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AFRICA'S YOUTH EMPLOYMENT CHALLENGE: NEW PERSPECTIVES

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Programme-Induced Entrepreneurship and Young People's Aspirations

Jacqueline Halima Mgomia

Abstract This article unpacks the experiences of 52 young men and women from relatively poor households who received a grant of US\$125 from a research project to start a business. Only 26 per cent aspired to be entrepreneurs while the remainder were either interested in business as a side activity or as a stepping stone towards employment. Using the concept of programme-induced entrepreneurship, the article explores interventions aimed at promoting entrepreneurship in contexts where young participants have a diversity of career aspirations, only some of which involve entrepreneurship. It argues that for those young people whose career aspirations do involve entrepreneurship, these interventions may be important gateways, whereas for youth whose aspirations do not, they are at best stepping stones and at worst distractions. As such, programme-induced entrepreneurship can fragment youth aspirations. The article calls for a more holistic approach to the promotion of entrepreneurship that takes explicit account of youth aspirations and family dynamics.

Keywords: Africa, Tanzania, unemployment, poverty, waithood, uncertainty.

1 Introduction

The general framework that informs most research on youth entrepreneurship in developing countries posits that the lack of capital (Chigunta and Mkandawire 2002; de Gobbi 2014) and business knowledge (Kourilsky, Walstad and Thomas 2007; DeJaeghere and Baxter 2014) explains, to a large extent, why innovative business ventures are not successful among poor people. As a PhD student in 2012, I participated in a microfinance research project known as 'Mechanics of Microfinance', which was designed within this framework. Specifically, it offered entrepreneurship training to youth coming from poor families who were likely to fail their secondary school final examinations. Its overall aim was to prepare them for careers as entrepreneurs once their academic paths closed. It is important to note that in Tanzania the term entrepreneurship (i.e. *ujasiriamali* in Kiswahili)

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is generally used to refer to starting and operating a small business; it is not used to imply innovation (see Schumpeter 1934). In the remainder of this article, therefore, entrepreneurship and starting, or operating, a small business are used synonymously.

It is also important to highlight that the Mechanics of Microfinance research project was rooted in a simple observation made by a beneficiary of Femina, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) working on reproductive health, who stated, 'It's all good that we get information about reproductive health and HIV/AIDS, but we need jobs!' (Sekei 2011: 6). To address the challenge, in 2011 Femina collaborated with the Norwegian School of Economics (NHH) to design a reality TV entrepreneurship competition, with 11 episodes aired over three months. The show offered entrepreneurship training by bringing six entrepreneurs together to compete around issues of finance, business skills, entrepreneurship knowledge and related attitudes (Sekei 2011). To measure the impact of the show, a randomised controlled trial was conducted with a sample of 1,918 students who were about to graduate from 43 public secondary schools. A treatment group (drawn from 22 schools) was provided with information and incentives to watch the 11 episodes of the *Ruka Juu* show, while a control group (drawn from 21 different schools) was encouraged to watch 11 films that were aired at the same time. One of the immediate outcomes was that 12 per cent of the treatment group and 8 per cent of the control group expressed willingness to pay money to attend future training on entrepreneurship. From these individuals, 60 were randomly selected and invited for two weekend training sessions on entrepreneurship at the University of Dar es Salaam Entrepreneurship Centre (UDEEC) in November 2011.

My study was thus designed to test whether the provision of capital to youth who had received entrepreneurship training would enable them to start and run small businesses successfully. To measure the impact of the training, capital was also provided to youth who did not receive any training. The capital injection, however, became an intervention in its own right as it incentivised youth to start up in business.

As I engaged with these youth in the initial stages of starting and running their business, I realised that there was a need to revisit the 'training + capital' framework because other factors seemed to be critical in determining success. For example, it appeared that family dynamics and participant aspirations were important in shaping their engagement with the entrepreneurship intervention and emergent outcomes. By family dynamics, I mean the give-and-take interactions between youth and other members of their families as the young people sought to access money and the family sought to meet basic household needs. In poor families, these dynamics can involve difficult trade-offs. I use the term 'youth aspirations' to refer to what youth were anticipating they would be and do in the future. I argue that aspirations and family dynamics impacted on the ways that young participants used the capital and training that they had received. As they engaged

in business, their aspirations and family situations interacted with, and played as important a role as the entrepreneurship intervention.

The body of this article is divided into three main sections. In the next section I present the Social Lab as a site and methodology for studying what I conceptualise as programme-induced entrepreneurship. Following this, I unpack the career aspirations of the youth participants in relation to family dynamics by looking at how they interacted with the entrepreneurship intervention. In the final section, I present a youth-centred framework for entrepreneurship promotion that puts family economic status and youth aspirations at centre stage.

2 Background

I use the notion of programme-induced entrepreneurship to refer to entrepreneurial behaviour that was stimulated by programmes such as the ‘training + capital’ intervention that was at the heart of the Mechanics of Microfinance project. Throughout sub-Saharan Africa there are now many programmes funded by government, NGOs and others with an explicit objective to induce entrepreneurial behaviour among under-resourced, and unemployed youth. The idea that entrepreneurial behaviour is or can be induced or stimulated among the poor is not new, as indicated by terms such as necessity-induced entrepreneurship, recession-induced entrepreneurship, opportunity-induced entrepreneurship, university-induced entrepreneurship and so on. The value of the concept of programme-induced entrepreneurship is that it brings into focus development interventions that are specifically designed to stimulate entrepreneurial behaviour and subjectivity among unemployed or disadvantaged young people, regardless of whether they had previously had any interest in entrepreneurship. Again, it is important to remember that in this context the key indicator of entrepreneurial behaviour is starting and running a small business in contrast to risk-taking or innovation. This means that much of the literature on stimulating entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial behaviour, which puts innovation and risk-taking at centre stage, is not particularly relevant.

In the Foucauldian sense of objectification and subjectification, programmes that seek to induce entrepreneurship are governed by discourses, i.e. ‘practices that systematically form objects of which they speak’ (Foucault 1972: 49). The process starts with identifying the ‘lack of something’ that is followed by identifying those who lack entrepreneurship skills, and culminates in encouraging and empowering them to acquire skills and support their entrepreneurial ventures. In collaboration with other actors, the Tanzanian government has created a framework for promoting entrepreneurship that seeks to produce an entrepreneurial subject through training and capital injection. It also promotes active research engagement. Although such interventions vary across actors and institutions, they all tend to present youth with only one possible future career – that of an entrepreneur. As such, they can run roughshod over other youth subjectivities and aspirations.

For my study, I selected 52 individuals, half women and half men, out of the 1,918 youth who participated in a randomised controlled trial to be part of an ethnographic study, using a method I refer to as the Social Lab. However, I only selected them from among those who were willing to pay for entrepreneurship training. Using a phone survey, I identified youth who had limited opportunities to continue with school and had shown an interest in starting a business. Individuals were selected to yield four equal groups, each having 13 young people: Group 1 had watched the entrepreneurship entertainment-education (edutainment) programme on TV, i.e. *Ruka Juu* Training; Group 2 had classroom entrepreneurship training, i.e. UDEC Training; Group 3 watched both the TV programme and attended the classroom training, i.e. *Ruka Juu* and UDEC Training; and Group 4 received no training. All participants in the study were between 18 and 23 years old, and all came from relatively poor families.

The project provided a grant of US\$125 to each of the 52 youth to enable them to start a business in urban Dar es Salaam. I observed their businesses from January 2013 to January 2014. Their ventures involved selling vegetables, snacks, second-hand clothes, electronics and beauty products. Some worked as street vendors, others set up at home or by the roadside, while a few managed to rent shops or other business premises.

My study used the ethnographic method to observe this economic experiment of how young people utilised a business grant. To do this, I set up a Social Lab, a methodological space that combines experiment with ethnography to capture how the participants interacted with real-life situations. Since one generally needs a lab to conduct an experiment and a field situation to do ethnography, I had to come up with a space that had some of the characteristics of both. Ethnographically, I thus used this Social Lab as a way to study the everyday lives of young people, tracking the money they received as it entered their businesses and households, as well as observing how these young people engaged with the microfinance project.

3 Aspirations and family dynamics

3.1 Setting the scene

In early January 2013 I was in Dar es Salaam to observe the young people starting their businesses. Within a period of two months, more than 40 businesses were up and running. The young people spent between 40 and 70 hours a week working. The profit they generated ranged from US\$1 to US\$3 per day, which is in line with expected earnings of small businesses in Tanzania (URT 2012). With these businesses, they generated pocket money and some financial support for their families. Yet when questioned about their employment status more than half of the youth responded 'I am just around', whereas less than a quarter said they were doing business. While some continued to run their businesses, others soon left them behind for low wage or salaried jobs as they promised a regular income, and still others went on to explore opportunities for further education.

It was then that I became curious about how these young people interpreted their engagement with entrepreneurship and, more critically, why only a few of them seemed to identify with entrepreneurship. How could it be that most of these participants in an entrepreneurship programme wished to stop being entrepreneurs or reduce entrepreneurship to a secondary activity?

3.2 Aspirations

Among the youth who participated in my study, I identified three groups in terms of their career aspirations. The first group, which accounted for 26 per cent of the study participants, were entrepreneurial youth for whom doing business was the first and perhaps only career choice. Although all the youth in my study came from poor families, relatively, the individuals in this first group tended to come from lower income families and had fewer other opportunities. They were more likely to start and run a business venture despite the challenges this entailed. For them, the provision of a business grant was an additional impetus that enabled them to realise their dreams. Hence, they were more likely to invest their money carefully to create a stable and profitable business. If their businesses failed, they tended to start another. One young woman who fitted into this group shared her aspirations:

After five years, I expect to have expanded my business by owning a large food store and as part of my plan I am saving for this. And I will buy another fishing vessel in the next five years and within the next ten coming years buy a boat with an engine.

In regard to the anticipated obstacles, she said:

The main challenge is that my parents might force me to get into marriage before it reaches that time, but in six to seven years to come if someone will be interested in marrying me I will accept as long as we both agreed to it. (FD, Dar, S1, 2012¹)

In fact, this young woman was married in 2014. However, prior to the wedding she agreed with her family and the spouse-to-be that she would marry only if she was able to keep her business, and her future husband agreed to hire someone to assist her. She was apparently successful in negotiating an arrangement that did not constrain her future business aspirations.

For three other participants who fitted into the first group, their businesses played a central part in their imagined futures:

In ten years, I expect to have more than Tsh30,000,000 and a manufacturing company. My income will be Tsh50,000,000 and my plan is to become a famous food producer in the world. (MD, Dar, S1, 2012)

In five years to come I believe I will be owning a business with a capital of Tsh7 million and in the next ten years I will be owning various business [sic.] that will round to a total of Tsh40 million in terms of capital. I have chosen to do business in my life. (MD, Dar, S1, 2012)

In five years' time, I will be having my own skills of making children's clothes and I think I will be married and with a child in my own house. In ten years' time, I think my business will have made a good capital and I will be running my life smoothly. (FD, Dar, S1, 2012)

While their current operations are on a small scale, they all imagine that their businesses and their capital will grow. They see the present as a time to gain the skills and experiences that will enable them to scale up their business and realise their aspirations.

In the second and largest group, 48 per cent of the participants were youth who thought they had multiple career options, with entrepreneurship being only one. They were more likely to come from households with parents who were employed. It was a sense of security and of having options that probably explained their willingness to abandon their business when another employment opportunity opened up, even if it paid less money. Stability and security of employment, and the assurance of regular pay, were particularly important for them and the risks inherent in running a business were acceptable only if they already had a job to meet basic needs.

One young woman in this group had a strong interest in being employed. In the first two months of running her business she hired someone to look after it while she attended nursing school. After six months of training, she started working as a nursing intern. While she earned less than what she would have earned from her business, she argued it was the beginning of her career and she hoped to make more money later. At the same time, she did not dismiss the possibility of running a business in the future '... in ten years if things do not go well on the employment side I will then be a big businesswoman in Dar and other regions' (FD, Dar, S1, 2012).

A young man in this group said: 'I will be a soldier as that is what my parents want me to be... but once I get my salary I will start a business' (MD, Dar, S1, 2012). This illustrates how family can shape young people's futures. His father pointed out to me that business was not a reliable form of employment, so he preferred his son to become a soldier like him so he can get government benefits. Reluctantly, the youth agreed, believing that it would help him get a permanent job and later assist him to start a business. Another young man imagined that in the future he would also combine employment and business: 'In five years to come I will be a procurement officer and will be paid Tsh500,000. In ten years, I see myself as a manager in a certain office. Later I will open a business' (MD, Dar, S1, 2012).

In the third group, 25 per cent of the participants were young people who were already employed and whose interest was to be employed in other jobs after attaining further academic credentials. They were continuously searching for opportunities or financial resources to continue with education. For them, doing business was only a

Table 1 Gendered aspirations of potential young entrepreneurs

Group	Young women	Young men
1 Aspire to be entrepreneurs	9	5
2 Aspire to be employed	14	11
3 Aspire to first continue with school	3	10
Total	26	26

Source Author's own.

temporary measure or a stepping stone towards their imagined futures as salaried employees. Specifically, it might help meet the cost of further education. Because they prioritised education and employment they were not likely to invest sufficient time in their businesses, and likely to drop out of business when other options arose.

Young people in this group were categorical about their priority being something other than business:

I will have acquired a diploma in five years to come and in the next ten years to come I think I will fight to acquire a degree that will help me in future life. To me education is the way through a good life for my family and me. (MD, Dar, S1, 2012)

My goal is to go back to school. So, I will do business until I get enough money to pay for school fees. I will study up to university. (FD, Dar, S1, 2012)

Well, I might have a diploma in the mentioned years to come. My plan is to apply for a position in the army and during my service time I can apply for studies as other students. (MD, Dar, S1, 2012)

All three of these young people left their businesses after a couple of months and went to school. Today, one of them is in her second year in law college. Another abandoned his business a couple of times to pursue educational opportunities that did not materialise, and the business eventually died. The third was finally admitted to the army after three years of applying.

The fact that 73 per cent of the participants were only interested in business as a side activity or as a stepping stone towards employment raises serious questions about the appropriateness of interventions that aim to induce entrepreneurial behaviour. In relation to young people in groups 2 and 3, are such interventions misdirected?

As indicated in Table 1, young women were more likely to be in groups 1 and 2, while young men dominated Group 3. Out of 52 youth, only 14 aspired to be entrepreneurs, nine of whom were young women. However, the imagination of entrepreneurship among these nine was largely confined to small-scale business in the informal sector: only three aspired to build a medium-scale, formal business. All the five young

men who aspired to be entrepreneurs were thinking of medium-scale businesses. As for the 25 youth who aspired to be in formal employment while running a business on the side, 14 were women and 11 were men. It is striking that of the 13 youth who aspired to continue with school and later be employed, only three were women. These differences underscore well-established gender patterns in relation to education and employment opportunities open to young women in sub-Saharan Africa (Bertrand and Crepon 2014).

Marriage also figured in the imagined futures of the participants and in this case, it was the young women who were more likely to think of getting married and having children within three years, while young men were thinking on a timescale of five to ten years. Over the 12 months of my study, four young women gave birth, four others became pregnant, and five got married (making a total of 13 out of 26 young women – 50 per cent). All of these moves had negative impacts on their business. For those who were doing well, their business declined and for those who were struggling, their business failed. With their new roles of wife and/or mother, these young women had to dedicate most of their time to domestic duties and they consequently had very little time for their businesses.

For young men, marriage aspirations were generally linked to their anticipated business success. During the fieldwork, two young men got married, two got engaged and two others were planning to have children with their girlfriends. Those who got married or engaged were among those whose businesses were doing really well. However, their new roles as husband or/and father also had negative impacts on their businesses. One business failed because the young man used most of his resources to care for his sick wife. Marriage slowed down the growth of another young man's business because he spent time caring for his wife when she got pregnant. Instead of investing money in his business as he normally did, this young man was supporting his expanding household. For the young men who were engaged, their businesses also experienced difficulties as they had to save money to finish paying bride price and prepare for marriage. After weighing the financial demands associated with marriage, one of them decided to postpone it until his business stabilised.

3.3 Family dynamics

The youth who participated in my study were still dependent – they lived with parents or guardians and depended on them for support (URT 1996; Mlama 1999). The parents and guardians worked in the informal sector, were employed in private firms, owned small businesses or were unemployed. According to the URT's (2000) Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PSRP), people who work in the informal sector in urban areas tend to be poor. During the initial stages of my study, most of the youth said their families had limited resources to support their further education. So, what does this mean for a microfinance project that interfaced with these families by providing young adults with business start-up capital? And what factors influence the ways in which those youth used the money provided?

Although it was expected, in line with the Foucauldian notion of object and subject formation, that a person who attained business knowledge would apply it in practice, I found that this was not necessarily the case. During the early fieldwork, I observed that the youth who were participating in the study made no clear demarcation between business and private transactions. Some used money from the business grant to pay for school fees or health bills, and others used it to cater for basic needs such as transportation, communication and food for themselves and their families. Operating in the context of scarcity and extended families, youth were faced with the difficult choice between investment and spending. I thus argue that, when resources are scarce, capital and business knowledge are necessary but not sufficient conditions for the success of new small business ventures.

Initially, I thought youth had limited knowledge of business principles. To establish the level of their understanding, I conducted a baseline survey. The survey revealed that, of the 52 participants, 22 had a solid theoretical grasp of business principles as they scored between 90 and 100 per cent; 8 scored between 70 and 80 per cent; 11 scored between 50 and 60 per cent and the remaining 11 scored between 40 and 30 per cent. However, on the question of the challenges of separating business transactions from personal transactions, only ten said it was easy. The difficulty was not based on a lack of business knowledge but, rather, on the financial constraints of their families that meant that they had to use their business money to meet personal and family needs.

3.3.1 Meeting family needs through business

Most of the youth in the study were living in under-resourced households, which made their businesses a potential source of family income. For instance, when one received a business grant, her mother was struggling to pay school fees for a younger son who had just started Form 1. With no income herself, his mother relied heavily on her late husband's siblings to raise the funds. The youth and his older brother had to survive on the one meal a day that their mother could afford. During my preliminary field visit in December 2012, she seemed to be relieved by the fact that the programme would provide her son with money to start a business. 'I am so grateful,' she said, 'that you have decided to assist this young man for I was totally stuck... At least now he will be able to sustain himself and help me here and there.' Even before he had started his business, the young man was aware of the family's expectations: 'You see, my mother is not doing well financially,' he stressed, 'and her health is not good. My brother is struggling with school fees just like I did.' He then shared his aspiration: 'I hope, when I start my business, and make profit, I will be able to help at least with transportation money'.

Indeed, only a week after he started his business, this participant took on the main responsibility for providing transport, and later, he frequently paid for the family's food as his mother's income was not stable.

In the field, I saw participants spending between Tsh1,000 and Tsh3,000 per day or even per week to buy food for their families. This money was coming from their daily sales. During our evening walks to their homes, one of the young women regularly bought fruits to take home and sometimes responded to requests from her mother to bring something home to eat. This could be rice, maize flour, beans or oil. Another young woman, who was selling fruits in a market space had to bring some back to her family every day. Similarly, a young woman who had a vegetable stand nearby her house often offered vegetables worth Tsh1,000–2,000 to her family at least four times in a week. Moreover, there were youth who contributed money to cover siblings' school fees and sometimes even assisted parents in paying rent.

Most of my participants felt obligated to contribute something because they were still dependent. To illustrate this situation, one of them said: 'It might be true that I make money nowadays but I depend on my family for most things. Even the shack for my chickens belongs to my parents. Now, how do I refuse their request?' Others said there is no assurance in business but relatives tend to help in good and bad times so one cannot just ignore them if they are in need. There were also those who argued that since family members help to run the business in their absence, contributing money to meet their needs is just a way of paying them back. But most of all, they did so because everybody felt they had also become co-breadwinners.

3.3.2 Costs of transitioning to adulthood through business

In the context of unemployment, having a business is conceived of as self-employment and hence a way of becoming an adult. For my research participants, this required them to abruptly transition to adulthood. This transition, however, comes with financial costs, not only to youths as individuals, but also to their nascent business.

In my analysis of their financial diaries, it was evident that there had been a significant decrease of the income the participants received from parents and relatives since they started their businesses. At the beginning, they would contribute between Tsh1,000 and Tsh3,000 per month, but from February 2013 their contributions to the basic daily needs of their family decreased to zero and the young people seemed to be financing their basic needs themselves. At this point their spending became constant, that is, there was a pattern in how much they were spending on basic needs and the amount varied little from week to week.

Basic needs included transportation, communication, food and clothing. In the field, I observed them financing their lunches at work places, paying for their transport and buying vouchers for their phones. Trying to understand these spending patterns, I conducted focus group discussions on cash flows and personal costs. Keywords coming from the discussions included *najisimamia* meaning 'I watch over myself', *najikimu* ('I meet my basic needs'), and *mambo madogomadogo* ('small basic needs'). In using these keywords, my participants were arguing that

Table 2 The costs of basic needs that young entrepreneurs incur

Item	Description	Cost
Food	Most youth have their meals while they are running their businesses or are out of the house between two and seven days a week	Tsh1,000–7,000 per day
Transport	Movement in the city is by public transport	Participants pay between Tsh1,000 and Tsh8,000 per week
Communication	Communication with clients, friends and family is mainly via family. However, to keep up with youth trends and information, one's mobile phone becomes a connection to the world of which they seek to be a part	Tsh500 per day
Health	The common diseases are headaches, malaria and stomach upset. The common treatment is self-medication using painkillers and/or antimalarial tablets	This happens at least once a month and the cost is between Tsh100 and Tsh2,000
Clothing	All youth are responsible for buying their clothes. Keeping up with the trend is costly but seems to be central to youth's outlook and self-esteem	Participants purchased at least one of these items every month: clothes, shoes, socks, vests, t-shirts, etc., spending between Tsh2,000 and Tsh15,000. The majority spend Tsh8,000–10,000
Beauty and hair	All youth use a salon to manage their hair	Males spend Tsh2,000 per month for a haircut; female costs vary between Tsh5,000 and Tsh15,000 per month

Source Author's own.

since they had received the business grant the financial responsibility of meeting their basic needs fell into their own hands, even before their business started making a profit. Recalling their financial situation before receiving the grant, one of the young women proudly said: 'I was depending on my mother for everything and when my mother did not have resources, I was asking support from relatives or friends'.

Hence once they started a business, things changed as they began to cater for their own needs: first, when they asked parents for support, they were asked 'What is the use of doing business if one cannot support oneself?'; and second, because they found a sense of self-actualisation by financing their daily needs. In my talks with their parents, they argued that cutting child support is not only the act of teaching them about living costs, but it also helps the child to learn about taking responsibility for her/his life. For instance, one of the mothers argued: 'If you make money without knowing your responsibility, you might forget the reason why you are working; but if you know you must eat and dress out of your business, then you take it seriously'. Most parents also argued that their economic situation did not allow them to continue supporting all their children. So, a young person having a business eases the financial responsibility of parents.

The youth, on the other hand, felt the transition from childhood to adulthood was too abrupt. Narrating her experience, one said the

transition was a confusing time: 'One day I got up sick', she recalls, 'and told my aunt that I suspected I have malaria'. Her aunt responded: 'It could be, go to the hospital and test'. Knowing that she normally gets money to go for check-ups, she prepared herself and waited for her aunt to provide the money. But no money was provided. After a long wait, she decided to knock at her aunt's door to tell her she was ready to leave, expecting she would give her money for the check-up. To her surprise, the aunt did not provide any money, saying: 'OK, make sure you came back early'. She then asked for money directly: 'Aunt, what about money?' Her aunt responded with a question: 'Aren't you doing business?'

This experience was not unique to this young woman who, by then, had been running her business for less than two weeks. Among the participants, transition to adulthood was generally marked by an income-generating activity that made one capable of supporting both oneself and one's family. Table 2 details the costs that the participants incurred in catering for family and personal needs.

4 Rethinking youth entrepreneurship

My research points to a disjuncture between (1) young people's aspirations that are rooted in a neoliberal imaginary that education can provide the route to a successful career and a good life, and (2) policy and programme objectives of promoting youth entrepreneurship. At the centre of this disjuncture is the fact that for many young people, establishing and operating a small business is not recognised as decent employment. Rather, it is a signifier of an inability to continue with further education and/or secure formal employment, and of low status. Business is acceptable as a temporary means of survival, but it is not what they imagine themselves doing into the future. Young people in the process of establishing and nurturing their businesses used the phrase 'I am just around', indicating that business was a temporary measure to be used to re-join the pathway to a salaried, middle-class future.

These observations are in line with and contribute to literature from anthropology and other fields on how the neoliberal economy has created uncertainty around youth futures (Honwana 2012; Cole and Durham 2008; Guyer 2007; Mains 2007; Hansen 2005; Comaroff and Comaroff 1999). As a response to social and economic exclusion, young people develop strategies to navigate the constraints and uncertainties of a precarious economy (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999; Cole 2004). There is also an emerging literature on the lives of unemployed youth and the strategies they use to deal with time, using various concepts such as teatime (Masquelier 2013), waithood (Honwana 2012), timepass (Jeffrey 2008, 2010), and killing time (Ralph 2008).

But what does this disjuncture mean for youth employment policy and programmes, and specifically for the current emphasis on the promotion of entrepreneurship and self-employment? Over the last decade, there has been a mushrooming of entrepreneurship training, capital schemes and policy frameworks meant to build an entrepreneurial culture among

young people. However, these initiatives seldom start with, or take any account of, young people's family situations or what they imagine as their futures. Rather, they assume those futures can, should and will be based on entrepreneurship.

As I found during the course of my study, for many young people this assumption is simply not sustainable. The family demands put on youth from poor families are such that it is difficult for them to get a business up and running. On the other hand, while youth from relatively better-off families do not face the same demands, the work futures that the majority of them and their families imagine are based on salaried employment, not entrepreneurship. They are only interested in starting and running a small business to the degree that it furthers their progress along the pathway to education and salaried employment.

This implies that any programme that seeks to induce entrepreneurship among young people should take account of both their aspirations and the economic status of their families. Such an approach might entail providing cash transfers to poor families so that they no longer need to depend on the businesses of their young people. Recent studies indicate that poor families are capable of using cash transfers responsibly to cater for their basic needs (Aizer *et al.* 2016). Similarly, such programmes may focus on providing health insurance for poor families or scholarships so that the youth who are establishing a business do not have to pay school fees and medical bills for their siblings. Further research needs to be done to systematically ascertain the social support needed to enable youth entrepreneurship.

5 Conclusion

Throughout this article, I have attempted to show how youth who opted to be in an entrepreneurship programme did so while attempting to realise a range of aspirations. Their engagement with the programme was mediated by their family situations, which affected both their ability to manage business capital and how they imagined their future employment. In other words, success in inducing entrepreneurial behaviour was dependent more on the participants' family situations than on the finer points of the intervention. To date, however, the links between young participants in entrepreneurship programmes and their families have not been acknowledged. There is clearly a need for more contextualised approaches to entrepreneurship promotion among young people. If programmes are to be effective in inducing entrepreneurial behaviour among young people, they must start with them and their families.

Note

- 1 FD = female participant of the focus group discussion, MD = male participant; Dar = Dar es Salaam; S1 = Seminar Room 1, where the focus group discussions took place.

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