The high level of unemployment among the youth is a global concern as it is a recipe for organized crime, lawlessness, politically instability and social conflicts. The Government of Uganda has in the past undertaken a number of programs intended to address the problem of unemployment and poverty among the youth including: Northern Uganda Social Action Plan (NUSAF 2), Skilling Uganda, Youth Enterprise scheme, Youth Venture Capital Fund, and the latest one being the youth livelihoods programme.

It is important to note that around 78% percent of Uganda’s population is under the age of 30 years. In this edition, we meet a Ugandan youth as he narrates his story of growing up, and the challenges other youth in his age group faced.

Growing up in my home district of Bugiri, my friends and I would sit by the roadside every evening and while feasting on man-goos, we would talk about what we wanted to be in future. At that time, I thought saying: “I want to be a lawyer,” would automatically make you one later in life. We were all innocent. We did not know what reality awaited us as adult Ugandans, in the 21st century.

Today, thank God, I am in University studying and hoping to realize my childhood dream of becoming a lawyer next year. But every time I go back to my home district and talk to my childhood friends, they are far from realizing their dreams. Why is that?

While my parents struggled to raise money and send me to good schools then like Busoga College Mwiri, on the other hand my friends’ humble parents did the same but only to take them to the “best” Universal Primary Education (UPE) schools. With shining shoes, books on shoulders, pens and pencils resting strategically on their ears; while wearing khaki uniforms, they majestically marched off to their schools. Ready to embark on an educational adventure in the social jungles of Uganda and break barriers within society, to become Uganda’s number one pilots, engineers or doctors later in life, my friends would be welcomed by absent teachers, small dilapidating classrooms, outdated textbooks; with a curriculum that was not innovative and administrative staff riddled with corruption.

As a result, many pupils began dropping out of school, as they were not seeing any
Young people in Action: Activista opens doors to health centres in Northern Uganda

Demonstrations and official letters from young activists was enough to change a Health Centre in Northern Uganda from a sleeping colossus of inefficiency to a sprawling clinic of activity. The villagers now get proper diagnoses, the children are immunized and the people receive free medicine for their illnesses.

The doors to Otichi Health Centre in Northern Uganda now open early in the morning. The shelves are bulging with vaccination medicine, needles and other medical equipment.

A year ago, the doors would often be shut until lunchtime and sick people travelled for hours to get treatment in the town of Gulu. Activista-member Ociro Bosco was at the forefront, when Activista demanded the Health Centre to operate as promised by the Government.

“We made a large call for improvements at the Health Centre. Everything has become better since we started to make noise,” he said.

Noise from Activista

When the Activista members realized that their children did not get immunized and that their neighbours were denied even basic treatment, they decided to call for action.

“We started by organizing several community meetings to map out the exact issues. We discussed with the ActionAid partner, Partner for Community Development (PCD) and last year, we wrote a letter to the District Officials signed by us and many other community members. We took the letter to the LCI Local Councilor and made sure that everybody knew about our complaints,” the 27 year old Ociro Bosco said.

A week later, the Government started delivering more medicine and the LCI councilor promised to hire 2 additional staff, raising the total number of staff to 6.

But the clinic still remained closed in the mornings, as the staff lived in Gulu, which is a two hour bus ride away.

“Then one day, a woman asked the councilor why the clinic is closed. The councilor held up the letter and said that the staff refused to come to work,” Ociro explained.

We used to open around 11.30, but now we open at 7.30 each morning.”

Ociro concluded.

Better health services

Paul Ocen who is a Health Practitioner at the clinic admits that a lot has improved because of Activista.

Shortly after the roadblock, the Health Centre started opening at 7.30 each morning.

“We used to open around 11.30, but now we have 3 staff members that sleep in the quarters. They ensure that the clinic opens early every day,” he explained. “The supply of Government medicine has become a lot more stable after the youth groups complained to the District Government Office. I am not sure how it disappeared before, but now we get the quantities, we need.”

Family planning and vaccinations are among the other improvements that came after Activista’s interventions.

“Over the last year, we have also improved readiness to serve urgent cases. All children get their immunizations and we visit different schools to sensitize them. We have also upgraded our antenatal care vastly, and we arrange family health days,” Paul Ocen concluded.

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Ibrahim Batambuze
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Using music to fight against theft: Meet the Zuukuka team

**BENEZERI**

1. **Tell us about yourself.**
   My name is Benezeri Chibita. I am a 20 year old rap artist. I am the first born of five children. I attended Aga Khan International School for my primary school education, St. Mary’s College Kitende for O’level and later Vienna College Namugongo for A’level. I am currently a second-year student of mass communication at Uganda Christian University Mukono.

2. **Why does your music (Zuukuka) carry the lyrical content it does?**
   My music carries the lyrical content it does because my vision as an artist is to influence positive living.

3. **What has been the response to the song from both your fans and the public?**
   The response to Zuukuka was very positive.

4. **Do you believe music can inspire a positive change in the fight against corruption?**
   I believe every voice has been given some measure of power to affect change through declaration. Be it Positive or Negative. Music is simply nothing but melodic talking.

**RUYONGA**

1. **Who is Ruyonga?**
   I am Edwin Ruyonga. I am a proud Ugandan, African and a Christian. I am a worker, a dreamer and a believer. I love art, poetry and music.

2. **Why does your music (Zuukuka) carry the lyrical content it does?**
   I don’t know how not to push a message. I believe through my music in some way, shape or form. It is my podium, my voice. I have to believe through my music in some way, shape or form. It is my podium, my voice. I have to

3. **What has been the response to the song from both your fans and the public?**
   It is a very powerful song. People have responded positively, thankfully.

4. **Do you believe music can inspire a positive change in the fight against corruption?**
   I believe every voice has been given some measure of power to affect change through declaration. Be it Positive or Negative. Music is simply nothing but melodic talking.

5. **An inspiring word to young people out there on the power they have to transform their world?**
   Seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and everything else will be sorted.

6. **Where can we find your music?**
   Soundcloud.com/ruyonga, reverbnation.com/ruyonga, ruyonga.com

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**POEM**

**SOCIALLY**

Socially we meet through mediums dubbed media. Socially we meet. Socially we share façades that we masterfully don on at dawn. Dust is but our plastic cocoon. Socially we seek to find ourselves in echoed caves of our craves. Socially we fall on this net of hope, Hoping this will help us cope...

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**LYRICS**

**ZUUKUKA II**

Intro Verse by Big Tril Kaiza

Chorus: Get Up, Better Zuukuka

Let’s make this world a better place (Zuukuka)

Ain’t no way we’ll ever call each race (Zuukuka)

Let’s all just join hands and make the world dance

Yeah, get Up! Zuukuka

Tell them pick a language Zuukuka, Yimuka,

Ebitu, ibikuza ku hinduka

Two tekumukite, if nothing changes, nothing changes

We look at these problems like they ain’t ours and we’re strangers

We don’t want to get involved, we’d rather get blankets
evry time an issue shows up in our place, we blank it out, we don’t want to face it, we don’t want to be the face of the current situation we want to blame the government, blame the legislature

Claim that the judiciary’s eating up all the paper but when we’re stopped in traffic over a violation and the option is a ticket or a compensation it’s suddenly no longer a spiritual conversation suddenly it’s taken on a different quonotation but I ain’t just talking about y’all, first thing I want to clear up is the mental of the man mirror when I tell him...

As the final battle draws nearer. Vision clearer than a mirror. With the kind of flow that makes you wanna take off your kofina The majority’s inferior coz she wants to live like Shakara He steals money to build a new castle. No Alan Shearer Travels from Lira to Madeira, drives a Porsche Panamera, to Parliament, to defend the destruction of Mabira.

Got be shares in another Kakira and yet he goes back to criticize terrorists on Al Jazeera or he’ll be watching a thriller on his 3D television from Manila Zuukuka. Pick up your placards and manila. Coat this is a guerilla war. Couldn’t get realer. What you gon do when u faced with this pack of angry gorillas. In the village people famished, your house is nicely furnished. Every week your wife gets her toes and finger nails vanished. Some girls don’t have pads but every MP has an iwatch? What? We deserve to be punished.

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Theft didn’t start in 2000... It has a history!

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Uganda Youth Network +256 414 286 923 - info@uyonet.or.ug

What must we do to get our money back?

Wear only black clothes every Monday to show you are tired of theft.

Demand political action from the President

Isolate every thief implicated in a theft scandal. Don’t invite them to your burials, weddings.

Do not buy goods or services from businesses owned by thieves. Support Ugandans working honestly to make a living.

Until all the thieves have returned our money.

So far the total amount lost to theft is 4,163,500,000,000 UGX

It’s time for Action: Zuukuka