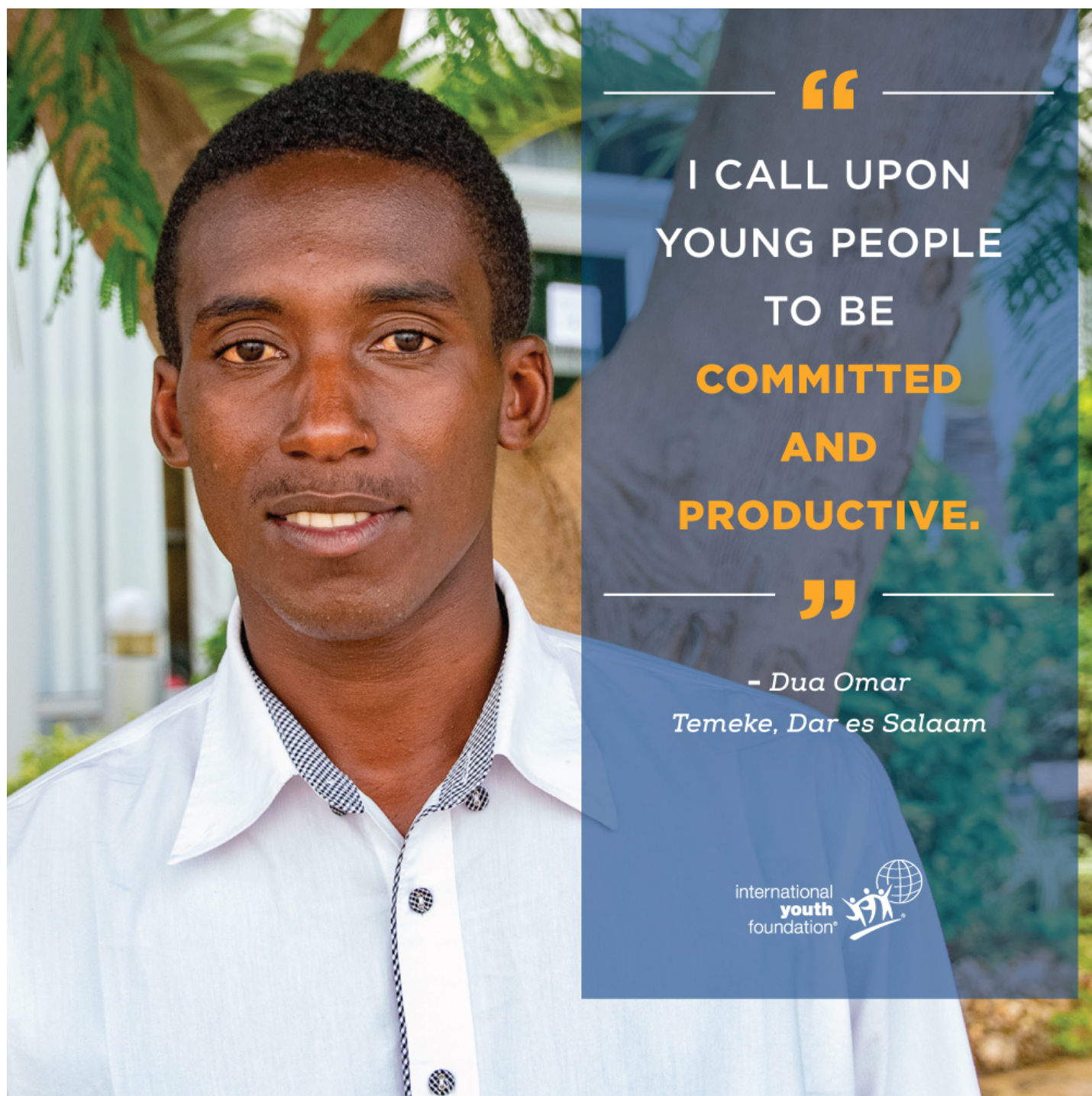
\*Percentages are calculated based on the denominator of those who answered this multiple-response question. These are the 5 most cited challenges; others included transportation, inconvenient timing, and limited access to information.



Meaningful youth engagement upholds young people as partners in program design, implementation, and evaluation and allows them to:

- Make choices about how they participate in activities
- Give meaningful input about programs
- Influence how programs are run
- Share in the leadership of and responsibility for programs

This engagement is vital to the success of TVET and entrepreneurship services, as well as government and NGO programming designed to support positive youth development. These recommendations were co-created with, and vetted by, youth participants in the validation workshops.



## Youth

- ✓ Study hard to gain the technical and life skills needed in the workplace, including effective communication, self-confidence, and how to get along with others.
- ✓ Join formal youth groups to help access financial resources.
- ✓ Register at employment centers and job search networks to get information on available opportunities.
- ✓ Seek and apply for internship and volunteer positions to gain more experience.
- ✓ Be courageous in starting your business with the capital you have. Don't wait around on the big loan.
- ✓ Speak out! Your voice matters and your engagement is critical to your success, as well as the success of your community and your country.



## RECOMMENDATIONS



# Recommendations

How can adults and systems better support young people?

## Implementing Partners

- ✓ Review and update curricula consistently to keep up with changes in technology. Engage young people in this process.
- ✓ Collaborate with the government to introduce life skills and entrepreneurship training in primary and secondary schools.
- ✓ Provide marketing training to students so they can better attract and retain customers.
- ✓ Integrate life and ICT skills training into every course offering (VETA).
- ✓ Consult more regularly with the private sector to understand what skills they expect graduates to possess (VETA).
- ✓ Increase the percentage of time allocated to practical activities and training (VETA).
- ✓ Improve mentorship offerings to guarantee each graduate is supported until their business takes off (TECC).

## Youth-serving stakeholders

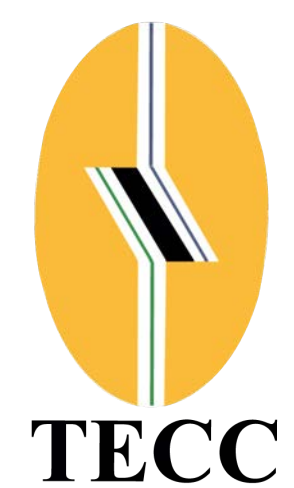
- ✓ Engage young people in the design, planning and implementation of programs which affect them.
- ✓ Support the creation of online portals and formal networks that facilitate youth access to job information.
- ✓ Coordinate regular seminars in which students or recent graduates can engage with employers on their recruitment processes and expectations.
- ✓ Increase community and parental engagement to promote home environments that impart the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for young people to be healthy and engaged citizens.
- ✓ Consider incorporating youth mentorship activities in programs to provide young people with opportunities to develop leadership and soft skills.

## Government

- ✓ Promote the establishment of ward-level youth councils to give young people platforms to discuss development issues.
- ✓ Ensure local governments actually spend the funds allocated for youth development by making the process easier and disbursing directly to formal youth groups.
- ✓ Support the creation of youth-friendly loan products that recognize most youth are in transition periods and might have minimal or no collateral.
- ✓ Advocate against the discrimination of young people with disabilities and continue enforcing the Persons with Disabilities Act of 2010.
- ✓ Encourage MoEST to collaborate with IYF to develop, test, and implement life skills training in primary and secondary schools.
- ✓ Strictly enforce anti-discrimination and harassment laws and policies to decrease instances of sexual and financial bribery.



# *via* PATHWAYS to WORK







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At IYF, we envision a world where all young people are  
inspired and equipped to realize the future they want.

W W W . K I J A N A O N G E A . O R G

