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Patterns of Engagement with Youth Savings Groups in Four African Countries

Justin Flynn and James Sumberg

June 2016

IDS Institute of Development Studies

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This report is an output of the Banking on Change Academic Partnership, which was established in 2014 between the Banking on Change programme (a partnership of Plan UK, CARE International UK and Barclays Bank) and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS).

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The views expressed in this document are solely those of the authors.

Patterns of Engagement with Youth Savings Groups: in Four African Countries
Justin Flynn and James Sumberg
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Photo caption: A youth savings group member stands by his stacks of bricks, Bwera, Kasese District, Uganda

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Summary

This report details findings of research undertaken under the Banking on Change Academic Partnership, which was established in 2014 between the Banking on Change (BoC) programme (a partnership of Plan UK, CARE International UK and Barclays Bank) and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS). The research sought to identify and explore different patterns of engagement with the programme's youth savings groups, and how those patterns relate to members' socio-economic characteristics, income-generating activities, and the training they had received. BoC, whose last phase focused on youth savings groups and ran from 2013 to 2015, operated in seven countries: Egypt, Ghana, India, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

Field work took place between April and August 2015 in Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Ghana. The research team engaged with two savings groups in each country. Information was gathered through group discussions, 57 detailed interviews with individual savings group members, and analysis of individuals' savings and borrowing activities as recorded in ledger books and passbooks. The strategy used for identifying savings groups and group members for interview was not meant to yield a representative sample of BoC participants, but rather to capture the range of savings and borrowing patterns.

Key findings of the research include the following:

- For many members, engagement with the BoC savings group is one part of a larger, complex picture of savings (including other savings groups), borrowing, income generation and other financial flows. Many members save, at least in part, with funds given to them by family members or others. A number of examples of share-outs and loans being given to or used by family members or other individuals were also identified.
- With regard to engagement with the savings groups, different patterns of engagement can be identified and described in terms of savings rate, borrowing rate and leverage rate. The amount saved by some individuals can be significant (e.g. 40 per cent of minimum wage for high savers).
- There is some consistency in the savings rate over cycles but little consistency in either borrowing rate or leverage factor. Overall the lack of consistency in engagement suggests that the socio-economic characteristics of members (sex, age, marital status, number of dependants, etc.) are probably not the primary determinants of how members engage with their group. Other factors such as the ups and downs of income-generating activities, seasonality, hazard and shocks are clearly important.
- Training is one of the inputs provided by the BoC programme directly to the savings group members, and many of the interviewees cited the importance of the training they had received and expressed interest in both refresher training on financial matters and vocational and skills training.
- Some of the interviewees are involved in other savings groups, a few use mobile money and a few have bank accounts. A number of others expressed interest in having a bank account at some point in the future, but others saw no need.

- Interviewees made several suggestions as to how the savings groups could be further improved. Some of the suggested changes were relatively minor (such as increasing the share price or moving from monthly or weekly meetings), while others were more fundamental, like bringing in other funds to increase the amount of credit available, or starting group-based businesses.

Some of these findings would appear to have potentially important implications for certain aspects of programme design and implementation. These are discussed in more detail in the **Discussion** and **Conclusions** sections in Chapter 4 of this report.

To make this report more useful and the findings of the research more accessible, much of the detail is located in the Annexes. Readers specifically interested in:

- the details of the research methodology **should refer to Annexe 1**;
- the personal profiles of the 57 savings groups members who were interviewed **should refer to Annexe 2**;
- Detailed insights drawn from the individual interviews **should refer to Annexe 8**.

Keywords: microcredit; microfinance; financial inclusion; financial exclusion; employment; entrepreneurship; VSLA.

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James Sumberg is an agriculturalist by training and has over 25 years' experience working on small-scale farming systems and agricultural research policy in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. He currently works as a Research Fellow at IDS, focusing on young people and agriculture and the emergence of the Livestock Revolution. Previously he served as Programme Director at The New Economics Foundation and Senior Lecturer in Natural Resource Management in the School of Development Studies, University of East Anglia. He has also held research positions at WARDA (now the Africa Rice Centre), the International Livestock Centre for Africa, CARE International and the Gambian Livestock Department.

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Abbreviations and acronyms

BoC	Banking on Change
CARE	CARE International
CBT	Community-based trainer
CRP	Community resource person
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ES	Employability Skills (a BoC training programme)
EYL	Enterprise Your Life (a BoC training programme)
FGD	Focus-group discussion
FE	Financial Education (a BoC training programme)
FFE	Further Financial Education (a BoC training programme)
FFI	Formal financial institution
FL	Financial Literacy (a BoC training programme)
FO	Field officer
GHS	Ghana cedi (1 cedi = £0.17)
HH	Household
JHS	Junior high school
LIP	Local implementing partner
MFI	Microfinance institution
MIS	Management information system
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
Plan	Plan International
PPA	Pre-/post-assessment
SHS	Senior high school
SPM	Selection Planning and Management
TZS	Tanzanian shilling (1 shilling = £0.00031)
UGX	Ugandan shilling (1 shilling = £0.00018)
YSG	Youth savings group
VA	Village agent
VSLA	Village savings and loan association
ZMW	Zambian kwacha (1 kwacha = £0.057)

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1 Introduction

This report is an output of the Banking on Change Academic Partnership, which was established in 2014 between the Banking on Change (BoC) programme (a partnership of Plan UK, CARE International UK and Barclays) and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS). The aim of the partnership was to support BoC by assessing assumptions underpinning programme design and interventions in order to better understand the extent to which Youth Savings Groups (YSGs) combined with financial and business trainings are relevant to young people. The first output of the academic partnership was a review of Africa-focused literature relating to entrepreneurship as an entry point for employment creation and economic empowerment, enterprise training as a specific intervention, and savings groups (Sumberg, Kim and Flynn 2014).

The Banking on Change programme, which ran from 2009 to 2015, supported access to financial services by mobilising individuals into savings groups so they can regularly save and borrow.[1] BoC promoted itself as savings- rather than credit-led, and aimed to allow people to build assets at their own pace. The last phase of the programme, which ran from 2013 to 2015, had a particular focus on young people. In addition to savings groups, BoC provided training in financial education, enterprise and employability skills and, as appropriate, created links to formal finance. BoC operated in seven countries: Egypt, Ghana, India, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

Savings and credit groups of various types, often referred to as Rotating Savings and Credit Associations (ROSCAs), are found throughout Africa and are a long-standing part of the social and economic underpinning of both rural and urban societies (e.g. Bouman 1995; Kimuyu 1999). Formalised savings and credit groups, commonly called Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), or in the context of our research, Youth Savings and Loans Associations (YSLAs) or Youth Savings Groups, have been promoted as a specific development intervention since the mid-1990s. The interest in promoting savings by poor people through groups is underpinned by and linked to a number of powerful, and in some cases contested, ideas. These include, for example, the notions of financial exclusion and inclusion, and the proposition that financial exclusion can be addressed through micro-finance; the notion of economic empowerment; the idea of asset poverty, and the proposition that asset accumulation can play a critical role in both poverty reduction and citizen engagement.

The benefits of savings groups have been widely proclaimed (e.g. Boonyabanca 2001; Wilson, Harper and Griffith 2010; Lowicki-Zucca *et al.* 2014; Ashe and Neilan 2014). Results from a series of randomised control trials paint a more variable and nuanced picture (Karlan *et al.* 2012; Gash and Odell 2013). Karlan *et al.* (2012) studied savings groups in Ghana, Malawi and Kenya and identified a number of short-term impacts (they must be considered short-term because members had been part of

1 For more information on Banking on Change see: www.plan-uk.org/what-we-do/partnerships/private-sector/our-partners/barclays/. See Markel and Panetta (2014) for a recent review that focuses primarily on project and programme experience.

a group for 15 months on average and only 61 per cent of members had gone through a full savings cycle of 8 to 12 months). The main impacts were that the VSLAs: substantially increased the portfolio of financial services available to participants; helped women invest in their businesses; enabled more businesses, even though some failed; and led to improvements in women's intra-household decision-making power (but not to any changes in women's involvement in the community). On the other hand, no significant changes in households' ability to mitigate economic shocks were observed, and nor were any changes in agricultural production, livestock holdings or the accumulation of household assets detected. The use of health services and expenditures on health remained unaffected, and no impacts were seen on housing conditions, food consumption or non-food expenditures.

Karlan, Ratan and Zinman (2014) provide a detailed review of literature and evidence on the impacts of expanded savings access (not only through savings groups). While recognising the limitations of the existing evidence, they conclude that the evidence of impact is 'promising' in relation to empowerment and decision-making, to increasing resistance to health shocks, to promoting entrepreneurial investment and activity, and to increasing agricultural investment and production.

For savings groups specifically, Gash and Odell (2013) summarise the findings of seven different randomised control trials (RCTs) conducted in Malawi, Uganda, Ghana, Mali, Kenya, Tanzania and Burundi. There are a number of important caveats around the findings, but key insights included the following:

- Savings group members tended to be relatively wealthier and more socially and financially active than non-members, although overall the programmes did reach the very poor.
- The availability of savings groups clearly increased savings and the use of credit in treatment areas, but findings on asset ownership were mixed.
- In relation to business impacts the collective evidence from the RCTs was mixed. Although selected studies showed evidence of increased business-related spending, increased profits, and the likelihood of women owning a business, these outcomes were not observed in all of the RCTs.
- Impacts on health and education spending were both mixed and limited.
- Evidence in the areas of social capital and women's empowerment was surprising. Three RCTs looked extensively at both community engagement and individual empowerment, and found very little impact.
- Some impact on household resilience was detected: increased food security among treatment households suggested that shocks may have had less catastrophic results for group members.

Research commissioned by Plan International in Ghana showed that savings groups can have diverse effects on education expenditure: they help pay for education in some contexts and not in others (Cameron and Ananga n.d.; Cameron and Ananga 2015). These authors conclude that:

> There is a need for caution about overselling savings groups, both in international debates and at the level of the villages where they are being

> introduced […] they are not a cheap substitute for more costly interventions that may be needed to ensure that children's rights, including free access to a quality education, are fulfilled (p.1039).

Research literature that specifically addresses youth savings is limited. Youth savings accounts with formal banking institutions, as promoted by the YouthSave consortium,[2] have received some attention. For example, Deshpande and Zimmerman (2010) reviewed trends in practice and gaps in knowledge and concluded that:

> […] promoting youth savings may have the potential to be a high-leverage intervention, with positive effects on youth development and financial inclusion. However, little is known about what types of youth savings products and services would best contribute to both goals, or how these contributions might differ with context. Especially in the developing world, financial institutions, donors, NGOs, and governments have little empirical evidence upon which to base decisions regarding whether and when to invest resources in promoting youth savings on a large scale. This is true even though, as detailed above, interest in YSAs as policy tools is growing (p.18).

Zou *et al.* (2015) also studied YouthSave in Ghana and Kenya (although with a sample of only eight young people) and concluded that:

> Programs to promote savings should build on the active support network around youth, including parents, school personnel, and peers. Financial education in schools or from financial institutions is important to build confidence and encourage savings. Financial institutions that make it easy for youth to open accounts and make deposits are more likely to build youth savings (p.73).

The specific aim of the field research component of the Banking on Change Academic Partnership, reported here, was to identify and explore different patterns of engagement with the programme's youth savings groups, and how those patterns relate to, e.g. members' socio-economic characteristics, income-generating activities, and the training they had received. Two key dimensions of an individual's pattern of engagement with a group are saving (i.e. amount, and consistency within and between cycles) and borrowing (i.e. number of loans, amount borrowed, and the relationship between the amounts saved and borrowed). Are factors such as sex, age and/or family responsibilities associated with specific patterns of engagement? Are patterns of engagement consistent over time? How does the training provided by the programme affect patterns of engagement? Are different patterns of engagement associated with different kinds of income-generating activities? It was hoped that analysis along these lines would enable BoC to better understand and improve its savings group model. The focus here is on individual members and not on group performance *per se*.

The members of the research team have no experience in designing or implementing programmes to promote savings groups. The report therefore highlights findings that the team suggests should be taken into account during

2 See: www.newamerica.org/youthsave/

design and implementation. However, the research team does not draw out specific programme responses to these findings, as such responses should more appropriately come from programme staff.

In identifying and analysing patterns of engagement with savings groups it was particularly important to recognise that the programme's savings groups encompass a great diversity of members. Thus, among the members interviewed for this research were, at one end of the spectrum, a 36-year-old mother of three, and at the other, a 13-year-old schoolboy. Given this diversity, great care must therefore be taken in determining the youth-specific elements of the engagement.

2 Methods

Banking on Change is a large professionally run programme that in the course of implementation collects, stores and analyses data in a number of different formats and for different purposes. Data sources that to one degree or another informed the field work included:

- **the BoC baseline survey,** which covers 4,500 young people;
- **pre- / post-assessments (PPAs),** which are administered to the same individual both before and after training activities;
- **group ledgers,** which show all savings, loans, repayments etc. by individual member and by meeting, for a given savings group. There may be one or more ledgers per savings cycle;
- **individual passbooks,** which show all savings, loans and repayments for an individual member and savings cycle;
- **the management information system (MIS)**, which holds aggregated (total / average) information about total savings, loans etc. by group;
- **group interview reports,** which are prepared by BoC country teams.

Field work took place in three phases between April 2015 and August 2015. The various steps of the research process included: country selection; group selection; initial meetings with selected group; photographing of ledger books and passbooks; interviewee selection; interviews with individual members; and data analysis. Details for each step are given in Annexe 1.

In selecting four countries from the seven in which BoC works, a number of factors were considered, including: a focus on Africa (and the various regions where the project is being implemented – West, Southern and East); the need for a mix of non-governmental organisation (NGO) partners (either Plan International or CARE); the availability of savings data; and staff interest and availability. This process resulted in the selection of Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Ghana. In total the field work included engagement with eight savings groups in these countries. Information was gathered through group discussions, 57 interviews with individual savings group members, and detailed analysis of individuals' savings and borrowing activities as recorded in ledger books and passbooks.

Interviewees were selected specifically to include different saving and borrowing patterns, but we were also mindful of baseline survey status, age and sex. The strategy used to identify group members for interview was not meant to yield a representative sample of BoC participants, but rather to capture the range of savings and borrowing patterns. This must be borne in mind as the findings are presented.

For each of the eight groups visited, the photographs of the ledger books and passbooks were used to construct spreadsheets of all saving and borrowing activity by individual members since the group was started. The savings group model works on the basis of a cycle, which is often but not always 12 months in length (the variation largely hinges on country-specific programme decisions).

Each new cycle starts from scratch – in principle there is no carryover of savings or loans between cycles (however, in cases of loan defaults, some groups allowed members to repay outstanding loan balances in the next cycle, and in some cases without accumulating additional interest). Thus savings and borrowing activity was also analysed by cycle. Most groups were in their second cycle, while one group had completed as many as four cycles. These data were used to determine seven indicators of engagement for each member of a group (not just those members who were interviewed):

- **Savings Amount:** the sum of all savings over the cycle (in local currency);
- **Savings Rate (%):** the Savings Amount / the group's savings limit;
- **Loan Number:** the number of individual loans taken over the cycle;
- **Borrowed Amount:** the total value of the loans taken;
- **Borrowing Rate (%):** the Loan Amount / the maximum loan amount for that group and cycle;
- **Leverage Factor:** defined as the Loan Amount / Savings Amount (we were interested in the leverage factor as an indicator of the degree to which different members used savings to leverage credit);
- **Engagement Pattern:** using the median of Savings Rate and Borrowing Rate for any given group and cycle as cut-offs, four engagement patterns were defined as follows:
  - **Pattern 1:** High Savings, High Borrowing;
  - **Pattern 2:** High Savings, Low Borrowing;
  - **Pattern 3:** Low Savings, High Borrowing;
  - **Pattern 4:** Low Savings, Low Borrowing.

In total, over the eight groups, the ledger books and passbooks allowed us to construct indicators of engagement for 280 individuals.

Notes from each interview were entered into the computer using Word, then reformatted under a standard set of headings (Employment, Savings, Loans, etc.). These documents were then imported into Nvivo[3] and coded, which allowed information pertaining to particular questions, issues or discussion points to be easily extracted and analysed.

The results of these analyses were used in two ways. First, they were used to contextualise and enrich the analysis of savings and loan patterns referred to in the previous section. Second, they were brought together in a number of 'findings' relating to questions such as motivation for joining the group and the origin of funds used for weekly or monthly savings.

3 Nvivo is a qualitative data analysis (QDA) computer software package produced by QSR International. It was designed for researchers working with very rich text-based and/or multimedia information, where deep levels of analysis of small or large volumes of data are required.

2.1 Key terms and language conventions

In Box 2.1 definitions are provided for a number of key terms associated with the operation of the BoC youth savings groups. Unless indicated otherwise, in the remainder of this report these terms are used in the sense indicated in this box.

Box 2.1 Key terms

Share: The basic unit of savings. Most groups identify a maximum number of shares that a member can purchase at a group meeting.

Share value: The monetary value of each share. Thus, number of shares purchased * share value = amount saved.

Social fund: A fund created by small obligatory weekly or monthly contributions made by each member, and which can be accessed (in some cases as a grant, in others as a loan) in emergencies. One group used the social fund to capitalise a group business.

Cycle: The pre-defined period over which savings and loan activities take place. For many groups a cycle lasts 12 months, yet there was considerable variation in this matter, and the length of a cycle was subject to change over time. At the end of a savings cycle, any accumulated interest, fines and any money remaining in the social fund, minus any outstanding loans, are distributed to members on a pro-rata basis in relation to the total number of shares purchased over the cycle. This distribution is called the **share-out**. After the share-out is distributed a new cycle is initiated; generally there is no roll-over of savings or loans from cycle to cycle.

Share cancellation: In cases where a member is unable to repay a loan he/she has taken, or the associated interest, the outstanding sum will be recouped by cancelling the equivalent value of shares from his/her passbook. The net effect is to reduce the member's savings amount, savings rate and eventual share-out.

Fines: Most groups levy small fines on members if they miss a meeting or arrive late without a legitimate reason, or if they are disruptive at meetings.

Savings group leadership committee: This is composed of savings group members and is responsible for the group's organisation and share meetings. Members are elected usually for terms of one cycle on a rotating basis, though some groups have opted to keep members in certain positions for multiple cycles. The leadership committee is composed of the chairperson, secretary, treasurer, and money-counters. In Uganda, an additional committee member, the security person, was responsible for security and decorum within the group and during meetings. Finally, at any time there are also three elected key-holders within a group, each with the responsibility and ability to open one of the three padlocks on the cashbox.

Chairperson: Person responsible for enforcing the group's constitution rules and policies, including the imposition of fines. The Chairperson also leads group meetings.

Secretary: Person responsible for keeping track of all the group's written records, including all share contributions (in Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia) and loan disbursements (only within Tanzania and Zambia). Plays an important role in meeting proceedings.

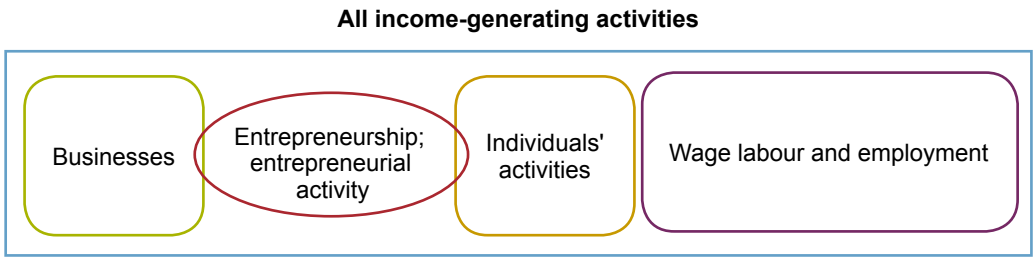
Treasurer: Person responsible for safekeeping of the cashbox, and for preserving the integrity of its contents.

Money-counter: Usually two money-counters are elected and both operate within a group at the same time. They are responsible for tallying all incoming and outgoing monies as well as for stamping members' passbooks to accurately reflect their share contributions.

Community Resource Person (also variously referred to as Community-based Trainer, Group Coordinator or Village Agent): Having been trained by Plan, CARE or LIP staff members, this person is responsible for recruitment of prospective group

members within a community, the formation of new groups, and the organising and carrying out of training. They also provide mentoring and supervision over group affairs, typically attending all group meetings throughout the first cycle. After completion of the first cycle, they keep an active but more distant and infrequent contact with the group. These individuals supervise up to 25 groups at a time and play a central role in the functioning of groups: in some cases these positions are paid and in others they are voluntary.

Figure 2.1 Different categories of income-generating activities



Source: Authors' own

BoC project documents, staff, partners and savings group members refer variously to 'income-generating activities' and also 'businesses' (as in 'my watermelon-selling business' or 'her sweets-selling business'.

For clarity, in this report the term 'income generating activities', as represented by the large blue rectangle in Figure 2.1, is used to refer to all activities, including e.g. petty trade, farming, charcoal making, food preparation, employment and wage labour, and more formal businesses, which are undertaken primarily for the purpose of generating income.

The term business (as in 'a business' or 'her business') is used in this report to refer to only those income-generating activities that are organised and managed in a way that they exhibit some of the following characteristics: a system in place for delivering a product or service that is replicable by new employees coming into the business; does not depend on the founder to produce the results; has a vision of how to satisfy the customers rather than simply to do the job; and exercises succession management (Gerber 2001). There is an important distinction between 'owning a business' in the sense given above and 'doing business' (which would include, e.g., petty trading).

The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (Singer, Amores and Moske 2015) and others (e.g. Langevang *et al.* 2015) define entrepreneurship as 'any attempt at new business or new venture creation, such as self-employment'. However, in the words of Hamilton and Hamilton (2012), 'calling a street vendor or a babysitter an entrepreneur drains meaning from the term' (p. 67). In this report, therefore, for the sake of clarity, the term entrepreneurship (or entrepreneurial activity) is used only to refer to that sub-set of businesses and individuals' activities that exhibit one or more of the following characteristics: innovation, risk-taking, and an objective of scaling up. These are represented by the red oval in Figure 2.1.

The individuals interviewed over the course of the field research were engaged in a variety of income-generating activities. Using the scheme above, the vast

majority of these would be considered as 'individuals' activities': they do not exhibit the characteristics of either a 'business' or of 'entrepreneurship'. Many of the interviewees also engaged to some degree in wage labour, primarily on farms (the purple box in the figure).

3 Findings

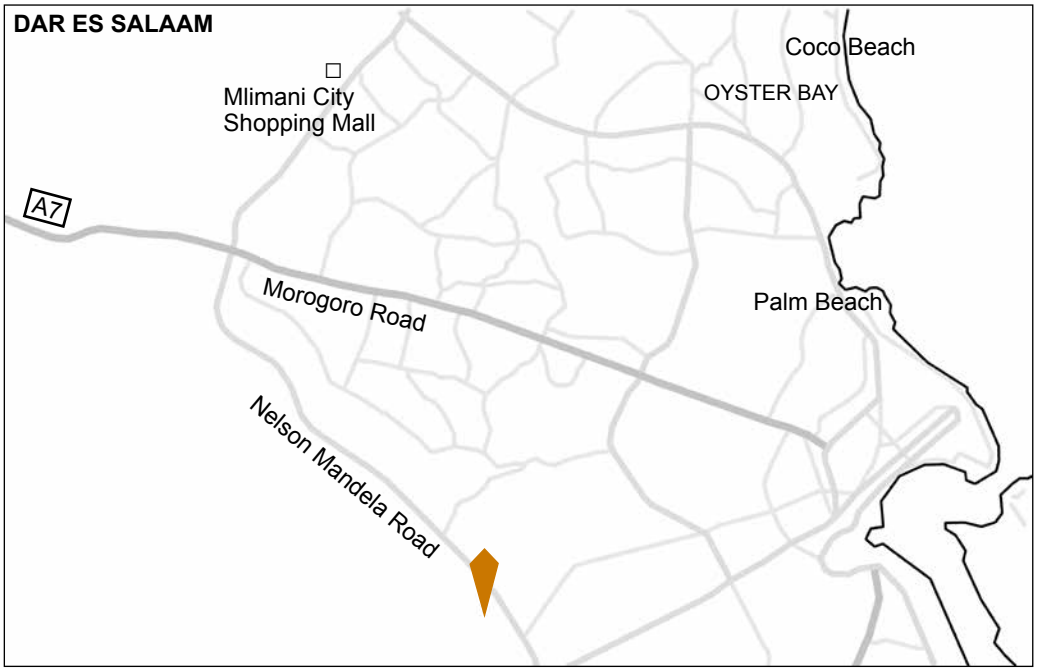
This section presents the findings of the research. First, the eight savings groups are introduced. This is followed by an introduction to the 57 interviewees. Next, variations in the operation of the youth savings group model are identified. Following this, and with the objective of identifying and exploring different patterns of engagement with the savings groups, we present the analysis of financial data from group ledger books and individual passbooks. As appropriate, these financial data are linked to information gathered through the individual interviews. This section ends with an analysis of the interviews, in order to address a number of questions and issues relating to members' engagement with the savings groups.

3.1 Introduction to the savings groups

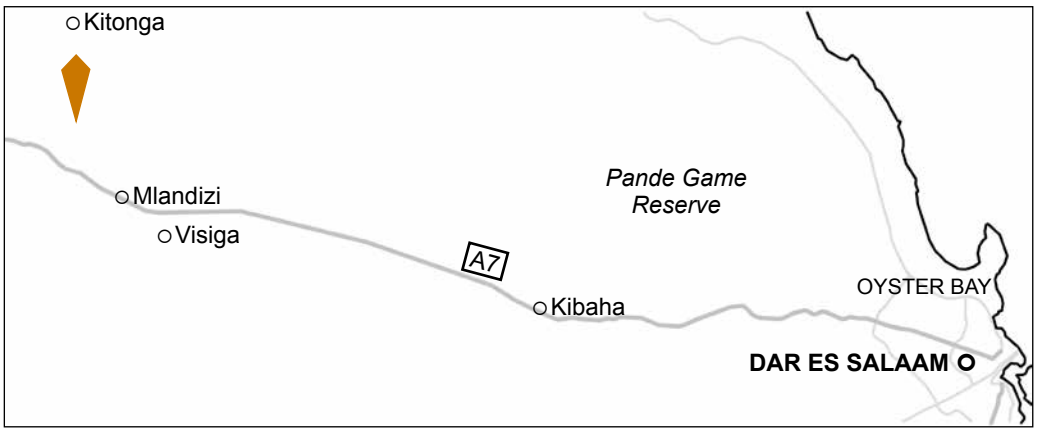
Group 1, Tanzania

This is an all-women's group located in a poorer area of Dar es Salaam (Map 3.1). It is the only urban group in the study. Members are typically in their 30s. The group started saving in February 2014, and at the time of the interviews it was in its second cycle. Of the 30 members, 28 had continued from the first cycle. The share value increased from TZS 1,000 (~£0.30) in the 1st cycle to TZS 2,000 (~£0.61) in the 2nd cycle. The members had received Financial Literacy / Financial

Map 3.1 Location of Group 1, Tanzania



Map 3.2 Location of Group 2, Tanzania



Education (FL/FE) training in their first cycle, and were receiving Enterprise Your Life (EYL) training at the time of the interviews (they had had only one session so far). The overall savings rate for continuing members is 84 per cent. Despite being considered a poorer urban area, the housing was mostly built of bricks and concrete and had decent roofing.

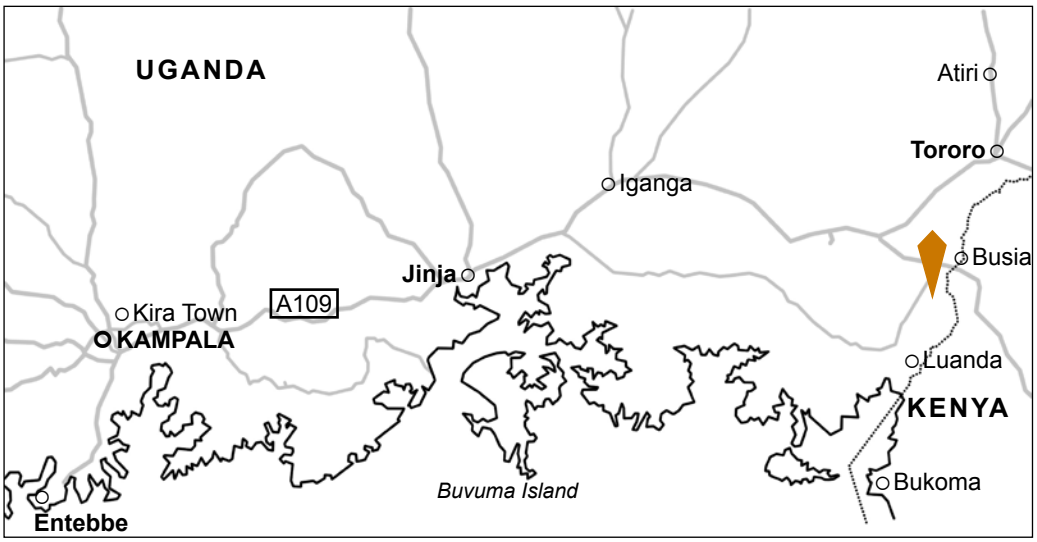
Group 2, Tanzania

Group 2 is a rural group, located about one-and-a-half hours west (65 km) of Dar es Salaam, and about 10 minutes by car (4 km) from the nearest town/market (Mlandizi) (Map 3.2). In this sense it is quite a remote village and community. A number of members, especially those who are or have been married, are engaged in agriculture, although nearly all members are involved in another income-generating activity. The group is composed mostly of young people, but includes a few members in their 30s. The group started saving in April 2014 and is currently in its second cycle. At the time of the interviews there were 18 members (8F, 9M and 1 unknown), 12 of whom had continued from the first cycle. The share value has remained at TZS 1,000 (~£0.30) for both cycles. Members received both FL/FE and EYL training in the first cycle, and employability skills training in the second cycle. The overall savings rate for continuing members is 80 per cent.

Group 3, Uganda

Group 3 is a rural group located approximately 15–20 minutes (8 km) from the town of Busia near to the Kenyan border (Map 3.3). In terms of age this is a mixed group, with some members in their teens and others in their 40s and 50s. Many members of this group take advantage of their proximity to the border, trading in border markets where goods tend to be cheaper. This group started saving in October 2013 and is in its second cycle. It was originally composed of 30 members (13F, 17M), with 20 continuing members (8F, 12M). The 10 members who dropped out after the first cycle had thus been replaced. The share value has remained at UGX 1,000 (~£0.18). Members received FL/FE and EYL training at the beginning of the second cycle. The overall savings rate of continuing members is 54 per cent.

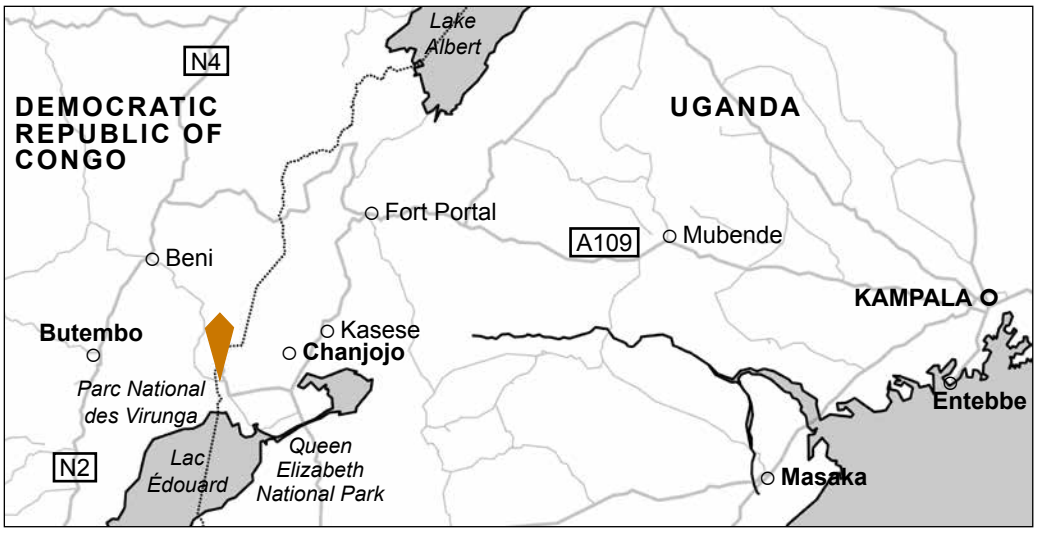
Map 3.3 Location of Group 3, Uganda



Group 4, Uganda

Group 4 is a rural group located near the town of Bwera, approximately 2 km from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) border (Map 3.4). All members are between 15 and 25 years old, and no members are in school. Although most members are engaged to some degree in agriculture, often on family or rented land, they also engage in trading activities, with a number of them trading goods acquired at the border where they can be cheaper. This group started saving in November 2013 and is in its second cycle. There are currently 26 members (21F, 5M), including the 20 original members (15F, 5M). The share value has remained at UGX 500 (~£0.09). Members received both FL/FE and EYL training in the second cycle. The overall savings rate of continuing members is 54 per cent.

Map 3.4 Location of Group 4, Uganda



Group 5, Zambia

Group 5 is a rural group located north of Lusaka, approximately 40 km from Kabwe, the nearest major town, and about a 10-minute drive (5 km) from the nearest main road and market (Map 3.5). This is an agricultural community, where members typically 'farm' (principally rainfed maize) and 'garden' on smaller irrigated plots (tomatoes are popular among gardeners). Many members also do casual labour, while some also have other income-generating activities (making and selling fritters, selling garments, and selling fish). Most current members are in their teens and 20s, though some are in their 40s. Most members in their teens are still in school. This group only meets once a month, but discussions among group members and Plan field officers are likely to lead to more frequent meetings (i.e. twice a month) in the near future. The group started saving in May 2013 and is in its third cycle. There is some confusion about the number of members but there are around 30, of whom 14 have continued through all three cycles. There were five drop-outs after the first cycle, and 14 drop-outs after two cycles. The share value increased from ZMW 10 (~£0.56) to ZMW 20 (~£1.11) after the first cycle. However, members sometimes contributed more than the allowed maximum (which was originally ZMW 50, and subsequently ZMW 100). Members received FL/FE training in the first cycle, and EYL and Employability Skills (ES) training in the second cycle. The overall savings rate of continuing members is 37 per cent.[4] The group took a three-month break from share meetings shortly after the third cycle started. This was because the secretary and treasurer, who according to the secretary herself were largely responsible for 'spearheading' the meetings, were attending a funeral outside of the village, but also because this period represented the lean period, and members thus decided to reconvene following the harvest (in March).

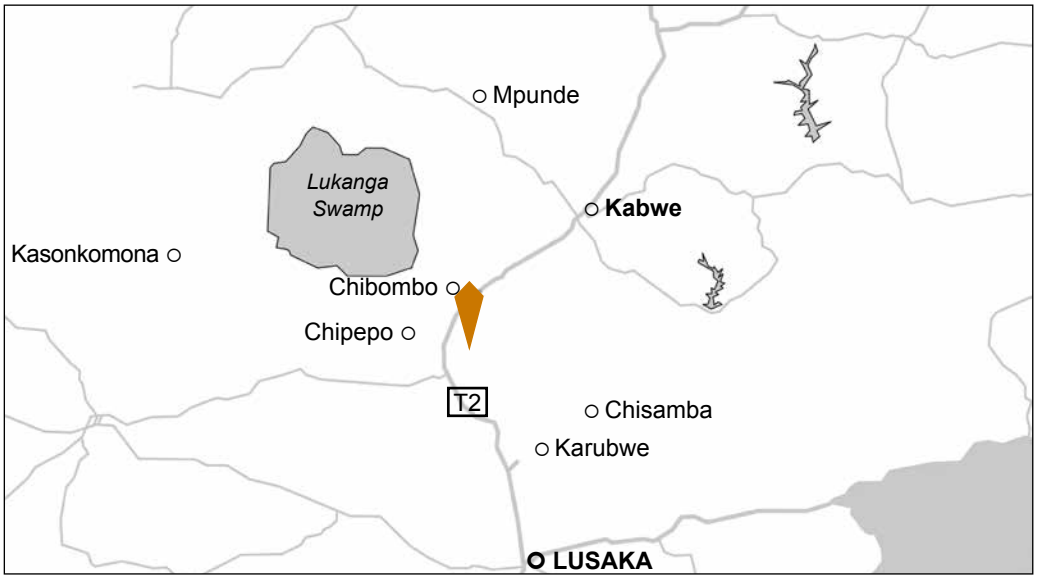
Map 3.5 Location of Group 5, Zambia

4 Although no maximum was ever enforced on the amount of shares/savings one could contribute to the group at any meeting, the savings rate is based on a 'guideline' for the maximum saving contribution (the coordinator's words) at each meeting, which is ZMW 100 per meeting. This ZMW 100 limit was also used to calculate the first-cycle savings rate because the ZMW 50 was never really respected.

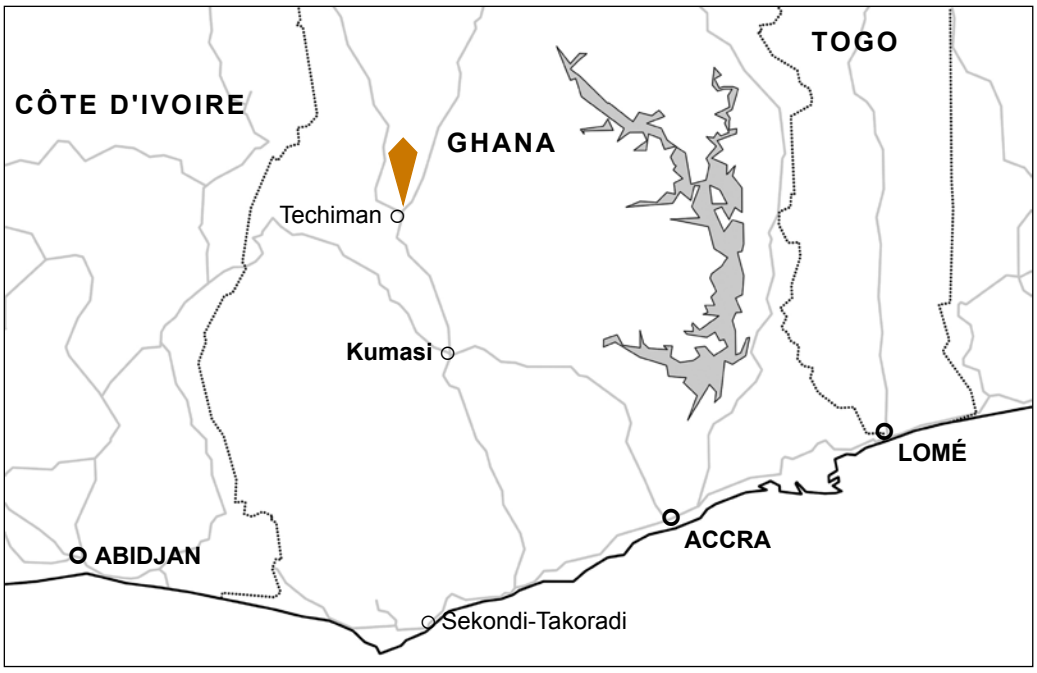
Group 6, Zambia

Group 6 is located about 70 km from Lusaka and 45 km from Kabwe, and is a 15-minute drive (5 km) from the nearest main road and market (Map 3.6). Members are aged between 14 and 27 years; those in their teens are still in school. People in this area are heavily engaged in farming (including casual farm labour) and gardening (greens). Many members are involved in other income-generating activities such as blanket and charcoal trading, local beer making, chicken and chicken product trading, and operation of small provisions shops. The group only meets once a month. It started saving in March 2012 and is in its fifth cycle. Originally it had 14 members (10F, 4M) and now there are 11 (7F, 4M). Ten members left after the second cycle when the group was actually dissolved, owing to poor governance and missing loan repayments. The group was put on hold for 11 months starting in March 2013, and became active again once it was reformed in February 2014. Only four members from the original group took part in the reforming of the group, along with seven other new members (bringing the total once again to 11 members). Since restarting, two of the members have left and both have been replaced. The share value increased from ZMW 5 to ZMW 10 when the group was reformed. This is the only group to officially allow members to buy 10 shares per meeting; the maximum share contribution thus went from ZMW 50 to ZMW 100 in the third cycle. Members received FL/FE training in the first and third cycles, and also EYL training in the third cycle and employability skills training in the fourth cycle. The overall savings rate of continuing members since the first cycle (n=3) is 18 per cent, and has been 23 per cent since the third cycle (n=9).

Map 3.6 Location of Group 6, Zambia



Map 3.7 Location of Group 7, Ghana



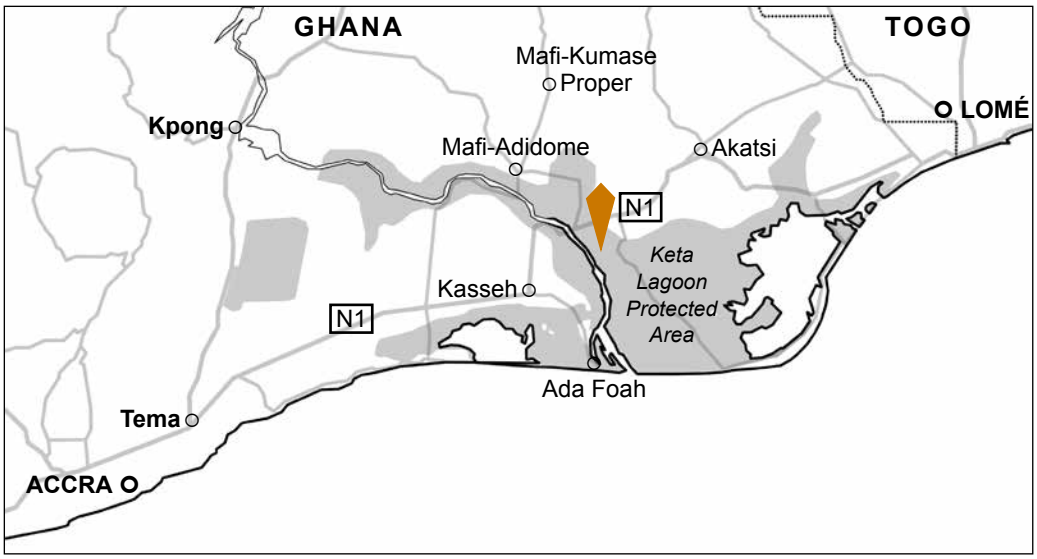
Group 7, Ghana

Group 7 is located in a small town in Brong Ahafo, about 25 minutes by car (15 km) from Techiman (Map 3.7). Most members are under the age of 16 and all but one are in school. The group meets weekly at a school. Most members live in and around the town's main roads and markets. The group started saving in November 2013 and is in its second cycle. It started with 22 members (13F, 9M); however, seven members left after the first cycle and were replaced. The current 22 members include 14F and 8M. In the second cycle the share value increased from GHS 0.2 (~£0.03) to GHS 0.4 (~£0.07). The group received FL/FE training in the first cycle, and started EYL training at the end of the first cycle (this was finished in the second cycle). Employability skills training was starting at the time of the interviews. The overall savings rate for continuing members is 46 per cent.

Group 8, Ghana

Group 8 is located in a small town in Volta Region, about 15 minutes by car (7–8 km) from Dabala and two hours from Accra (125 km) (Map 3.8). Most of the younger members are students, while older members (in their 20s) were typically involved in trade. Some school-going members were saving on behalf of adults. Members, as well as their caregivers, were mainly involved in trade, with some caregivers also being involved in farming. The group meets weekly, but members can only borrow once a month, on the day of the loan repayment meeting. The group started saving in January 2014 and is in its third cycle. There were originally 30 members (11F, 6M, 13 unknown), but 13 left and have been replaced. Current members include 19F and 11M. The share price recently increased from GHS 2 (~£0.35) to GHS 3 (~£0.52). The members received FL/FE training in the first cycle and EYL in the second cycle, and recently started employability skills training. The overall savings rate for continuing members was 91.1 per cent (87.0 per cent after share cancellations).

Map 3.8 Location of Group 8, Ghana



3.2 Introduction to the interviewees

This research sought to understand patterns of engagement with savings groups by individual members. The focus was therefore on the individual members and their specific situations, characteristics and stories. This is not to say that we sought to isolate or disentangle individual members from their social milieu, indeed quite the opposite. Rather we wanted to shift the focus from the kind of aggregate, group-level analysis that seems to characterise so much of the research on and evaluation of savings groups.

A short biography of each interviewee is provided in Annexe 2. The aim is to provide some insight into the lives and backgrounds of the interviewees in order to help contextualise the analysis of patterns of engagement. The remainder of this section presents a selection of five of these biographies.

Unique ID 43, a 15-year-old male, is a member and former key-holder of Group 7 in Ghana. He recently completed Primary 6 and will be going to the local junior high school (JHS). He lives with his uncle, mother, father, two sisters and brother; he is the second-born. Although he receives a modest pocket money allowance – GHS 0.5 per day (~£0.09) – usually only on school days, he is the highest saver in the group. His father, a farmer, usually gives him enough money to cover all five share purchases and social fund contribution (GHS 1.10 in total; ~£0.19). He said his father was doing so despite some lack of confidence in the group. His father doubled his saving contribution in the second cycle, following the doubling of the share value. He has a savings level of 70 per cent (equal in both cycles), but does not always save the maximum number of shares because he sometimes forgets to ask his father for the share contributions, or because his father doesn't always have money. He hasn't taken any loans and has used his share-outs on educational expenses, and on buying livestock (with additional help from his father). [**Category 1**: ***Student***]

Unique ID 54 is a case of a 'surrogate saver' within Group 8 in Ghana. The first member, an 18-year-old, was replaced by his 13-year-old brother after the first

cycle. Both saved on behalf of their mother, a 33-year-old married woman, who is a member of two other VSLAs. The two brothers live at home with their mother, father and two younger siblings (including a newborn). The older brother is a driver, and left the group because of the nature of his job. The second brother is a primary school student (going into Primary 6). The mother's principal economic activity was distilling alcohol, but recently she switched to second-hand shoe selling, mainly because the heat given off from the distilling was difficult for her to cope with while pregnant. She plans to return to this activity, however. She gets money to save both from her income-generating activities, and from her husband's 'upkeep' money. Her husband is a farmer. The mother's savings level is 67 per cent (63 per cent after share cancellations). Part of the reason for the missed savings is that the current member fails to go to all the meetings – he sometimes just doesn't feel like going. However, she also said her participation in the two other VSLAs reduced her savings in the BoC group. She had taken eight loans worth GHS 1,800 (~£306). She used all of her BoC group loans and share-outs to invest in her income-generating activities. [**Category 1**: ***Student***]

Unique ID 14, a 25-year-old single man, is a member of Group 2 in Tanzania, and also serves as one of the group's money-counters. He completed Form 4 and lives with his parents. He previously traded in cashews but this was not very successful. His current economic activity consists of buying and milling maize, and selling the flour to small shops in the surrounding area. He reports selling 5–10 180 kg sacks per week. His business is doing well and is growing – to the extent that he has managed to buy a small plot of land for himself. He would like to open a wholesale shop and buy a motorcycle to help transport the flour. His savings rate is 105 per cent (members of the group are allowed to buy additional shares during the first four weeks of a savings cycle), and he has taken three loans to a total value of TZS 360,000 (~£111), all of which were related to the maize flour business. [**Category 2**: ***Working; no children; not with a partner***]

Unique ID 21, a 20-year-old married woman, is a member of the Group 4 in Uganda, and also a signatory to the group's bank account. She completed Primary 7. She married seven months ago and is now pregnant with her first child. She and the husband farm on family and rented land. She used a loan to start trading in cassava flour, but this was not successful. Three months ago she used another loan to start a duck-rearing activity (i.e. she bought two ducks). The husband also works as a truck loader. Her savings rate is 56 per cent and she has taken three loans to a total value of UGX 50,000 (~£9). She plans to use the next group share-out to buy a female pig and start a piggery. During the interview she was timid, speaking in a hushed voice. [**Category 3**: ***Working, no children; with a partner***]

Unique ID 34, a 27-year-old single woman, is a member of Group 6 and is also its treasurer. She completed Grade 8. She is a mother of two children (aged 8 and 4), and she lives with them as well as her parents, two brothers and eight sisters. She is the eldest of her siblings. Her economic activities include farming and gardening, and watermelon trading, which are year-round activities, as well as sweet beer (*monkoyo*) production and grass cutting and selling (for thatching), which she does seasonally. She has also started to rear goats since joining the group. She joined the group in the third cycle, she has a savings rate of 26 per cent. She took eight loans worth ZMW 1,717 (~£98), and has invested them all in her various income-

generating activities. She was a vocal member of the group during the share meeting, and also an active participant in the group discussion. She is confident and proud of her achievements since joining the group –- she'd used her first share-out and was particularly proud to be the only person among her neighbours to have built a house with iron roofing. [***Category 4: Working; children; not with a partner***]

Unique ID 1, a 33-year-old married woman, is a member of Group 1 in Tanzania. She completed Form 4. She has three children in school, the oldest having been born when she was 21. Her current economic activity consists of cooking and selling samosas. She previously tried to set herself up selling charcoal (which is illegal unless one is in possession of the proper registration documents) but her first load was confiscated by the police and she lost everything. She is currently investing in a *jiko* (wood- or charcoal-burning cooking stove) income-generating activity. Her husband is a carpenter. Her savings rate is 68 per cent and she has taken three loans, to a total value of at least TZS 550,000 (~£171) (her third loan was not recorded in the ledger book). She is enthusiastic, jovial and positive, despite having encountered some difficulties in her income-generating activity proceedings thus far. [**Category 5**: ***Working, children; with a partner***]

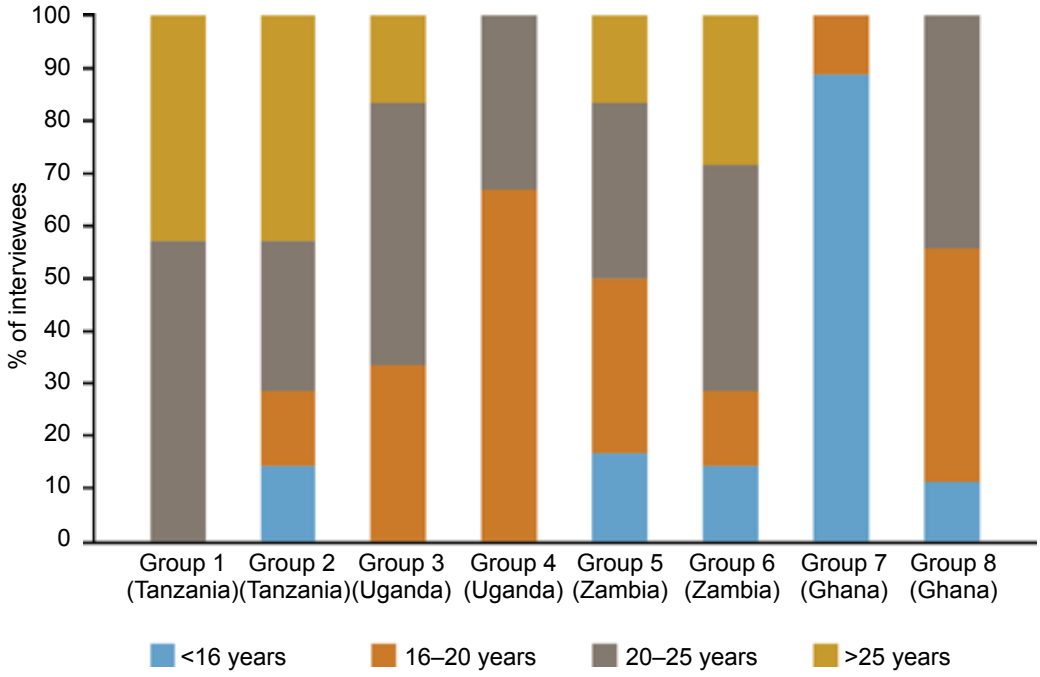
3.3 'Youth' is a very broad label

As is evident from the members' biographies presented in the previous section and in Annexe 2, the 57 savings group members interviewed during the course of this research were in very different life situations. For example, they ranged in age from 13 to 36 years; some were students still wholly dependent on parents, while others had three or four children of their own; some were just beginning to engage with the world of work, while others had one or more well-established income-generating activities.

Table 3.1 Sex and age distribution of interviewees

	Female					Male						
Group	**<16**	**16–20**	**21–25**	**>25**	**Sum**	**<16**	**16–20**	**21–25**	**>25**	**Sum**	**Total**	**Total students**
1 (Tanzania)			4	3	7					0	7	1
2 (Tanzania)			2	2	4	1	1		1	3	7	1
3 (Uganda)			3		3		2		1	3	6	0
4 (Uganda)		3	1		4		1	1		2	6	0
5 (Zambia)	1		2	1	4		2			2	6	2
6 (Zambia)	1	1		2	4			3		3	7	2
7 (Ghana)	3	1			4	5				5	9	8
8 (Ghana)		2	4		6	1	2			3	9	4
Total	**5**	**7**	**16**	**8**	**36**	**7**	**8**	**4**	**2**	**21**	**57**	**18**
%					**63%**					**37%**		**32%**

Figure 3.1 Age distribution of interviewees (%)



Source: Authors' own

Table 3.1 shows the distribution of interviewees by group, sex and age class. Overall 63 per cent of the interviewees were women and 32 per cent were full-time students (including one university student), although there were important differences in the characteristics of interviewees from the different groups. Differences in age distribution of interviewees are illustrated in Figure 3.1. It can be seen that, for example, the age profiles of interviewees from Groups 1 and 7 are very different.

These differences highlight some of the limitations of the labels 'youth' and 'youth savings group'. While all the interviewees were members of a youth savings group, in other important respects several had little in common. To help capture these different life situations, and to go beyond analysis focused on age and sex, we assigned each interviewee to one of five categories:

1 Student (n=18, or 31.6%)

2 Working; no children; not with a partner (n=15, or 26.3%)

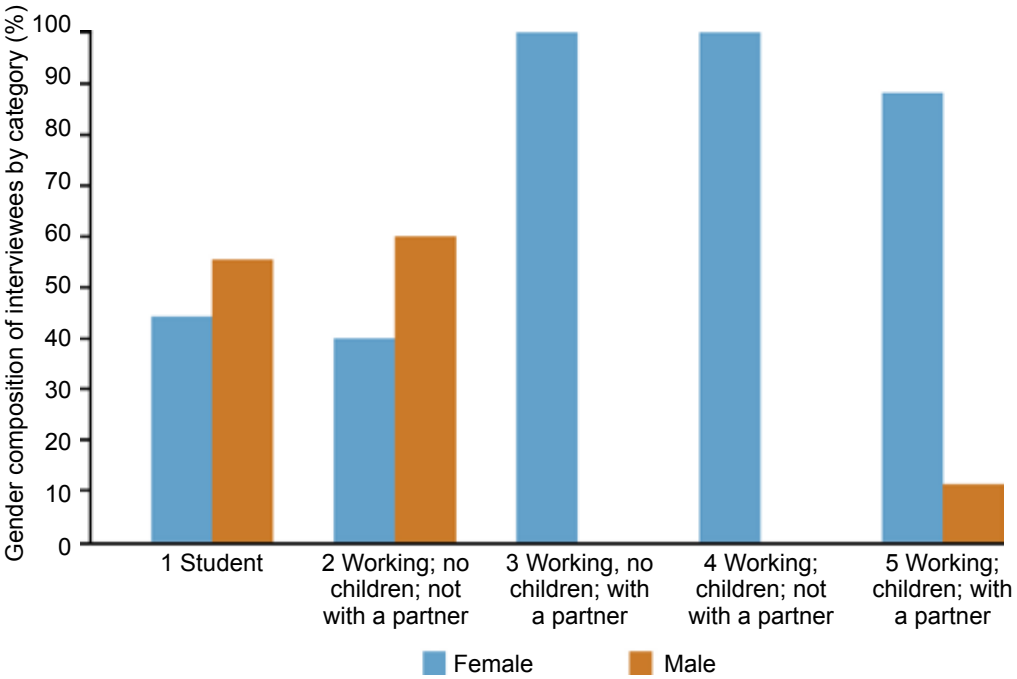
3 Working, no children; with a partner (n=2, or 3.5%)

4 Working; children; not with a partner (n=5, or 8.8%)

5 Working; children; with a partner (n=17, or 29.8%)

Classifications for the 57 interviewees are given in Annexe 3. The sex and age distributions of interviewees across these categories are shown in Figure 3.2 and Table 3.2 respectively. The sex distribution of the 47 interviewees across these categories for whom at least two cycles of savings and borrowing information is available is shown in Figure 3.3 and closely mirrors the distribution of the 57. The age-by-category distribution of the 47 was exactly the same of that shown in Table 3.2. We return to these 47 in some of the analysis of engagement patterns.

Figure 3.2 Sex distribution of 57 interviewees by category

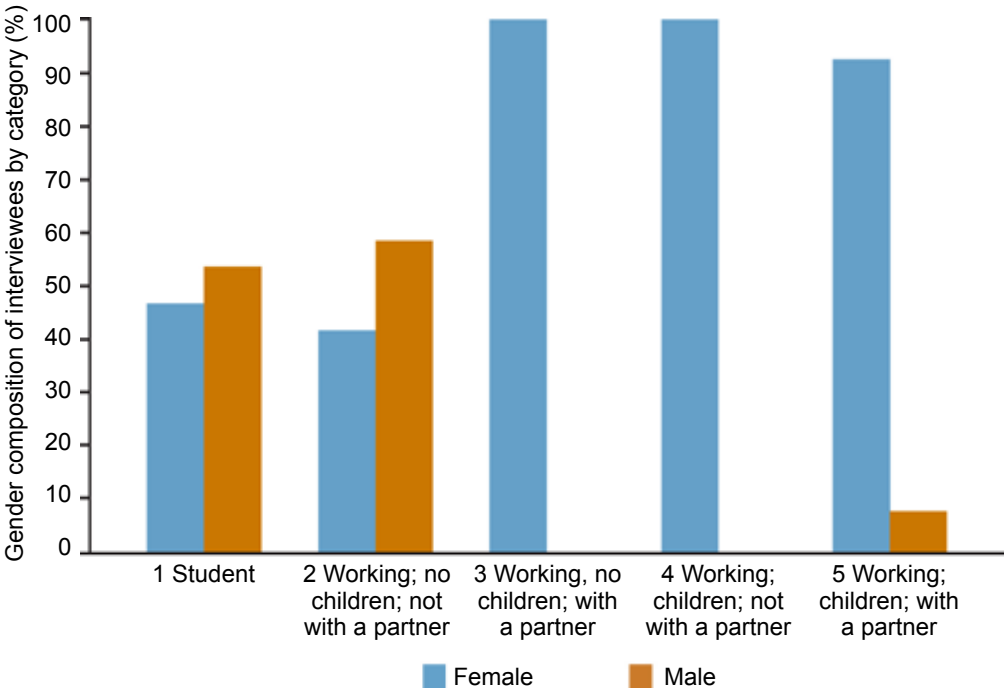


Source: Authors' own

Table 3.2 Age distribution of 57 interviewees by category

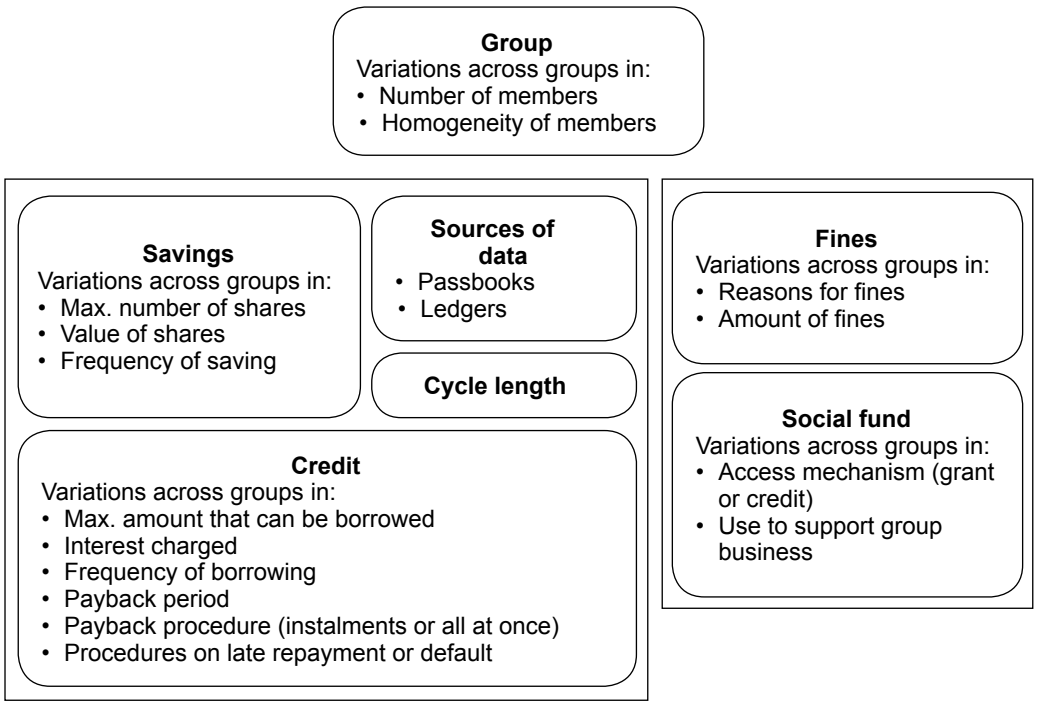
	Age		
Category	**Average**	**Minimum**	**Maximum**
1. Student (n=18)	15	13	23
2. Working; no children; not with a partner (n=15)	21	16	25
3. Working; no children; with a partner (n=2)	22	20	23
4. Working; children; not with a partner (n=5)	28	22	36
5. Working; children; with a partner (n=17)	25	20	33

Figure 3.3 Sex distribution of 47 interviewees by category (includes only interviewees for whom two cycles of savings and borrowing data are available)



Source: Authors' own

Figure 3.4 Observed variations in the savings group model



Source: Authors' own

3.4 Variations in the savings group model

BoC documents and staff refer to and promote what is called the programme's youth savings group model.[5] One 'principle' of the model is that it is to some degree flexible, with the idea being that it can and should be adapted to local circumstances. Over the course of the research a number of variations in the operation of the savings groups were observed. These variations are summarised in Figure 3.4. Some variations appear to reflect decisions made at the level of individual groups, while others reflect decisions made at country level by the implementing partner. In any case, as will be illustrated in the sections that follow, some of these variants – including, for example, frequency of savings (weekly or monthly) – appear to have important implications for patterns of engagement and how engagement with a savings group is experienced by individual members.

3.5 Patterns of engagement: savings and borrowing

3.5.1 Scale of engagement

Before presenting the analysis of patterns of engagement it is important to get a measure of the scale of engagement within and between groups.

Weekly group-level savings indicators (average, median, minimum and maximum for all members, not just the interviewees) by cycle are given in Table 3.3 (also see Annexe 4). For purposes of comparison these are shown in local currency, in GB£ equivalent and as a percentage of the national weekly minimum wage (see Annexe 5). The table illustrates several important points:

- There can be significant differences in savings within some groups: for example, in Group 3 (Uganda) the first cycle minimum and maximum weekly savings amounts were UGX 615 and UGX 5,000 respectively; while in the second cycle the minimum and maximum weekly savings amounts were UGX 875 and UGX 5,000 respectively (we return to the issue of within-group variation later).
- In one group in the first cycle and two groups in the second cycle, top savers are managing to save over 40 per cent of the official minimum weekly wage.
- An increase in share price can be associated with significantly higher savings (e.g. Group 1 increased its share price from TZS 1,000 to TZS 2,000 between the first and second cycle, and the average weekly savings amount increased from TZS 4,010 to TZS 8,562.
- The savings amounts achieved by Group 7, the predominately student group in Ghana, were very low in comparison with those of the other group in Ghana.

These group-level data suggest that some group members are able, over the course of a cycle, to save at least 15 per cent of the weekly minimum wage (although not within the Zambia groups), and some considerably more than this.

5 See: www.plan-uk.org/assets/Documents/pdf/Youth_Savings_Group_Model_Proposed_Principles_FINAL.pdf

Table 3.3 Weekly group-level savings indicators by cycle

		1st cycle savings				2nd cycle savings				3rd cycle savings			
Group		Average	Median	Min	Max	Average	Median	Min	Max	Average	Median	Min	Max
1 (T)	In local currency	4,010	4,135	1,577	5,000	8,562	10,000	3,714	10,000				
1 (T)	In GB£	1.12	1.15	0.44	1.39	2.38	2.78	1.03	2.78				
1 (T)	As % of weekly minimum wage	17%	18%	7%	22%	37%	43%	16%	43%				
2 (T)	In local currency	3,878	4,317	1,308	5,385	4,000	4,563	1,125	5,000				
2 (T)	In GB£	1.08	1.20	0.36	1.50	1.11	1.27	0.31	1.39				
2 (T)	As % of weekly minimum wage	17%	19%	6%	23%	17%	20%	5%	22%				
3 (U)	In local currency	2,618	2,481	615	5,000	2,797	2,700	875	5,000				
3 (U)	In GB£	0.50	0.47	0.12	0.95	0.53	0.51	0.17	0.95				
3 (U)	As % of weekly minimum wage	24%	23%	6%	46%	26%	25%	8%	46%				
4 (U)	In local currency	1,140	929	429	2,214	1,515	1,304	598	2,500				
4 (U)	In GB£	0.22	0.18	0.08	0.42	0.29	0.25	0.11	0.48				
4 (U)	As % of weekly minimum wage	11%	9%	4%	21%	14%	12%	6%	23%				
5 (Z)	In local currency	7.75	7.67	0.77	15.34	5.84	3.20	-	21.99	7.10	7.67	-	15.34
5 (Z)	In GB£	0.64	0.63	0.06	1.26	0.48	0.26	-	1.81	0.58	0.63	-	1.26
5 (Z)	As % of weekly minimum wage	6%	5%	1%	11%	4%	2%	0%	16%	5%	5%	0%	11%
6 (Z)	In local currency	6.12	6.04	3.45	8.92	3.05	3.22	2.30	3.68	6.14	5.37	3.84	9.21
6 (Z)	In GB£	0.50	0.50	0.28	0.73	0.25	0.26	0.19	0.30	0.50	0.44	0.32	0.76
6 (Z)	As % of weekly minimum wage	4%	4%	2%	6%	2%	2%	2%	3%	4%	4%	3%	7%
7 (G)	In local currency	0.45	0.45	0.20	0.70	1.03	1.00	0.66	1.42				
7 (G)	In GB£	0.07	0.07	0.03	0.11	0.16	0.15	0.10	0.22				
7 (G)	As % of weekly minimum wage	1%	1%	0%	2%	2%	2%	2%	3%				
8 (G)	In local currency	8.93	9.33	6.55	10.00	9.07	9.60	5.25	10.00	12.60	15.00	-	15.00
8 (G)	In GB£	1.38	1.44	1.01	1.55	1.40	1.49	0.81	1.55	1.95	2.32	-	2.32
8 (G)	As % of weekly minimum wage	21%	22%	16%	24%	22%	23%	13%	24%	30%	36%	0%	36%
Average	In GB£	0.69	0.71	0.30	0.99	0.83	0.87	0.34	1.19	0.54	0.54	0.16	1.01
Average	As % of weekly minimum wage	13%	13%	5%	19%	16%	16%	6%	22%	5%	5%	1%	9%

Table 3.4 Weekly group-level borrowing indicators by cycle

		1st cycle loans				2nd cycle loans				3rd cycle loans			
Group		**Average**	**Median**	**Min**	**Max**	**Average**	**Median**	**Min**	**Max**	**Average**	**Median**	**Min**	**Max**
1 (T)	In local currency	6,928	6,731	-	16,442	9,737	10,714	-	28,571				
1 (T)	In GB£	1.93	1.87	-	4.58	2.71	2.98	-	7.95				
1 (T)	As % of weekly minimum wage	30%	29%	0%	71%	42%	46%	0%	124%				
2 (T)	In local currency	4,816	4,327	1,923	9,615	3,681	2,500	-	15,000				
2 (T)	In GB£	1.34	1.20	0.54	2.68	1.02	0.70	-	4.18				
2 (T)	As % of weekly minimum wage	21%	19%	8%	42%	16%	11%	0%	65%				
3 (U)	In local currency					4,897	3,525	500	24,750				
3 (U)	In GB£					0.93	0.67	0.10	4.72				
3 (U)	As % of weekly minimum wage					45%	33%	5%	229%				
4 (U)	In local currency	1,541	1,043	143	4,286	3,366	2,294	588	15,804				
4 (U)	In GB£	0.29	0.20	0.03	0.82	0.64	0.44	0.11	3.01				
4 (U)	As % of weekly minimum wage	14%	10%	1%	40%	31%	21%	5%	146%				
5 (Z)	In local currency	14.51	10.12	-	92.08	11.88	5.11	-	52.26	7.04	7.31	-	19.18
5 (Z)	In GB£	1.19	0.83	-	7.57	0.98	0.42	-	4.30	0.58	0.60	-	1.58
5 (Z)	As % of weekly minimum wage	10%	7%	0%	66%	8%	4%	0%	37%	5%	5%	0%	14%
6 (Z)	In local currency	36.41	32.22	22.57	65.88	9.51	8.29	4.60	19.33	11.12	7.67	3.84	18.72
6 (Z)	In GB£	2.99	2.65	1.86	5.42	0.78	0.68	0.38	1.59	0.91	0.63	0.32	1.54
6 (Z)	As % of weekly minimum wage	26%	23%	16%	47%	7%	6%	3%	14%	8%	5%	3%	13%
7 (G)	In local currency	-	-	-	-	0.31	-	-	3.85				
7 (G)	In GB£	-	-	-	-	0.05	-	-	0.60				
7 (G)	As % of weekly minimum wage	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	9%				
8 (G)	In local currency	14.63	10.63	-	41.75	10.97	9.50	-	27.50	-	-	-	-
8 (G)	In GB£	2.26	1.65	-	6.46	1.70	1.47	-	4.26	-	-	-	-
8 (G)	As % of weekly minimum wage	35%	25%	0%	99%	26%	23%	0%	65%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Average	In GB£	1.43	1.20	0.35	3.93	1.10	0.92	0.07	3.82	0.75	0.62	0.16	1.56
Average	As % of weekly minimum wage	19%	16%	4%	52%	22%	18%	2%	86%	6%	5%	1%	14%

What does this say about the socio-economic status of the members? How do they manage to do this, given the generally low skill and low investment levels required for many of the income-generating activities that they engage in? We explore these questions in more detail in the sections that follow.

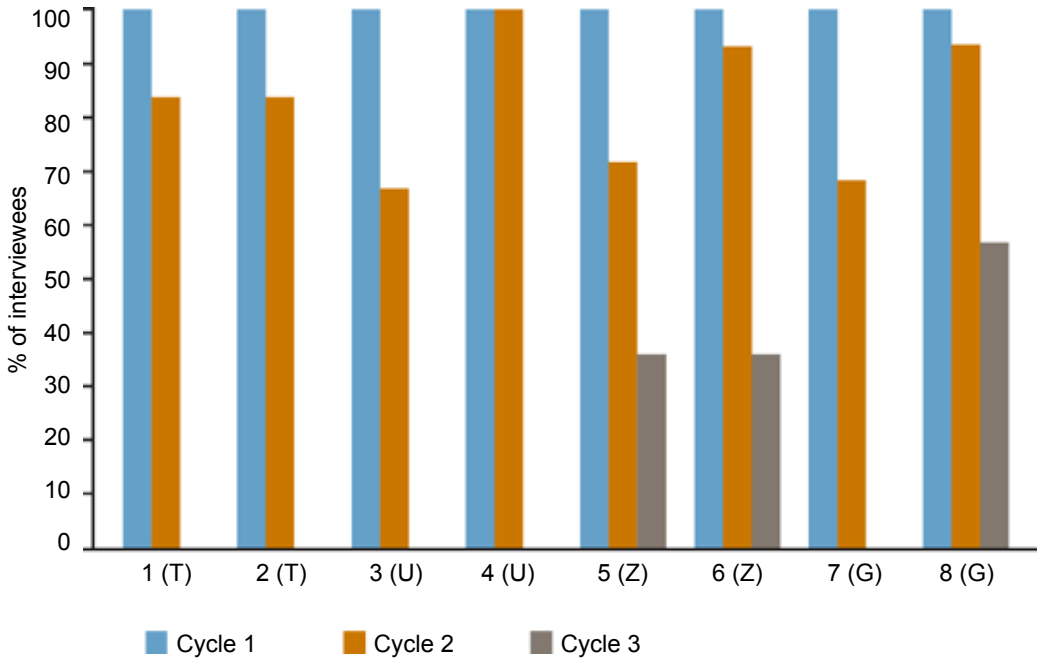
Weekly group-level borrowing indicators (average, median, minimum and maximum) by cycle are given in Table 3.4. Again, significant variation can be observed within and between groups. A key point is that while all members save, not all members borrow. For some members it is an individual decision not to borrow, for others, including those in some student groups, the rules under which the group operates may discourage or prohibit borrowing.

3.5.2 Turnover of members

Only individuals who had been in their group continuously from the beginning were selected for interview (though there were a few exceptions to this: for example, since the vast majority of members in Group 7 did not borrow at all, we selected the only two who did, even though they had joined in the second cycle). The idea was that this would provide a more informative picture of the evolution of patterns of engagement. While it certainly would have been possible to interview members who joined the group after the first cycle was completed, given the time and resources available, gaining access to individuals who had ceased to be members would have been much more challenging. Thus there is only limited information at hand about why specific individuals ceased to be active members.

Across the eight groups the percentage of original members who participated in the second cycle ranged from 100 per cent (Group 4 in Uganda) to 67 per cent (Group 3 in Uganda), and averaged 82 per cent overall (Figure 3.5). It is interesting

Figure 3.5 Change in group membership over time



Source: Authors' own

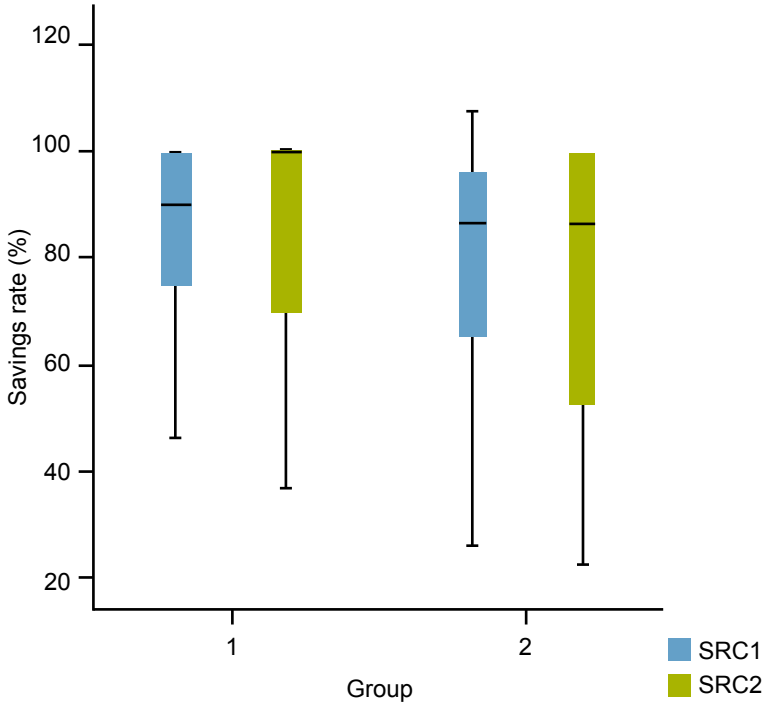
to note that the figure for Group 7 in Ghana, the group with the highest proportion of full-time students and the youngest age profile, was 68 per cent, and thus near the bottom of the range. Three of the eight groups have either started or completed a third cycle, and for these groups the percentage of original members who participated in the third cycle ranged from 57 per cent in Group 8 (in Ghana) to 36 per cent in Groups 5 and 6 (in Zambia). This limited data suggests that 50 per cent or less of members might be expected to remain in a group for at least three cycles, and perhaps less than this for student groups. From this perspective, the members that we interviewed may need to be considered as somewhat special.

3.5.3 Savings

Within-group variation in savings rates are shown in Figure 3.6, Figure 3.7, Figure 3.8 and Figure 3.9.[6] It is clear from these figures that for many groups and cycles there is a considerable range in the savings rates. Some members are saving 3, 4 or 5 times as much as others. At group level there is no obvious trend in savings rate from the 1st cycle to the 2nd cycle: the median savings rate for Groups 1, 3 and 4 showed a slight increased from the 1st cycle to the 2nd cycle, while the median savings rate was stable for Groups 2, 7 and 8, and decreased for Groups 5 and 6.

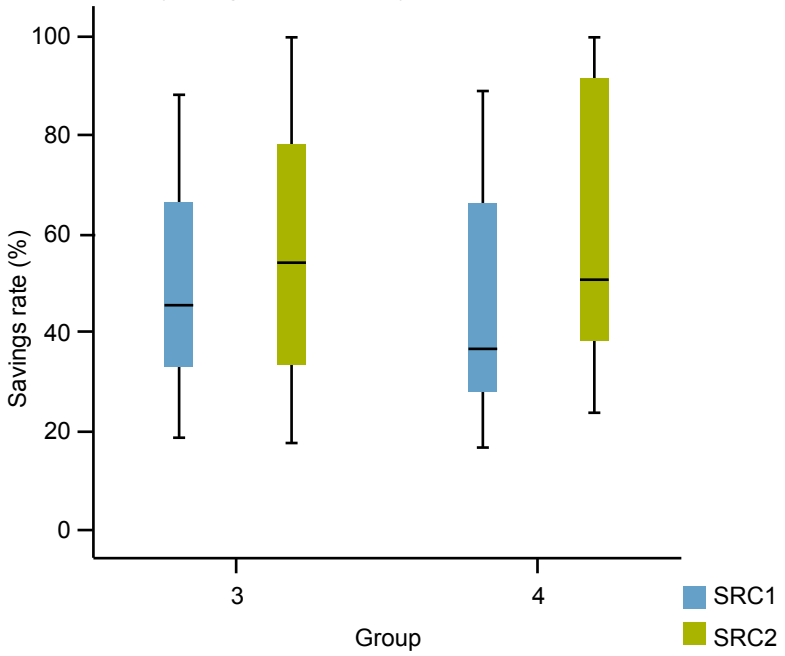
6 These box and whisker plots show the **median** (the dark horizontal line within the coloured rectangle); the **range** (the extremities of the top and bottom whiskers) and the **interquartile range** (the top and bottom of the coloured rectangle); and any **outliers**.

Figure 3.6 Groups 1 and 2 (Tanzania) savings rates
(blue – 1st cycle, green – 2nd cycle)



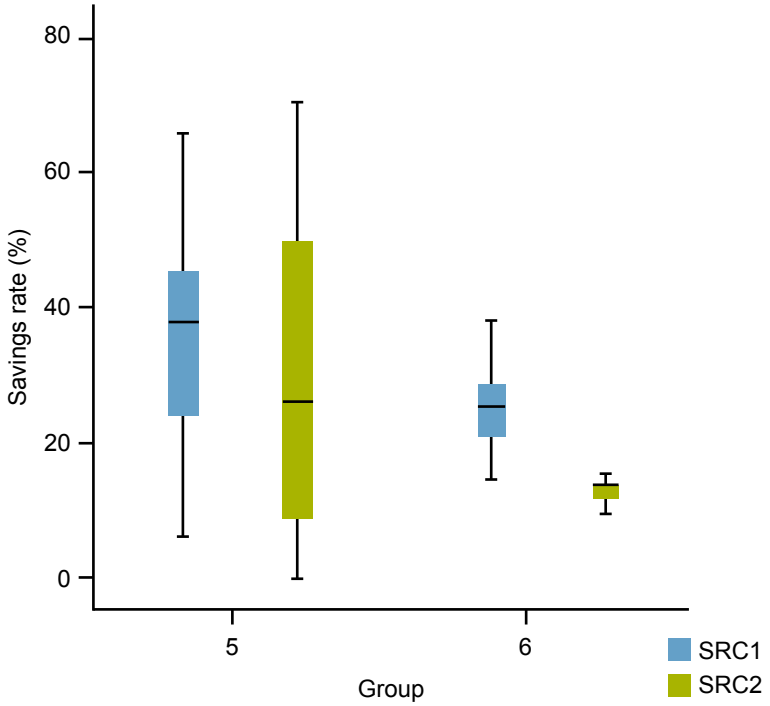
Source: Authors' own

Figure 3.7 Groups 3 and 4 (Uganda) savings rates
(blue – 1st cycle, green – 2nd cycle)



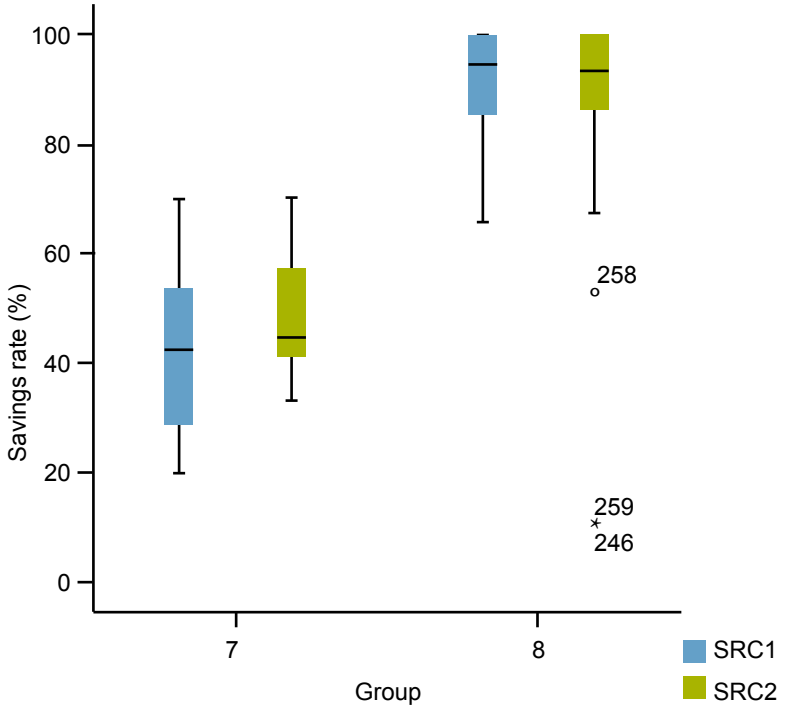
Source: Authors' own

Figure 3.8 Groups 5 and 6 (Zambia) savings rates
(blue – 1st cycle, green – 2nd cycle)



Source: Authors' own

Figure 3.9 Groups 7 and 8 (Ghana) savings rates
(blue – 1st cycle, green – 2nd cycle)



Source: Authors' own

Table 3.5 Consistency of engagement with the savings group over time (correlation coefficient, r)

		Saving	Borrowing	Leverage
Group	n =	Cycles 1–2	Cycles 1–2	Cycles 1–2
1	25	0.25	0.21	0.21
2	9	0.44	-0.37	-0.66*
3	20	0.49**		
4	19	0.43*	0.35	0.17
5	24	0.53***	-0.11	-0.10
6	11	0.64**	0.10	-0.16
7	15	0.18		
8	27	0.77***	0.28	0.26**

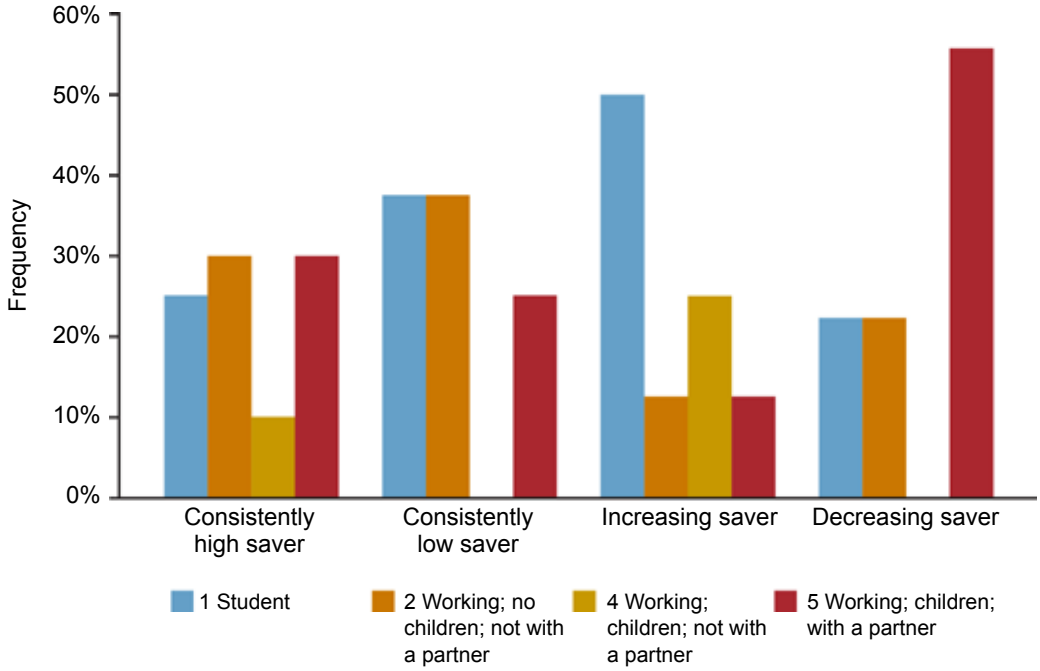
*, **, *** Designates a correlation coefficient that is statistically significant at a probability level of <0.10, <0.05 or <0.01 respectively.
Note: Shaded areas: correlations were not calculated for groups 3 and 7 since group 3 had missing loan data for the 1st cycle, and group 7 did not issue any loans in the 1st cycle.

How consistent are individual members' savings rates over cycles? Are high savers in the 1st cycle also high savers in the 2nd cycle? Table 3.5 shows the correlation coefficients for savings rate between the 1st cycle and 2nd cycle. In five of the eight groups the correlation coefficient is positive and statistically significant ($p<0.10$). This suggests that within these groups there is some degree of consistency in savings: individuals who saved more in the 1st cycle tended to also save more in the 2nd cycle. For the other groups the correlation coefficients provide no statistical evidence of consistency between first and second cycle savings.

The correlation analysis provides some evidence of consistency in savings over cycles. Using the scatter plots on which these correlations were based, individuals were identified who could be considered consistently high or consistently low savers, and also savers whose savings rate had either increased or decreased from the 1st to the 2nd cycle. Relevant information about these individuals was extracted from the interviews (see Annexe 6), coded and analysed. Figure 3.10 shows that Category 4 (Working; children; not with a partner) is under-represented among the consistently high savers, among the consistently low savers and among the decreasing savers. Students are over-represented among the increasing savers, while Category 5 (Working; children; with a partner) are over-represented among decreasing savers.

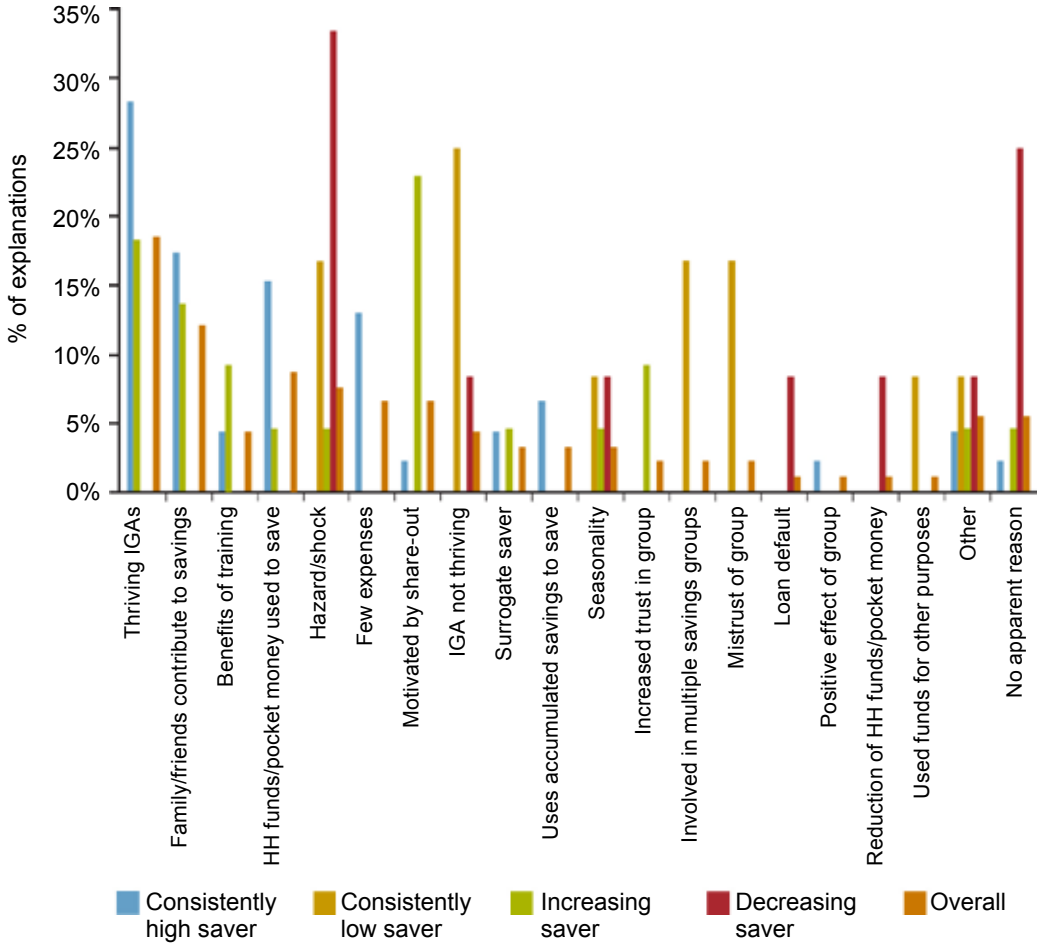
Looking across all the categories, Figure 3.11 highlights the fact that thriving income-generating activities, family and friends' contributions, access to household funds or pocket money and low expenses are associated with consistently high savings. On the other hand, consistently low savings is associated with income-generating activities that are not thriving, hazard or shock (e.g. becoming ill or being called away for a lengthy period), mistrust of the group and involvement in more than one savings group. Being motivated by the share-out, and thriving

Figure 3.10 Savings consistency by category



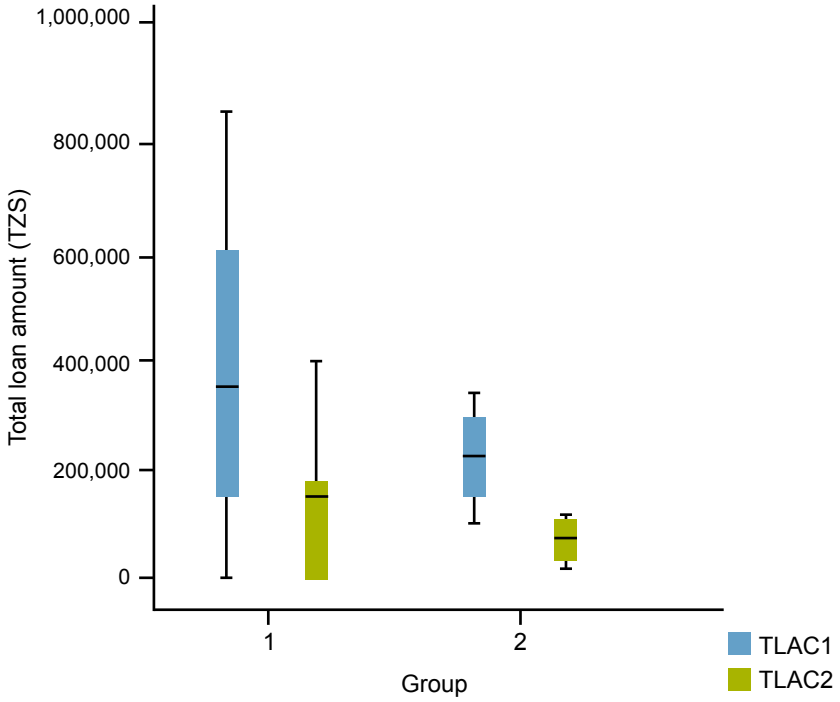
Source: Authors' own

Figure 3.11 Explanations for savings consistency over all categories



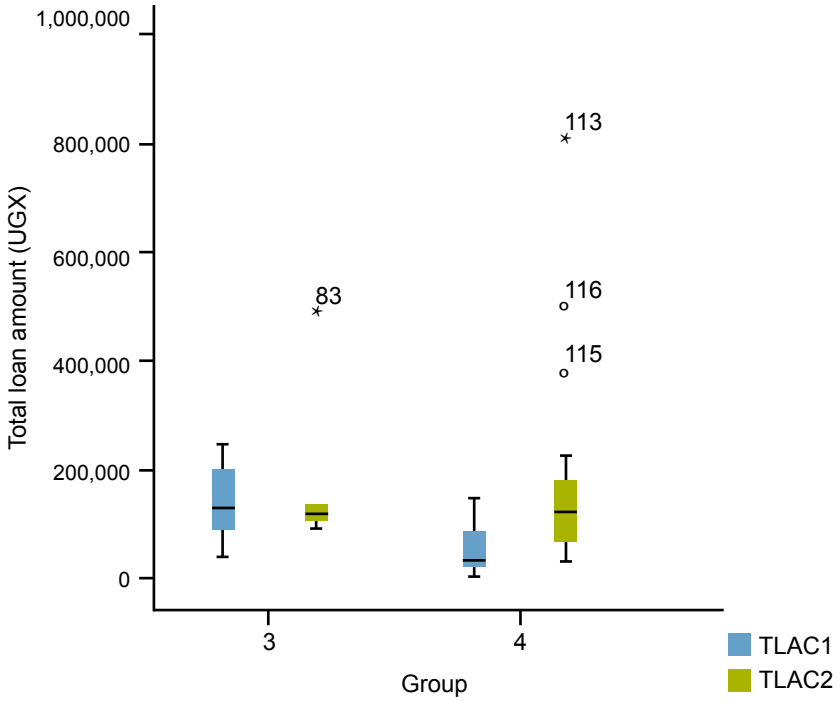
Source: Authors' own

Figure 3.12 Groups 1 and 2 (Tanzania) total loan amounts
(blue – 1st cycle, green – 2nd cycle)



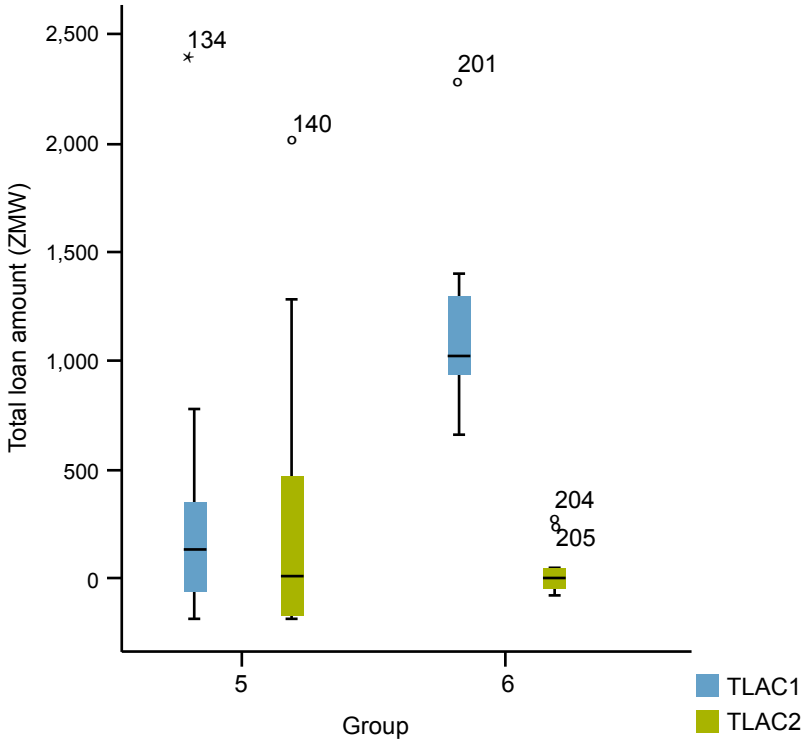
Source: Authors' own

Figure 3.13 Group 3 and 4 (Uganda) total loan amounts
(blue – 1st cycle, green – 2nd cycle)



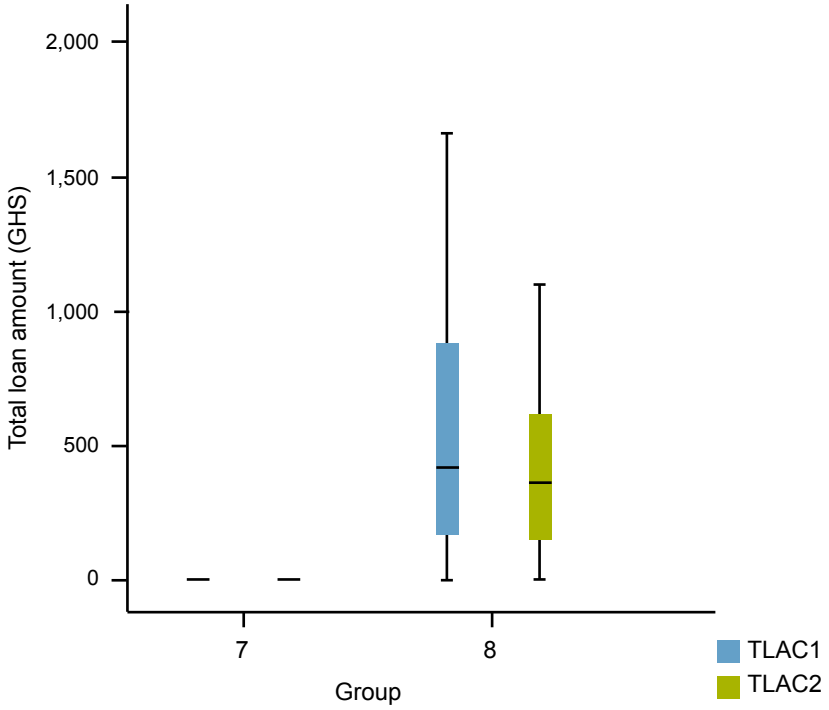
Source: Authors' own

Figure 3.14 Groups 5 and 6 (Zambia) total loan amounts
(blue – 1st cycle, green – 2nd cycle)



Source: Authors' own

Figure 3.15 Groups 7 and 8 (Ghana) total loan amounts
(blue – 1st cycle, green – 2nd cycle)



Source: Authors' own

income-generating activities, are associated with increasing savings, while hazard and shocks are the single most important factor associated with decreasing savings. There are insufficient data to disaggregate this analysis by category.

3.5.4 Borrowing

Within-group variation in borrowing is shown in Figure 3.12, Figure 3.13, Figure 3.14, Figure 3.15. It is clear from these figures that for many groups and cycles the range in the amount borrowed by different members is quite large. While some members do not borrow at all, others take multiple loans per cycle, adding up to a considerable sum.

At group level, for five of the seven groups where loans were issued in both cycles (Groups 1, 2, 5, 6 and 8), the median amount borrowed declined from the 1st cycle to the 2nd cycle, while it was stable for Group 3, and increased slightly for Group 4. Correlation coefficients provide no evidence for consistency in borrowing within groups over cycles (Table 3.5).

Although the correlation analysis provides no evidence of consistency in borrowing over cycles, it is nevertheless possible to identify some individuals whose borrowing was consistently at a high or a low level, and others whose borrowing went up or down. As was done for savings above, information was extracted from the interviews that might help explain these different patterns of borrowing, and this information was then coded and analysed.

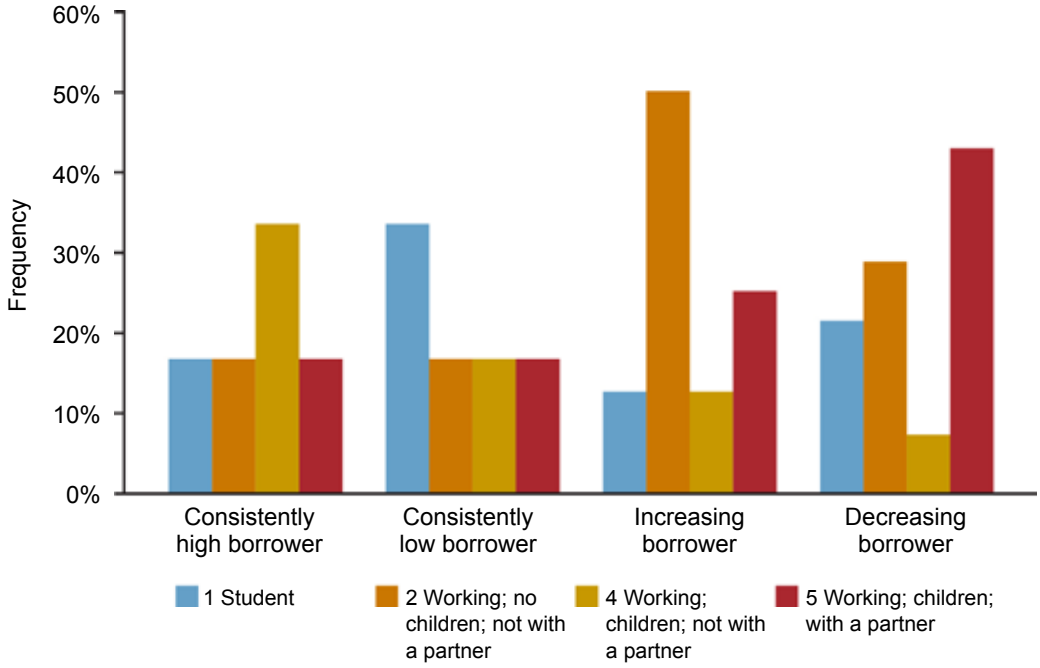
Figure 3.16 shows that Category 4 (Working; children; not with a partner) is over-represented among the consistently high borrowers, and under-represented among the decreasing borrowers. On the other hand, Students are over-represented among the consistently low borrowers and the decreasing borrowers, while Category 2 (Working; no children; not with a partner) is over-represented among the increasing borrowers.

Looking across all the categories, Figure 3.17 highlights the fact that thriving income-generating activities and previous experience of successfully borrowing for others are associated with consistently high borrowing, while fear of borrowing is the most important factor associated with consistently low borrowing. Again, thriving-income generating activities is the single most important factor associated with increasing borrowing, while seasonality and constraints to borrowing caused by lower savings are associated with decreasing borrowing. There are insufficient data to disaggregate this analysis by category.

Further insight into borrowing can be gained through what we have called the leverage factor (defined as the Loan Amount / Savings Amount). In effect the leverage factor measures how intensively during a particular cycle a member has used the shares he or she has purchased in the savings group to access additional funds through borrowing. The leverage factor is independent of the amount saved: a member could, for example, have a high leverage factor even if the amount borrowed was relatively modest.

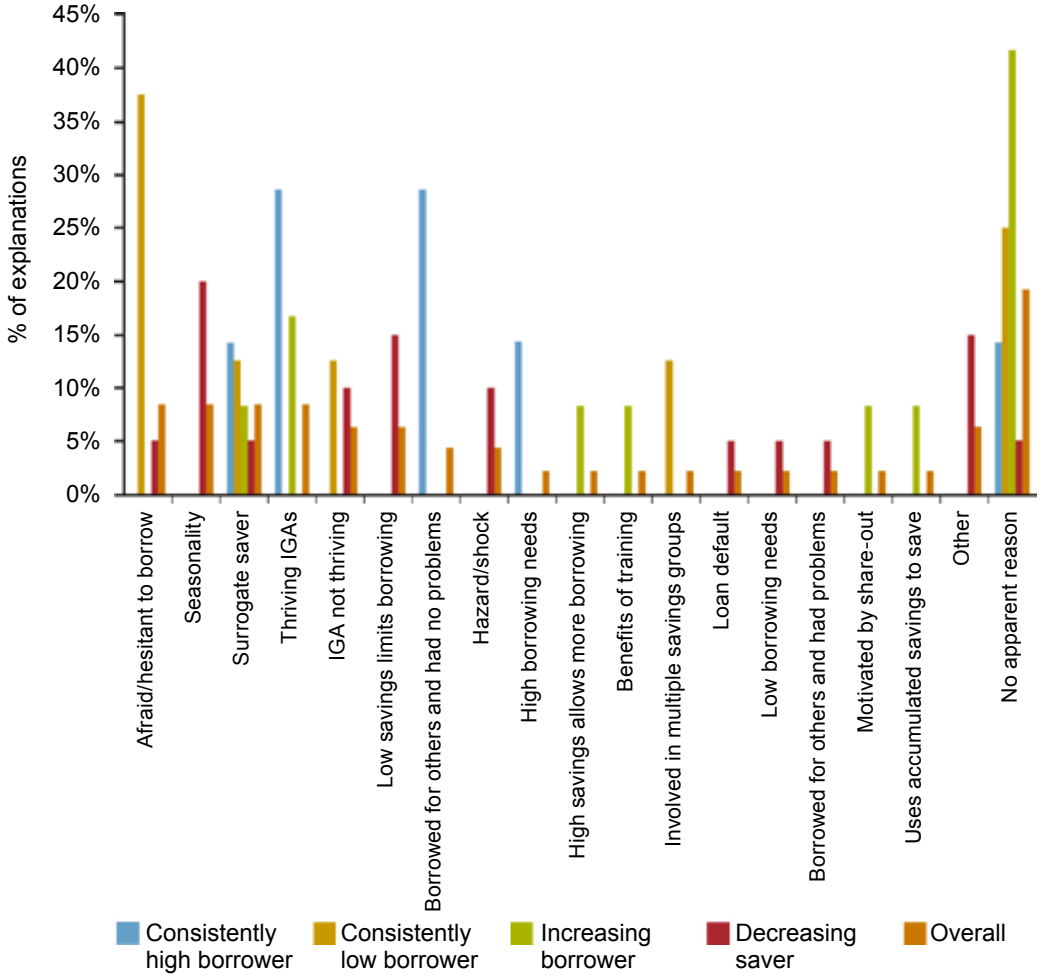
Within-group variation in the leverage factor is shown in Figure 3.18, Figure 3.19, Figure 3.20, Figure 3.21. It is clear from these figures that for many groups and

Figure 3.16 Borrowing consistency by category



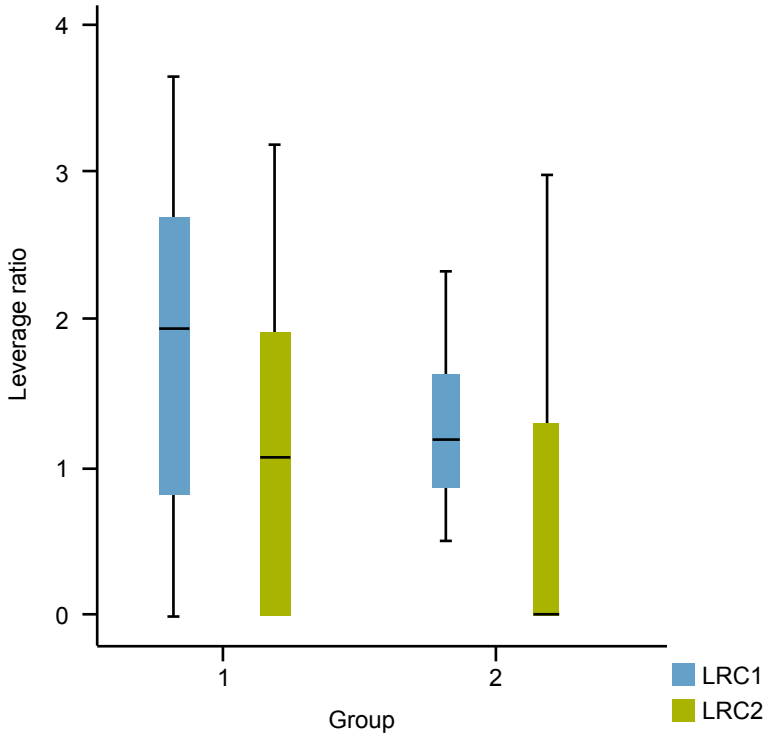
Source: Authors' own

Figure 3.17 Explanations for borrowing consistency over all categories



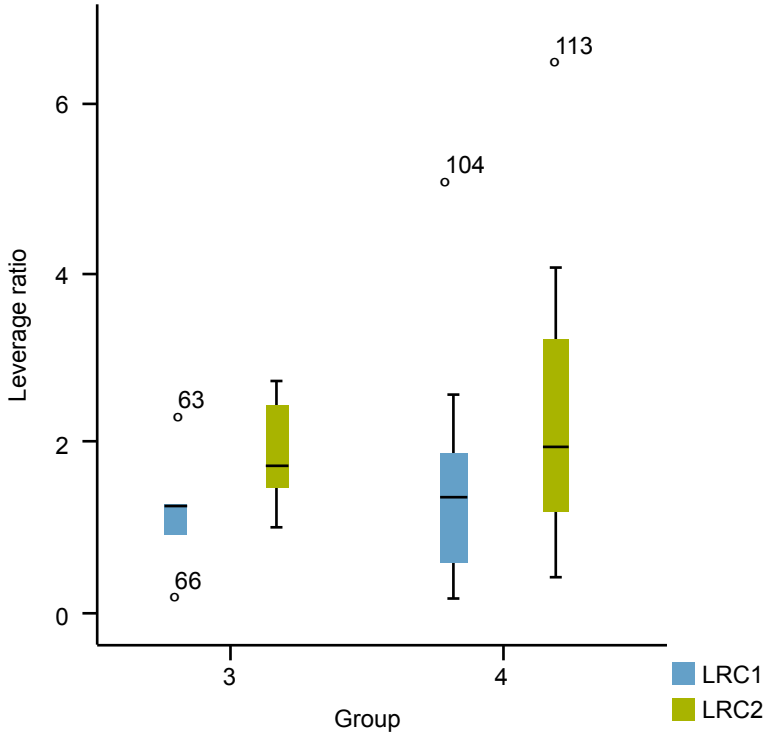
Source: Authors' own

Figure 3.18 Groups 1 and 2 (Tanzania) leverage factors
(blue – 1st cycle, green – 2nd cycle)



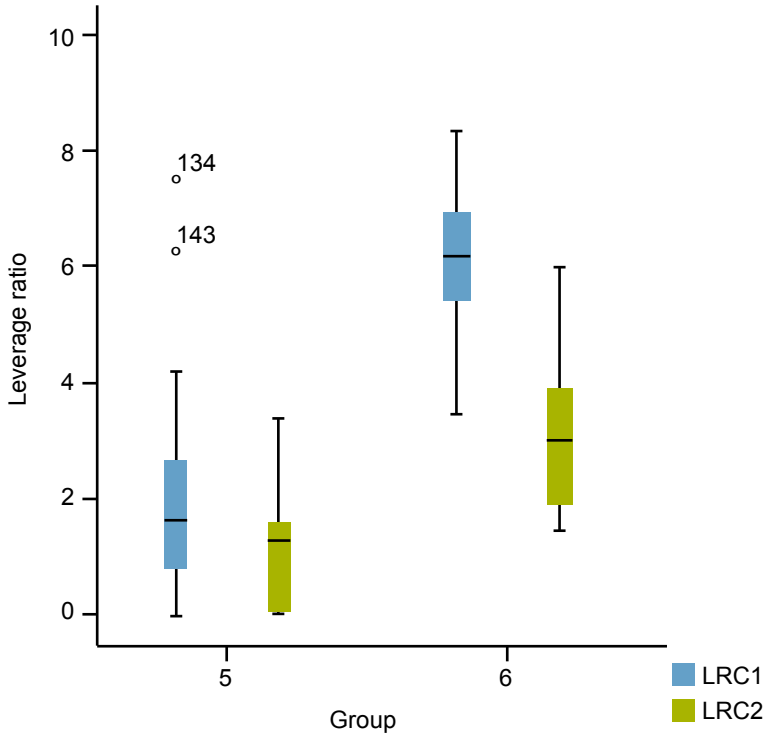
Source: Authors' own

Figure 3.19 Groups 3 and 4 (Uganda) leverage factors
(blue – 1st cycle, green – 2nd cycle)



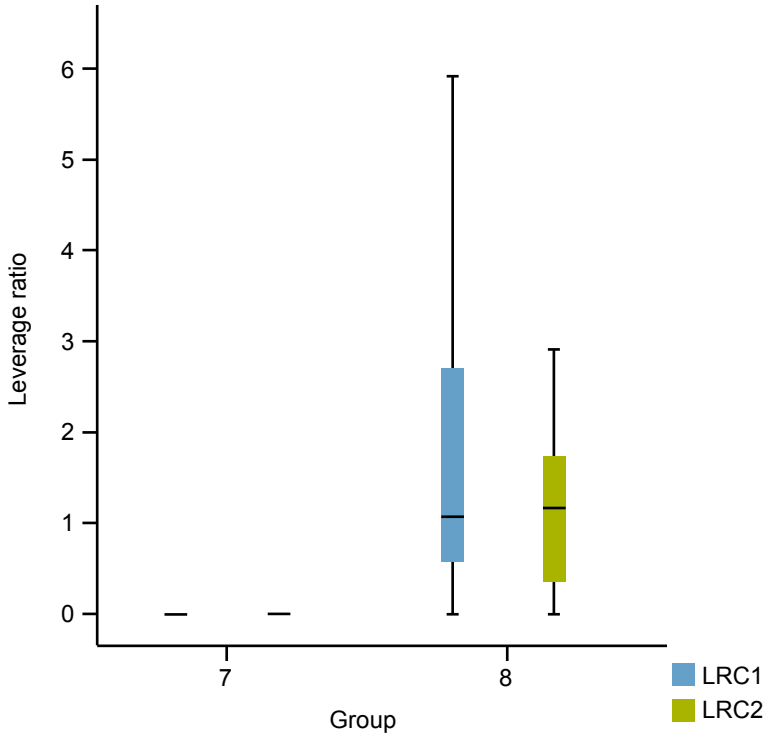
Source: Authors' own

Figure 3.20 Groups 5 and 6 (Zambia) leverage factors
(blue – 1st cycle, green – 2nd cycle)



Source: Authors' own

Figure 3.21 Groups 7 and 8 (Ghana) leverage factors
(blue – 1st cycle, green – 2nd cycle)



Source: Authors' own

cycles there is a considerable range in how intensively members use their savings to access loans. In the second cycle for Group 4, for example, while the median leverage factor was 2, one individual's leverage factor was above 6.

The correlation analysis suggests that only for Groups 2 and 8 was there statistically significant consistency in leverage rate between the 1st and 2nd cycles (Table 3.5). For Groups 1, 2 and 6 the medium leverage factor declined from the 1st cycle to the 2nd cycle, while it was stable for Groups 8 and increased slightly for Groups 3 and 4.

The correlation analysis provides no evidence of consistency in leverage factor over cycles. We were also interested to explore whether particular classes of members – e.g. older members, men or office-holders – appeared to monopolise or have greater access to the funds available to borrow. We could see no evidence for this. Older members in Group 5 seem to have borrowed more heavily than other members, but it was not clear whether other members (and particularly younger members) were disadvantaged by or had less access to loans as a result. This was not mentioned as a problem or issue by any of the interviewees.

Johnson and Sharma (2007) studied the repayment problems often faced by micro-finance initiatives and argued that these should be understood in relation to group internal dynamics and power relations, and especially the constraints to implementing sanctions on defaulters. In none of the BoC groups visited for this research did defaults on loans come across as a common problem in either the ledger or passbooks, or the interviews. Two of the interviewees reported defaulting. ID 27, a 25-year-old married woman from Zambia, defaulted on a loan in the 1st cycle. Although the group coordinator said that members are usually given a grace period of one month to repay outstanding balances at the end of a cycle, the interviewee reported that she repaid the balance in the first two months of the following cycle. She was thus given an additional month's grace period and did not incur further interest charges on the outstanding balance. She was not an officer of the group and nor did she have any other known role within the group's leadership committee.

ID 52, a 20-year-old woman from Ghana, said she defaulted on her third loan in the 2nd cycle. It was reported that in cases like this the group usually decides on a timeline for late repayment. However, the member said she was given the entire subsequent cycle to repay her outstanding balance, because the group recognised that she was otherwise a reliable saver and member of the group. She said she would repay the loan with her 3rd cycle share contributions, either at share-out or before.

ID 28, a member of Group 5 in Zambia, reported that some members in the group who had loans outstanding eventually repaid their debts before leaving the group. This included the chairperson in one instance. The coordinator of Group 8 in Ghana, who is himself a member of the group, described what happened to Ledger ID 10, who defaulted on a loan he took in the 1st cycle. He said the member went off to school and left the community after the 1st cycle and had a proxy to save in his place in the 2nd cycle. However, when the proxy was told by the group that his shares would be used to repay his debt, the proxy also left the group. One interviewee from this group reported that with the loan still unpaid at the end of the

2nd cycle, the group was going to seek recourse from the local chief. She said that going to the local police would also be an option eventually. In another case, where a young person was saving and borrowing on behalf of their mother, the mother accepted and assumed responsibility for the member's 1st cycle loan default. The coordinator said she had agreed to repay the loan in the 2nd cycle, but fell ill, and was thus now supposed to repay the loan in the 3rd cycle. The child stopped attending meetings shortly after the 2nd cycle started (presumably because of the mother's inability to contribute savings or to repay the outstanding loan). In none of these cases was the member an officer of the group or member of the committee.

3.5.5 Engagement patterns

The analysis presented in the previous sections show some consistency in savings over cycles, but limited consistency in borrowing or in leverage factor.

Here we combine savings and borrowing into a single indicator of engagement referred to as the engagement pattern. For each cycle, each of the 47 interviewees with at least two cycles of savings and borrowing data was assigned to one of four engagement patterns, with the cut-off between the high and low categories being the median savings or borrowing for a particular group and cycle:

- **Pattern 1**: High Savings, High Borrowing
- **Pattern 2**: High Savings, Low Borrowing
- **Pattern 3**: Low Savings, High Borrowing
- **Pattern 4**: Low Savings, Low Borrowing

It is important to note that this approach adopts a somewhat different view of consistency from that of the correlation analysis. The use of quartile cut-offs would have provided a more nuanced analysis, but the relatively small number of interviewees for whom two cycles of data are available make this inappropriate.

An analysis of consistency in patterns of engagement over all groups and by category is provided in Table 3.6. Overall consistency ranges from 33 per cent for Category 1 (Students) to 60 per cent for Category 4 (Working; children; not with a partner). Category 4 also has the highest percentage of consistent High Savings, High Borrowing interviewees, although with only five interviewees in this category, all of whom are women, this should be interpreted with caution.

For the category Students, savings consistency is lower than borrowing consistency (many students borrowed little, if anything), while for the other categories savings consistency is greater than or equal to borrowing consistency.

Category 4 (Working; children; not with a partner) included only women and Category 5 (Working; children; with a partner) was over 90 per cent women. No sex-disaggregated analysis of these categories is therefore required. Table 3.7 provides a sex-disaggregated analysis of engagement patterns for Categories 1 (Students) and 2 (Working; no children; not with a partner) by sex. For the students, savings was broadly similar but a higher proportion of male students was classified as high borrowers in both cycles. Engagement by male students was considerably more consistent overall, and in terms of both savings and borrowing. These same findings come through in an expanded analysis of student members

Table 3.6 Analysis of consistency of patterns of engagement over all groups and by category

1. Students

n = 15

Cycle 1	Cycle 2: HS,HB	HS,LB	LS,HB	LS,LB
HS,HB		7%	7%	
HS,LB		13%	7%	7%
LS,HB	7%		7%	7%
LS,LB		20%	7%	13%

Overall consistency	**33%**
Savings consistency	**54%**
Borrowing consistency	**74%**
HS 1st cycle	**41%**
HS 2nd cycle	**47%**
HB 1st cycle	**35%**
HB 2nd cycle	**35%**

2. Working; no children; not with a partner

n = 12

Cycle 1	Cycle 2: HS,HB	HS,LB	LS,HB	LS,LB
HS,HB	8%			25%
HS,LB	17%	17%		
LS,HB			17%	
LS,LB	8%		8%	

Overall consistency	**42%**
Savings consistency	**67%**
Borrowing consistency	**42%**
HS 1st cycle	**67%**
HS 2nd cycle	**50%**
HB 1st cycle	**50%**
HB 2nd cycle	**58%**

4. Working; children; not with a partner

n = 5

Cycle 1	Cycle 2: HS,HB	HS,LB	LS,HB	LS,LB
HS,HB	60%	20%		
HS,LB				
LS,HB				
LS,LB		20%		

Overall consistency	**60%**
Savings consistency	**80%**
Borrowing consistency	**80%**
HS 1st cycle	**80%**
HS 2nd cycle	**100%**
HB 1st cycle	**80%**
HB 2nd cycle	**60%**

5. Working; children; with a partner

n = 13

Cycle 1	Cycle 2: HS,HB	HS,LB	LS,HB	LS,LB
HS,HB	8%	23%		8%
HS,LB		8%		8%
LS,HB			8%	8%
LS,LB	15%			15%

Overall consistency	**39%**
Savings consistency	**70%**
Borrowing consistency	**47%**
HS 1st cycle	**55%**
HS 2nd cycle	**54%**
HB 1st cycle	**55%**
HB 2nd cycle	**31%**

HS = High saver; LS = Low saver; HB = High borrower; LB = Low borrower

How to read this page:

1 Each small table should be read from left to right.

2 For example, look at the **row** labelled '**HS,HB**' (High Saver, High Borrower) at the top of the table on the far left above (marked **1. Students**).

3 In Cycle 1, 14% (7% + 7%) of the 15 students were classed as **HS,HB**.

4 In Cycle 2, half (7%) of these same students were classified as **HS,LB** (High Saver, Low Borrower) and half (7%) as **LS,HB** (Low Saver, High Borrower).

5 In other words, half of the Cycle 1 HS,HB students were **consistent** in terms of their savings, and **inconsistent** in terms of their borrowing; while the other half were **inconsistent** in terms of their savings, and **consistent** in terms of their borrowing.

6 **If these students' performance had been completely consistent in terms of both their savings and their borrowing over the two cycles, all 14% would have been located in the yellow cell (indicating that they were also HS,HB in Cycle 2**).

7 Each row of each small table should be read in the same way.

Table 3.7 Analysis of consistency of patterns of engagement for categories 1 and 2, by sex

1. Students (male) n = 8

	Cycle 2			
Cycle 1	**HS,HB**	**HS,LB**	**LS,HB**	**LS,LB**
HS,HB			13%	
HS,LB		25%		
LS,HB	13%		13%	13%
LS,LB		13%		13%

Overall consistency	**51%**
Savings consistency	**64%**
Borrowing consistency	**90%**
HS 1st cycle	**38%**
HS 2nd cycle	**51%**
HB 1st cycle	**52%**
HB 2nd cycle	**39%**

1. Students (female) n = 7

	Cycle 2			
Cycle 1	**HS,HB**	**HS,LB**	**LS,HB**	**LS,LB**
HS,HB		14%		
HS,LB			14%	14%
LS,HB				
LS,LB		29%	14%	14%

Overall consistency	**14%**
Savings consistency	**42%**
Borrowing consistency	**57%**
HS 1st cycle	**42%**
HS 2nd cycle	**43%**
HB 1st cycle	**14%**
HB 2nd cycle	**28%**

2. Working; no children; not with a partner (male) n = 7

	Cycle 2			
Cycle 1	**HS,HB**	**HS,LB**	**LS,HB**	**LS,LB**
HS,HB	14%			43%
HS,LB				
LS,HB			20%	
LS,LB	14%		14%	

Overall consistency	**34%**
Savings consistency	**48%**
Borrowing consistency	**34%**
HS 1st cycle	**57%**
HS 2nd cycle	**28%**
HB 1st cycle	**77%**
HB 2nd cycle	**62%**

2. Working; no children; not with a partner (female) n = 5

	Cycle 2			
Cycle 1	**HS,HB**	**HS,LB**	**LS,HB**	**LS,LB**
HS,HB				
HS,LB	40%	40%		
LS,HB			20%	
LS,LB				

Overall consistency	**60%**
Savings consistency	**100%**
Borrowing consistency	**60%**
HS 1st cycle	**80%**
HS 2nd cycle	**80%**
HB 1st cycle	**20%**
HB 2nd cycle	**60%**

HS = High saver; LS = Low saver; HB = High borrower; LB = Low borrower

How to read this page:

1 Each small table should be read from left to right.

2 For example, look at the **row** labelled '**HS,HB**' (High Saver, High Borrower) at the top of the table on the far left above (marked **1. Students, (male)**).

3 In Cycle 1, 13% of the 8 students were classed as **HS,HB**.

4 In Cycle 2, all of these same students were classified as **LS,HB** (Low Saver, High Borrower).

5 In other words, all of the Cycle 1 HS,HB students were **inconsistent** in terms of their savings, and **consistent** in terms of their borrowing.

6 **If these students' performance had been completely consistent in terms of both their savings and their borrowing over the two cycles, all 13% would have been located in the yellow cell (indicating that they were also LS,HB in Cycle 2**).

7 Each row of each small table should be read in the same way.

Table 3.8 Expanded analysis of consistency of patterns of engagement for student members

1. Students (expanded) n = 25

	Cycle 2			
Cycle 1	**HS,HB**	**HS,LB**	**LS,HB**	**LS,LB**
HS,HB		4%	4%	
HS,LB	4%	12%	8%	12%
LS,HB	4%		4%	4%
LS,LB		20%	4%	20%

1. Students (expanded) (male) n = 11

	Cycle 2			
Cycle 1	**HS,HB**	**HS,LB**	**LS,HB**	**LS,LB**
HS,HB			9%	
HS,LB		27%		9%
LS,HB	9%		9%	9%
LS,LB		9%		18%

1. Students (expanded) (female) n = 14

	Cycle 2			
Cycle 1	**HS,HB**	**HS,LB**	**LS,HB**	**LS,LB**
HS,HB		7%		
HS,LB	7%		14%	14%
LS,HB				
LS,LB		29%	7%	21%

Overall consistency	**36%**	**54%**	**21%**
Savings consistency	**52%**	**63%**	**42%**
Borrowing consistency	**76%**	**90%**	**64%**
HS 1st cycle	**44%**	**45%**	**42%**
HS 2nd cycle	**44%**	**45%**	**43%**
HB 1st cycle	**20%**	**36%**	**7%**
HB 2nd cycle	**28%**	**27%**	**28%**

HS = High saver; LS = Low saver; HB = High borrower; LB = Low borrower

How to read this page:

1 Each small table should be read from left to right.

2 For example, look at the **row** labelled '**HS,HB**' (High Saver, High Borrower) at the top of table on the far left above (marked **1. Students (expanded)**).

3 In Cycle 1, 8% (4% + 4%) of the 25 students were classed as **HS,HB**.

4 In Cycle 2, half (4%) of these same students were classified as **HS,LB** (High Saver, Low Borrower) and half (4%) as **LS,HB** (Low Saver, High Borrower).

5 In other words, half of the Cycle 1 HS,HB students were **consistent** in terms of their savings, and **inconsistent** in terms of their borrowing; while the other half were **inconsistent** in terms of their savings, and **consistent** in terms of their borrowing.

6 **If these students' performance had been completely consistent in terms of both their savings and their borrowing over the two cycles, all 8% would have been located in the yellow cell (indicating that they were also HS,HB in Cycle 2**).

7 Each row of each small table should be read in the same way.

(Table 3.8): in addition to the 15 student interviewees, the analysis of consistency in this table used information collected from ledger and passbooks for an additional 10 student members.

Compared with the males, a higher proportion of Category 2 females were high savers in the 1st and 2nd cycles, and low borrowers in the first cycle. Engagement by females was more consistent overall, and in terms of both savings and borrowing.

3.6 Patterns of engagement: use of share-outs and loans

All interviewees were asked how they used the share-outs they had received. Many reported that share-outs were divided up and used for several purposes. In total 51 interviewees reported 100 ways that they had used their share-outs (Table 3.9 – note that this table presents reported frequency as opposed to the monetary value associated with a particular use).

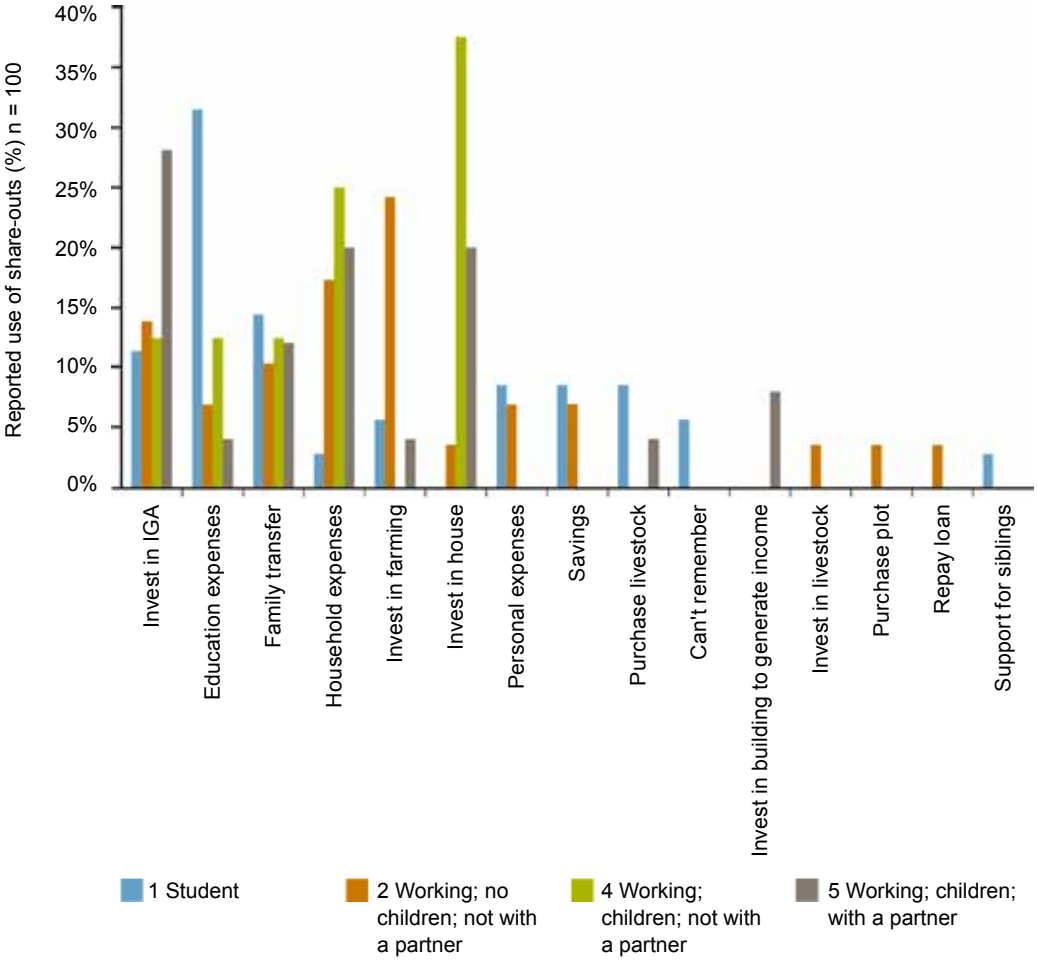
Together, investing in an income-generating activity, pWaying education expenses, paying household expenses and transferring funds to a family member accounted for 60 per cent of all reported uses. Over the short term, approximately one-third of the reported uses – i.e. investing in an income-generating activity, investing in farming, purchase of livestock, and investing in a building to generate income – might be considered as productive investments, although the line between productive investment and consumption should probably not be over-drawn.

Share-out use by category of interviewee is shown in Figure 3.22. Some important differences are apparent. Compared with the other categories, Category 5 interviewees (Working; children; with a partner) more frequently use share-outs to invest in an income-generating activity; Category 1 interviewees (Students) more frequently use them for school expenses; Category 2 interviewees (Working; no children, not with a partner) more frequently use them to invest in farming (accounting for nearly 40 per cent of reported cases) and household expenses;

Table 3.9 Reported use of share-outs (100 uses in total)

Use	%
Invest in income generating activity	16%
Education expenses	15%
Family transfer	14%
Household expenses	14%
Invest in farming	10%
Invest in house	9%
Personal expenses	5%
Savings	5%
Purchase livestock	4%
Can’t remember	2%
Invest in building to generate income	2%
Invest in livestock	1%
Purchase plot	1%
Repay loan	1%
Support for siblings	1%
Total	**100%**

Figure 3.22 Reported use of share-outs by interviewee category (100 uses in total)



Category 1: n=16, reporting 35 uses; Category 2: n=14, reporting 29 uses; Category 4: n=5, reporting 8 uses; Category 5: n=14, reporting 25 uses

Source: Authors' own

and Category 4 interviewees (Working; children; not with a partner) more frequently use their share-outs to invest in housing. The fact that Category 3 interviewees (Working; no children; with a partner) most frequently use share-outs for family transfers and household expenses is intriguing, but caution must be exercised in the light of the very small numbers involved.

Interviewees were also asked how they had used the money that had been borrowed from the savings group. As with the share-outs, many reported that individual loans were divided up and used for several purposes. In total 51 interviewees reported 185 ways that they had used the money they had borrowed (Table 3.10 – note that this table presents reported frequency as opposed to the monetary value associated with a particular use).

Investing in an income-generating activity alone accounted for 42 per cent of all reported uses, while investing in an income-generating activity, investing in farming or gardening, and loans being given, lent or used by someone else together accounted for 75 per cent of all reported uses. Over the short term, approximately two-thirds of the reported uses might be considered as productive investments

Table 3.10 Reported use of loans (185 uses in total)

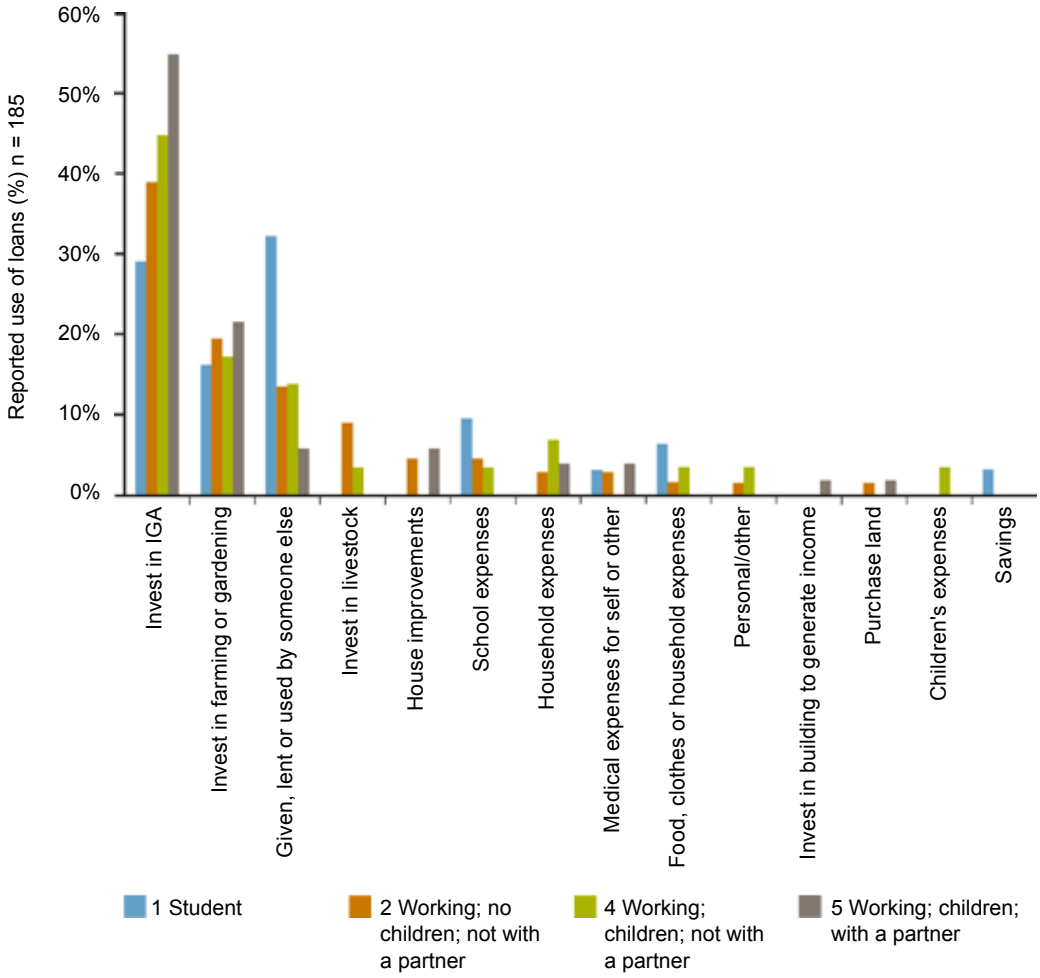
Use	%
Invest in income-generating activity	42%
Invest in farming or gardening	18%
Given, lent or used by someone else	15%
Invest in livestock	4%
House improvements	4%
School expenses	4%
Household expenses	3%
Medical expenses for self or other	3%
Food, clothes or household expenses	2%
Personal / other	2%
Invest in building to generate income	1%
Purchase land	1%
Children's expenses	1%
Savings	1%
Total	**100%**

(i.e. investing in an income-generating activity, investing in farming or gardening, investing in livestock, and investing in a building to generate income).

Reported loan use by category of interviewee is shown in Figure 3.23. Category 5 (Working; children; with a partner) more frequently reported using loans to invest in an income- generating activity than any other category. Individuals in Category 1 (Students) more frequently reported that money they borrowed from the savings group was given to, lent to or used by someone else (accounting for 30 per cent of their reported uses).

Comparing the reported uses of share-outs and loans (Table 3.11), we can conclude that overall, funds borrowed from a savings group are approximately twice as likely to be invested in income generation (investing in an income-generating activity or in farming or gardening) as are savings returned via a share-out.

Figure 3.23 Reported use of loans by category of interviewee (185 uses in total)



Category 1: n=11, reporting 31 uses; Category 2: n=15, reporting 67 uses; Category 4: n=5, reporting 29 uses; Category 5: n=17, reporting 51 uses

Source: Authors' own

Table 3.11 Comparison of reported use of share-outs and loans

Reported use	Share-outs (%)	Loans (%)
Invest in income-generating activity	16%	42%
Invest in farming or gardening	10%	18%
Given to or used by someone else	14%	15%
Education expenses	15%	4%
Household expenses	14%	3%
Other	31%	18%
Total	**100%**	**100%**

3.7 Other insights on engagement

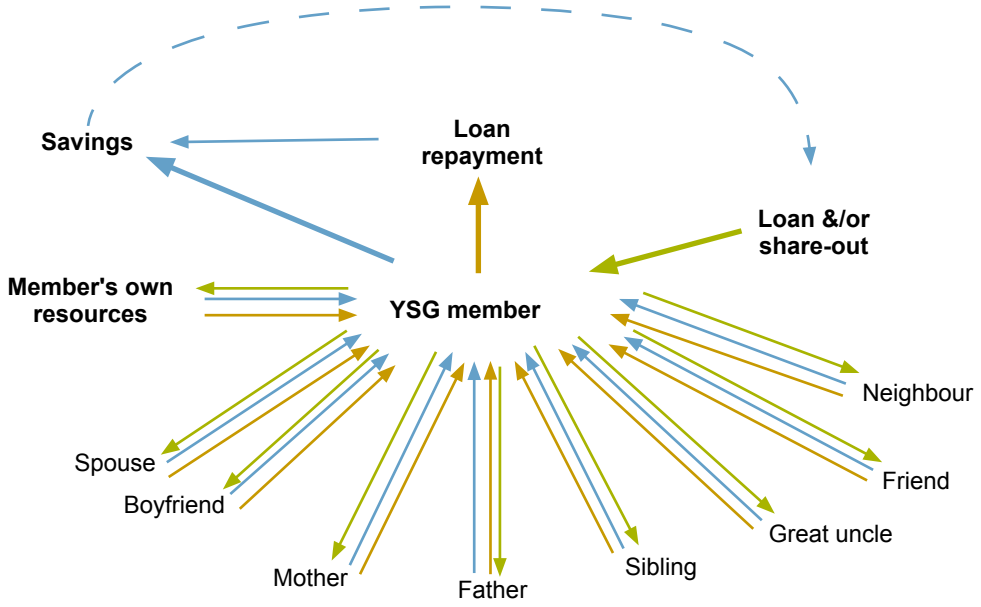
The 57 in-depth interviews shed further light on different aspects of the engagement of members with savings groups. This section summarises these insights, while more detailed analysis is given in Annexe 8.

Why people join savings groups: Some individuals joined a savings group because they wanted to learn to save; others highlighted an interest in both savings and borrowing; while others reported being only motivated by borrowing. Interest in joining often related to starting or expanding an income-generating activity or meeting family needs and expenses; in Ghana, this often included covering school expenses. Some were attracted by the safety of saving with the group. Family members and friends influence some decisions to join a savings group. Surrogate savers joined on behalf of their caregivers (most often one of their parents).

The family and social embeddedness of engagement: Savings group members use the funds of other individuals (e.g. spouse/boyfriend, parent, ex-partner, other family members), or funds from other sources (e.g. existing savings, informal loans), to save and to repay loans. In both groups in Ghana, group members who are not autonomous – i.e., who do not have income-generating activities that can sustain them independently – contribute to the savings group primarily through money they receive from their caregivers. Some are explicitly saving for their caregivers: these individuals might best be thought of as 'surrogate savers'. There are examples of members dropping out and being replaced by other family members. It is not uncommon for members to pass their share-outs and/or loans to others. Investments that members make with their share-outs are sometimes 'topped up' by spouses/partners or other family members.

Figure 3.24 depicts the flows of funds to and from family members and friends that were reported during the interviews.

Figure 3.24 Reported flows of funds from / to family members and others



Source: Authors' own

The variety of income-generating activities: Interviewees reported involvement in a wide variety of income-generating activities. The majority of these activities, particularly those of members of groups in rural areas, are essentially the same as the activities that have characterised Africa's economies for decades: small-scale agriculture and livestock, casual farm labour, mud block and charcoal making, small-scale food preparation, services such as hair plaiting, and petty trade. Activities which fall outside these well-established areas are far and few between. There are relatively few examples of economic activities that could be termed a business (in the sense of Figure 2.1). Many economic activities start out on a very small scale, and although there were a number of examples of economic activities that appeared to be on a significant growth path, this did not constitute the majority of cases. Different strategies – e.g. diversification or specialisation – are evident. There are some clear examples of members finding the trainings of direct relevance to their economic activities.

Use of additional savings vehicles and formal banking services: Some interviewees have access to and use one or more additional savings and/or banking vehicles. Some are members of other savings groups. Some use mobile money (seven of the eight who reported they use it are from Tanzania). A few have bank accounts (all three who reported having bank accounts are from Tanzania). Many see no need for a bank account, while others would like to have a bank account in the future.

Role of the group in motivating savings: A handful of interviewees reported that interaction with other group members motivates savings and engagement; and others said that the groups have a demonstration or competitive effect that drives savings.

The social fund: The social fund is appreciated, but the boundary between the social fund and borrowing can be blurred. Two cases were reported of the social fund not being available so the member took a small loan instead. There was one example of a group trying to grow the social fund by using it to invest in a 'group business'.

Suggested improvements to the savings group model: The most commonly suggested improvements to the savings group model are the provision of more training and greater access to credit. Both refresher training and skills training were mentioned repeatedly. There was some interest in training for and initiating group-based businesses. Some interviewees were interested in finding ways to increase the interest generated by savings. There was some interest in allowing members to increase their share contributions at certain meetings. There were some specific suggestions to improve how a group was run.

4 Discussion and conclusions

4.1 Discussion

This research was motivated primarily by a desire to identify and to understand different patterns of engagement with youth savings groups. A better understanding of these patterns of engagement should help make the savings groups more relevant to their members, make implementation more effective, and help guide thinking about impact and how it can be evaluated.

For many members, it would appear that engagement with the BoC savings group is one part of a larger, complex picture of savings (including other savings groups), borrowing, income generation and other financial flows. Many members save, at least in part, with funds given to them by family members or others, and some examples of surrogate savers were identified among the student members. A number of examples of share-outs and loans being given to or used by family members or other individuals were also identified, although it is important to note that there was no evidence of coercion or direct appropriation. Another aspect of the family aspect of engagement with savings groups is the replacement of a member who leaves the group with one or more other members of his or her family.

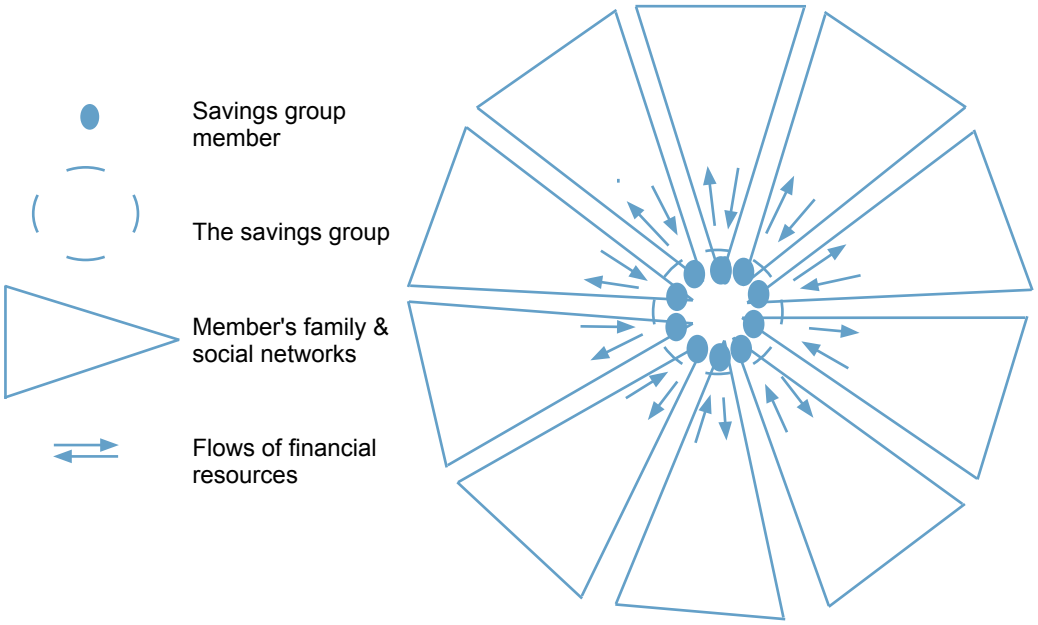
This picture is in line with Zou *et al.* (2015) who cite the importance of family and social networks in supporting student savings in the YouthSave programme in Ghana.

> In almost every case, parents and other family members were the main source of income for the youth to deposit into the YouthSave account. In some cases, this was money given to the youth for making a deposit; in other cases, it was money for food or transport that the youth chose to save instead of spend (p.69).
>
> Youth in two Sub-Saharan African countries struggle with limited resources, conflicting demands on funds, and lack of guidance, yet the youth profiled continue to save. These youth report that the people around them – parents, family members, school stakeholders, peers, and bank staff – play a major role in opening accounts and making deposits. Family members, especially parents, had either provided an example of saving for them to follow or had more directly assisted them (p.72).

For the members who rely particularly heavily on financing from their family members, relatives or friends, or who channel their financial resources into multiple savings vehicles, it follows that their pattern of engagement with the savings group may not be a very sensitive indicator of the state of, or change in, their lives or livelihoods. It also follows that it will be both conceptually and methodologically challenging to directly link changes in their livelihoods to their participation in the savings group. For the others, however, their participation in the savings group and its interaction with their lives and livelihoods may be positively linked.

The fact that for many members engagement with the savings group is a ‘family affair’ raises important questions about how group membership is conceptualised

Figure 4.1 Youth savings group membership in context: it's about much more than the member



Source: Authors' own

by the programme, how activities are targeted, and how impact is conceived and evaluated. Figure 4.1 presents a way of seeing members' engagement with the savings group: from this perspective the savings group member essentially acts as a door to a wider network of family and social relations, through which financial and other resources flow. A narrow focus on the member potentially gives an impoverished view of the dynamics and impacts of the group. Would it be possible, for example, to get a better grasp of the impacts of a savings group as they ripple through members' family and social networks?

Another area that deserves further consideration is what 'learning to save' actually means for a surrogate saver or a saver who is regularly given money to save, as compared with members who save funds generated through their own economic activity.

What did we learn about patterns of engagement with the savings groups? It is clear that different patterns of engagement can be identified and described in terms of savings rate, borrowing rate and leverage rate. In some groups the ranges of the amount saved, the amount borrowed and the leverage factor are quite considerable.

The amount saved by some individuals can be significant (e.g. 40 per cent of minimum wage for high savers). Increasing the share value was associated with a rise in savings, although part of this effect may be because share values are set at a modest level in the first cycle (this was specifically mentioned by the chairperson of Group 7, for example).

The correlation analysis indicated some consistency in savings rate over cycles but little consistency in either borrowing rate or leverage factor. Overall the lack of consistency in engagement suggests that socio-economic characteristics of

members (sex, age, marital status, number of dependants, etc.) are probably not the primary determinants of how members engage with their group. Other factors such as the ups and downs of income-generating activities, seasonality, hazard and shocks are clearly important.

The analysis provided some intriguing hints concerning the engagement patterns of different categories of members. For example, members in Category 4 (Working; children; not with a partner) were over-represented among the consistently high borrowers, and under-represented among the decreasing borrowers; while Category 1 (Students) were over-represented among the consistently low borrowers and the decreasing borrowers, and Category 2 (Working; no children; not with a partner) were over-represented among the increasing borrowers. Across all the categories, thriving income-generating activities were associated with consistently high borrowing and with increasing borrowing, while fear of borrowing was the most important factor associated with consistently low borrowing. Seasonality effects (e.g. associated with farming or the timing of the group's cycle) and constraints to borrowing caused by lower savings were associated with decreasing borrowing. Given the nature of the data at hand, it would be inappropriate to draw any specific programming implications from these findings.

The research was not designed to determine or test sex-disaggregated differences in engagement. Where sex disaggregation of engagement patterns was possible, a mixed picture emerged. Among students, engagement by males was more consistent than among females; while women in Category 2 (Working; no children; not with a partner) engaged more consistently than Category 2 men. In both cases, the relatively small numbers of members in these sub-categories means that caution is required in interpreting these findings.

One aspect of engagement that did reflect the socio-economic positions of interviewees is the use of share-outs and of borrowings. For example, students commonly use share-outs for school expenses and single parents use them to invest in housing. Similar patterns can be seen in loan use, although in general borrowed funds were more likely to be used for income-generating activities.

The potential for gaining access to loans is an important motivation for joining and engaging with savings groups. Our data suggest that the use of a significant number of loans might best be described as regulating cash flow – a kind of short-term overdraft facility. For example, many of the loans that supported income-generating activities were used to purchase relatively small lots of stock (fish, oil, tomatoes) for re-sale. The interviewees obviously found this beneficial. However, if credit (or share-outs for that matter) is not being used to invest in capital goods or equipment, technology, or skills acquisition – any of which might provide a basis for larger-scale and/or more profitable operations – it raises important questions about the magnitude of the livelihood impacts that might be expected from group membership.

The income-generating activities in which interviewees from rural savings groups are involved are, by and large, small-scale and entail low levels of skill, technology, investment and return. Many of the rural interviewees are involved at some level with farming, gardening or livestock, and the research provides evidence that the seasonality effects associated with these activities can impact on savings.

Some of these income generating activities have grown, but we observed only a few examples of activities that might be moving toward something that could reasonably be described as a business.

The notion of empowerment is often associated with participation in savings groups, and the research provided some glimpses of this. For example, through their participation in the groups, some members – particularly women – had made or were planning investments in assets such as land or housing so that they could take better care of themselves and their children in the event of a separation from their partners. Other members, both men and women, also reported gaining increased confidence and respect from their families and communities through their participation in YSGs.

Variations were observed in how the savings group model is being implemented (e.g. homogeneity of members, frequency of meetings, cycle length, types of documentation, procedures relating to late payment of loans, etc.). Some variations reflected decisions made at the level of the groups, while others reflected country-level programming decisions.

The internal dynamics of the savings groups was not the primary focus of the research. Nevertheless, some important insights emerge. For example, people join savings groups for various reasons: to learn to save, to gain access to credit, or at the suggestion of family or friends. Some members reported that the group motivated them to save more and that they appreciated the support of other members; others were less positive about what they saw as intrusion into their affairs. It is reasonable to suspect that group dynamics will reflect the stability (or instability) of group membership. We were not able to explain why some groups had relatively low and others relatively high turnover of members, and this deserves further attention.

Training is one of the inputs provided by the BoC programme directly to the savings group members. Although this research was not designed to test or evaluate the impact of training on patterns of engagement, many of those interviewed cited the importance of the training they had received and expressed interest in both refresher training on financial matters and vocational and skills training. It is possible that the interest in vocational training reflects a perceived need on the part of members to upgrade their economic activities because of low margins and market saturation. If this were found to be the case, then the priority given to vocational or skills training relative to, for example, financial literacy or enterprise training, would need to be reviewed.

Some of the interviewees use mobile money and a few have bank accounts. A number of others expressed interest in having a bank account at some point in the future. In the meantime some members are effectively bumping up against the inherent limitations of the savings group model. For example, savings limits mean that some are members of more than one group, with the additional associated transaction costs, or are forced to find other means to save. In most groups there is no facility to roll-over a share-out, which would allow a more flexible approach to savings. This points to a possible gap between participating in the savings group on the one hand and having a formal bank account on the other. Is there a savings product that can fill this gap? Some interviewees seem to be using mobile money as an easily accessible but more formal saving channel, but it does not provide the opportunity to borrow, nor to accumulate interest.

The members we interviewed made a number of suggestions as to how it could be further improved. Some of these were relatively minor, such as increasing the share price or moving from monthly to weekly or bi-weekly meetings (e.g. in Zambia). Other suggested changes were more fundamental, like bringing in other funds to increase the amount of credit available, or starting group-based businesses.

4.2 Conclusions

Overall

For most of the interviewees, BoC savings groups are one element of a complex picture of financial transactions and flows. Members do not engage with savings groups as isolated economic actors. Rather their engagement reflects the fact that members are deeply embedded in family and social relations and networks, and that these networks play an important role in structuring financial relationships, behaviour and outcomes. This is particularly true for students and other younger members.

The vast majority of interviewees spoke positively about their engagement with the savings group. In a number of areas the interviews pointed towards changed attitudes and behaviours, and many interviewees reported using share-outs and loans to make valued improvements in their own lives and the lives of others.

At the same time, most of the income-generating activities that the interviewees are engaged in could be characterised as low skill, low investment, limited technology and low margin. There were some examples of activities that were growing, and a few looked poised to develop into more profitable businesses.

Overall, it is clear that engagement with a savings group can yield some positive benefits. Nevertheless, this research, with all its many limitations, found little evidence of what some have claimed to be the transformational effects of savings group membership (see, e.g.: Allen and Panetta 2010). Indeed, given the rural economic contexts that many members find themselves in, the complex financial context described above, and the types of income-generating activities that most members engage in, this should not be surprising. It is possible that transformational effects will become evident over the longer term, but that is beyond the scope of this research.

Until and unless there are more fundamental shifts to the rural economic context, shifts that would support upgrading of income-generating activities (e.g. through investment in skills, equipment and/or technology, or increases in scale), or investment in a whole new range of activities, we suggest that the effects of group membership on the income and economic security of members are likely to remain constrained.

Youth, young people, students

The research very clearly highlights the limitations of the term youth as an analytically meaningful category. While all are members of youth savings groups, the interviewees are in very different positions in terms of dependency, the ability to act autonomously and the responsibilities they carry. While there is more homogeneity within than between groups, the diversity of members is reason to reflect on some aspects of the programme. Can, for example, the same sorts of

training (or any other particular aspect of the model) be equally relevant to both a 14-year-old student and a 33-year-old mother of four?

Instead of an age-based classification system (i.e. defining youth as including everyone between x and y years old), there is a strong rationale for taking account of factors such as the level of responsibility carried by an individual (e.g. full-time students versus unmarried working mothers).

Savings groups are a 'family affair'

One of the most important findings of this research is that for a significant number of members, engagement with a savings group both depends on and feeds broader networks of family and social relations. In other words, members do not engage with savings groups as individual or isolated economic actors. The interviews provided many examples of sharing, joint action and cooperation – funds given to buy shares; the transfer of share-outs and loans; and co-investment – involving spouses, partners, parents, caregivers and friends. While there were a few examples of women wanting to keep their spouses in the dark about some of their saving or investment activities, no examples were encountered of unilateral appropriation or coercion in relation to share-outs or borrowing. The considerable help that is given to students by parents and caregivers so that they can save, and the phenomenon of surrogate savers, provides an intriguing hint at the role that savings groups may play in inter-generational transfers, and particularly in respect of educational expenses (although, as noted earlier, Cameron and Ananga [2015] found that the effects of savings groups on education expenses were diverse).

In the view of the research team, this finding has critically important implications for how membership is conceived, how activities like training are targeted and evaluated, and how the benefits and impacts of savings groups are conceived and estimated.

Training

BoC prioritises training in financial literacy, enterprise and employability skills. However, it was never the intention to design this research to provide robust conclusions about the efficacy or impacts of these training activities.[7] There was no way, for example, to determine the effect of training on savings or borrowing patterns, or on the success of income-generating activities. Given the lack of consistency that characterised individual engagement patterns overall, it is unlikely that even with a different research design it would be possible to discern specific effects of training.

Most of those interviewed spoke highly of the training they had received; some spontaneously repeated key messages from the training; and a few cited specific examples of how they had made use of the training in their income-generating activities. Again, many said that the trainings increased their motivation to save, and expressed a desire for more training, both refresher and skills or vocational training. To the degree that more broadly conceived vocational and skills training can support the much-needed upgrading of members' income-generating activities, training along these lines should become a much more central aspect of the savings group model.

7 We understand that BoC has an ongoing Randomised Control Trial on the impact of its FL training activities.

Annexes

Annexe 1 Research methodology

Field work took place in three phases between April 2015 and August 2015. The various steps of the research process included: country selection; group selection; initial meetings with selected group; interviewee selection; interviews and 'business visits' with individual members; and data analysis.

In selecting four countries from the seven in which BoC works, a number of factors were considered, including: a focus on Africa (and the various regions where the project is being implemented – West, Southern and East), the need for a mix of NGO partners (either Plan International or CARE) the availability of savings data, and staff interest and availability. This process resulted in the selection of Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Ghana.

An initial visit was made to Tanzania 27–30 April with the primary aim of determining whether the groups would allow their financial information (ledger books) to be photographed, and whether this information could be analysed to show different patterns of engagement with the group. Following this, between 13 June and 12 July, two-week visits were made first to Tanzania and then to Uganda, during which additional financial information was collected, group discussions held and individual interviews conducted. During the period 3–29 August, two-week visits were made first to Zambia and then to Ghana, where again financial information was collected, group discussions held and individual interviews conducted.

In total the field work included engagement with eight savings groups in four countries, and resulted in a total of 57 individual interviews.

The field work was carried out by a research team composed of a research leader (Justin Flynn – IDS), Plan and CARE staff members (either field officers, or

Annexe Table A1.1 Supporting partner organisations and staff members by country and group

Country	NGO partner and participating staff	LIP partners
Tanzania	Plan Tanzania Kessia Chonjo, Angelina Anthony	UHIKI
Uganda	CARE Uganda Alfred Ariko, Marie Ediu	Group 3: SEPSPEL Group 4: FURA
Zambia	Plan Zambia Adrian Kanyamale, Albert Chibuye	None
Ghana	Group 7: CARE Ghana Hardi Mohammed, Seth Frinpong Mensah Group 8: Plan Ghana Sulemana Gbana, Joyce Asamoah, Gilbert Yinbil	Group 7: ABOFAP Group 8: FYSSO

M&E or microfinance coordinators) and field officers from the local implementing partner (LIP) (Annexe Table A1.1). The research leader led the interview and group discussions while benefiting from support from NGO and local implementing partner staff. This support came mainly in the way of the provision of translation, but also clarifications of group and country-level dynamics and activities. At times, they also contributed relevant questions.

Group selection

Six groups in each country were shortlisted, from which two groups were selected for visits and interviews. Group selection was based primarily on the following criteria:

- **Inclusion in the baseline:** Groups that were included in the baseline were prioritised in the shortlisting and group selection. However, non-baseline groups were also shortlisted in Tanzania and Ghana to allow for differences in group characteristics such as geographical setting (i.e. urban/rural), training profiles and implementing partners.
- **Completion of at least one full savings cycle:** This was to make sure there were enough financial data to allow for the identification of different savings and borrowing patterns.
- **Location:** In Tanzania, groups were selected on the basis of being located in either rural or urban areas. In the other countries, all groups were in rural areas or small towns. In Ghana, however, groups were purposely selected from the operational areas of the two BoC partners, who operate in different areas of the country.
- **Presence of an adequate number of female members aged between 15 and 24:** The exception here was the Tanzania urban group – like most groups in Tanzania this one is composed largely of older members (>24 years of age).
- **Difference in training profiles, especially Enterprise Your Life (EYL):** Differences in other training profiles (e.g. Financial Literacy – FL) were more difficult to find, particularly for groups in their second cycles. An equal number of groups with and without EYL training was shortlisted.

Based on these criteria, a shortlist of groups was developed for each country. These lists were then discussed with BoC country teams and final selections made.

Initial meetings

Initial meetings were held with the selected groups to introduce the research. In some cases these meetings coincided with their scheduled share meetings; in other cases special meetings were held. With some small variations, meetings proceeded along the lines given below.

Introductions

The research team introduced itself, stated the purpose of the visit, and indicated its desire to interview individuals on the basis of differences in savings and borrowing. Permission to collect (i.e. photograph) the group's financial information was sought. Members were asked to fill in (or provide the information to fill in) a roster sheet with their details (i.e. names, age, sex, occupations). Finally, members were asked to allow 20 minutes for a group discussion at the end of the meeting (this step was not included in the meeting with the first Tanzania group, as we had already conducted a group discussion with them a month and a half prior to this visit). Introductions usually lasted between 10 and 20 minutes.

Photographing of group financial information

Ledger books and passbooks were photographed when they were not being used during the share meeting. This usually took 15–30 minutes in total, depending on the number available. All available passbooks were photographed in Uganda and Ghana because all the loans (and savings for Ghana) are only recorded in the passbooks. Passbooks were partially photographed in one of the two Tanzania groups – to check ledger accuracy, while in Zambia, all available passbooks were also photographed, but these were only partially complete and thus only provided part of members' financial information.

Roster sheets

The roster sheets were important because they provided basic information for those members who did not complete the baseline. Because names, sex and age were provided in the Ugandan ledgers, only their occupations were collected on the roster sheet. Filling in the roster sheet took between 15 and 30 minutes.

Group discussions

The group discussions took place at the end of the group meetings. On average, 3–4 questions were asked to each group. The questions addressed a number of themes, some having emerged from recommendations from previous reports (i.e. Youth Savings Group Model – Consultation Paper and the research team's previous visit to Tanzania); others having emerged as topics of discussion within individual interviews prior to the group discussion; and others from group-specific characteristics (e.g. linkage to a bank). Most questions, however, were related to members' engagement with the savings group, e.g. how their financial behaviours had changed or evolved since joining the group, and whether particular factors influenced members' financial behaviour in the group – and if so, how. It is important to note that group members also had questions for the research team. However, questions were primarily of programmatic concern, and were thus mostly addressed by national and local implementing staff members. While the group discussions lasted on average 20–25 minutes, answers and discussions arising from group members' questions sometimes took equally long to address.

Selection of interviewees

As indicated above, interviewees were selected on the basis of different saving and borrowing patterns and their participation in both cycles, as well as baseline survey status, age and sex.

Overall, a mix of higher and lower savers was achieved in all the groups. A mix of higher and lower borrowers was also achieved, particularly for the Tanzania groups. For the Uganda groups, analysis of loan behaviour was more difficult as they were not recorded in the ledgers. Given the limited time available to identify interviewees (about a 2–3 hour window in the evening after the group meeting), the identification process was focused instead on saving patterns, age, sex and baseline status. Identification of precise savings patterns within a short window of time was possible for the second Uganda group as the amounts of shares bought thus far in each cycle were aggregated throughout the ledger, which facilitated cross-member and cross-cycle comparison. In some cases, because of time constraints, some members needed to be interviewed on the same day as the group meetings. This left essentially no time to analyse their data; however, indications of passbook photographs (e.g. a passbook full of stamps) as well as inclusion in the baseline (known before meeting the group) were used to select individuals of interest. Members in Zambia were primarily selected on the basis of the consistency of their participation throughout the cycles, i.e. active members with longer participation in the groups (and meeting the age and sex criteria) were prioritised. In Ghana, members were mainly selected on the basis of their saving and borrowing behaviours, since most members were in or around the right age range.

Annexe 2 provides more detail on the individuals selected for interview relative to the other members of their groups. The strategy used to identify group members for interview was not meant to yield a representative sample of BoC participants, but rather to capture the range of savings and borrowing patterns. This must be borne in mind as the findings are presented.

Interviews and business visits

Once members were selected they were usually notified of the team's interest in interviewing them by the LIP staff member a day or two in advance. Some members were interviewed immediately after the group meetings. In Tanzania, interviewees were most often met at the group meeting location. This approach was problematic as it tended to make later interviewees gather and wait at the meeting point until their turn to be interviewed. In some cases, interviewees waited for several hours before being interviewed, as they were sometimes the third interviewee on that day. Furthermore, it put the research team under greater pressure to conduct the interviews quickly. LIP staff members and group members alike made comments regarding the waiting times. To avoid such problems, later interviews were conducted at their homes or places of business.

A number of people were present for the interviews, including the member (and in the case of interviews with minors, parents were also sometimes present), interpreter (there was sometimes more than one), the group coordinator, community resource person (CRP), community-based trainer (CBT) or village agent (VA), and the research team leader (Justin) who conducted the interview and took detailed notes of the discussion.

The research team engaged with individuals on the basis of informed and freely given consent. The team used the following protocol to obtain this consent:

1 The objective of the research was explained.

2 The nature of the individual's requested participation was explained.

3 The following statements were then read to the individual:

- You are under no obligation to participate in this research – your involvement should be completely voluntary. Do you understand?
- You are free to stop or leave the interview at any time and for any reason. Do you understand?
- We will anonymise all information you provide and all information gathered from the group. Your identity will be hidden – there will be no links between the information and you. This is to protect your right to privacy. Do you understand?
- If we take any pictures of you, your home or your work environment, we will only use these pictures in future research reports or publications with your consent. Do you understand?

4 The individual was then asked:

- Do you understand all of these statements? Do you have any questions about them?
- Do you agree to participate in the research on this basis?

The date, time, location and nature of the participant's response was recorded in the research notebook. Each interview was conducted with at least two people – the IDS researcher and one or more BoC or LIP staff members. One of the accompanying staff members countersigned the recording of the statement in the research notebook, thus providing a witness statement. Many members also signed to confirm that they gave consent.

If the group member agreed to participate, and if the member was aged 18 or over, the interview proceeded. If the group member agreed to participate, but was aged less than 18, the research team then sought consent from a parent or legal guardian, using the same protocol outlined above. The interview only proceeded if consent was given by both the member and the parent or legal guardian.

The interviews were open-ended and explored a number of areas including a member's income-generating activities, family situation, motivations for joining the group, savings and use of loans and share-outs, trainings, challenges and possible improvement to the model. On average, interviews lasted approximately 1.5–2 hours. A total of 57 individual interviews were completed.

In some cases a 'business visit' also took place, with the aim of observing the member's economic activities. The limited time available and the fact that many economic activities are part-time or seasonal meant that only a limited number of such visits were possible.

Annexe 2 Short biographies of interviewees, by group

Group 1, Tanzania

Unique ID 1, a 33-year-old married woman, is a member of Group 1. She completed Form 4. She has three children in school, the oldest having been born when she was 21 years old. Her current economic activity consists of cooking and selling samosas. She previously tried to set herself up selling charcoal (which is illegal unless one is in possession of the proper registration documents) but her first load was confiscated by the police and she lost everything. She is currently investing in a *jiko* (cooking stove) income-generating activity. Her husband is a carpenter. Her savings rate is 68 per cent and she has taken three loans, to a total value of at least TZS 550,000 (~£171) (her third loan was not recorded in the ledger book). She is enthusiastic, jovial and positive, despite having encountered some challenges in her income-generating activity proceedings thus far.

Unique ID 2, a 22-year-old single woman, is a member of Group 1. She completed Form 4 and is employed in a male salon where she cuts hair and does massage and nail-cutting. She has also established an M-PESA (mobile money) business (which is run by someone else) and has dabbled in selling handbags. She would like to establish a food-selling income-generating activity. She was encouraged to join the group by her sister who is also in the group. Her savings rate is 100 per cent and she has taken three loans to a total value of TZS 500,000 (~£153). She uses mobile money and has a bank account.

Unique ID 3, a 21-year-old married woman, is a member of Group 1. She completed Form 4. She was married in 2013 and her only child was born a year and a half ago (when she was 19 years old). Her economic activity consists of repackaging bulk soap powder and hawking it. She is also investing to start a '*kef*' (small snack bar) income-generating activity, and talks of establishing a decorations income-generating activity. Her husband is an electrician. She joined the group to be able to save money. She says that 'at home, it's difficult to save; it's easier to save with the group'. Her savings rate is 88 per cent and she has taken one loan of TZS 50,000 (~£15) to start the soap income-generating activity. She appeared happy and content with the savings group although she did remark that her income-generating activity was slowing down as other people in the neighbourhood had started to do the same kind of activity.

Unique ID 4, a 23-year-old woman, is a member of Group 1 and is also its chairperson. She completed Form 2 with the support of Plan International. She comes from a modest background; her father is a cook at a hotel in Dar es Salaam, and her mother works as a 'house girl' with an Asian family. She has a two-year-old child and they live with her parents. She is not married to the child's father but is in a relationship with him. She works in a hairdressing salon and also does hairdressing on her own account. She was attracted to the group by the fact that she could save money and make a profit from her shares. Her savings rate is 68 per cent and she has taken five loans to a total value of TZS 675,000 (~£206). She was 'overwhelmed' by the size of the share-out (TZS 300,000 or ~£90), which she spent on personal items including a mattress.

Unique ID 5, a 30-year-old married woman, is a member of Group 1. She has a six-year-old son. Her economic activities include making and selling *mandazi* (fried doughnuts) and running a general store and bar. Her savings rate is 100 per cent and she has taken three loans to a total value of TZS 790,000 (~£241). During the interview she was lively, in-tune, and focused on what was going on.

Unique ID 6, a 23-year-old single woman, is a member of Group 1 and is its treasurer. She is the daughter of the CRP (who is also a businesswoman) and her

Annexe Table A2.1 Group 1, Tanzania: Interviewees in their group context (those in red were interviewed)

Number of original members	Number of original members still in the group	In baseline?	Number	Age range	Age	Number	Gender	Ledger ID	Unique ID
30	25	Yes	10	15–24	21	3	F	2	3
					23			5	
					23			17	4
				>24	49	7		14	
					35			20	
					35			8	
					27			1	7
					35			9	
					30			4	
					29			15	
		No	15	15–24	22	2	F	26	2
					23			3	6
				>24	27	9		22	
					30			16	5
					30			10	
					33			12	1
					40			19	
					40			28	
					45			23	
					48			13	
					49			29	
				Unknown		4		30	
								11	
								24	
								27	

Annexe Table A2.2 Group 1, Tanzania: Economic activities

Unique Interview ID	Current work	Previous work	Future work	Spouse's / boyfriend's [parents'] work
1 F, 33 years	Sells samosas	Charcoal selling – Failed	Sell *jiko* cooking *stoves*	Husband – Carpenter
2 F, 22 years	Hairdressing (employed in another's saloon) M-PESA business Selling handbags		Food-selling income-generating activity	
3 F, 21 years	Soap hawking		'*Kef*' income-generating activity Decorations income-generating activity	Husband – Electrician
4 F, 23 years	Hairdressing Own hairdressing income-generating activity			Boyfriend – waiter in hotel [Father – cook in hotel in Dar es Salaam; Mother – casual 'house girl']
5 F, 30 years	*Mandazi* (fried doughnuts) General store and bar			
6 F, 23 years	Sells East African chocolate treats	Selling 'girl stuff'	Buy motorcycle and hire it out Continue university education	[Mother – CRP and businesswoman; Father – security guard for Dar es Salaam port]
7 F, 27 years	Hairdressing income-generating activity (from home)	Hair plaiting in a salon		Boyfriend – employee at harbour (now unemployed)

father is a security guard with the Dar es Salaam port authority. She is currently studying actuarial science at university. Her economic activity involves selling chocolate treats that come from Zanzibar (her father helps retrieve them from the port). She sells mostly on her university campus. In addition to continuing her university education she plans to purchase a motorcycle that can be rented out. Her savings rate is 100 per cent and she has taken three loans to a total value of TZS 750,000 (~£229) to invest in a friend's M-PESA business. She gave her first share-out to her mother to use as she wished.

Unique ID 7, a 27-year-old woman, is a member of Group 1. She has two children, the oldest is seven and a half. She lives with her boyfriend (the father of the children), who used to work as a carpenter at the port of Dar es Salaam, but lost his job about a year ago. This was a real 'shock'. She does hair-plaiting from her home, having previously worked in a salon. Her plan is to eventually establish her own salon. She also boosts their income through two tenants who live in the house. Her savings rate is 68 per cent and she has taken three loans to a total of TZS 300,000 (~£90). She seemed embarrassed about the fact that she had used the share-out for household expenses. She uses mobile money but does not have a bank account.

Annexe Table A2.1 provides information that helps situate the interviewees in relation to the other members of their respective groups.

Annexe Table A2.2 summarises information about the economic activities of the interviewees from Group 1, and where available, those of their immediate family members.

Group 2, Tanzania

Unique ID 8, a 22-year-old married women, is a member of Group 2 and is also its secretary. She completed Standard 7 and was selected to go to high school, but at 15 she became pregnant with her first child. She has since had one other child. Both she and her husband are farmers and casual labourers, and he also cuts wood for charcoal. She reports that their income is low. Before joining the group she went to a share-out meeting for another group, and saw the lump sums being paid out. Her primary motivations to join were to save money and access loans in case of emergencies, and to cater for family needs. She is a 30-per-cent saver and has taken two loans to a total value of TZS 160,000 (~£48). Her share-out and one of the loans were used to buy food and family needs. The other loan was used to support their farming activities. She is soft-spoken, but focused and alert.

Unique ID 9, a 36-year-old divorced woman, is a member of Group 2. She completed Standard 7. She has three children – the two oldest boys have dropped out of school but the girl is in boarding secondary school. Her economic activities consist of operating a small general store in the village (she started with a stall selling vegetables and fish) and growing vegetables for sale (two crops per year, one under irrigation). After her divorce, she says she was 'just sleeping' – not doing very much in her home village. Her mother was in a carry-over group and talked to her about it. She says she wanted to know how to save money, and have a reliable access to loans. Her savings rate is 105 per cent (members of this group are allowed to buy additional shares during the first four weeks of a savings cycle) and she has taken three loans to a total value of TZS 370,000 (~£111) (though only one loan is recorded in the ledgers). She seems to have a steady income stream, and relatively few expenses. She plans to use the next share-out to replace her wood house with one made from blocks. She is very talkative, confident, focused and alert.

Unique ID 10, a 20-year-old single man, is a member of Group 2. He completed Standard 7. He lives with his mother and three younger brothers, all of whom are in school. The father is a mechanic in Dar es Salaam. He runs a house-painting business, having previously served as a painter's apprentice. He employs two workers. During the rainy season when the painting business is slow he works for other tradesmen in town to improve his skills. His savings rate is 83 per cent and he has taken two loans to a total value of TZS 500,000 (~£150) – the first to buy land and the second to invest in materials and equipment for the painting business. He bought bricks for a house with his first share-out. He has a bank account.

Unique ID 11, a 26-year-old married woman, is a member of Group 2. She completed Standard 7. She has two children, and the oldest is eight. Her husband farms a one-acre plot they own by the river. Her motivations for saving money are to own her own assets, such as a plot and a house. She used to work in a small

Annexe Table A2.3 Group 2, Tanzania: Interviewees in their group context (those in red were interviewed)

Number of original members	Number of original members still in the group	In baseline?	Number	Age group	Age	Number	Gender	Number	Ledger ID	Unique ID
12	9	No	9	<15	14	1	M	1	8	12
				15–24	22	5	F	3	3	8
					22				11	13
					24				1	
					20		M	2	12	10
					22				5	
				>24	26	3	F	2	9	11
					36				10	9
					25		M	1	2	14

restaurant but for the last five months she has been repackaging soap powder and selling it. She got the idea for this income-generating activity from the EYL training. One particular challenge she faces is recouping payment for soap that is sold on credit. Eventually she would like to set herself up to sell vegetables in the market. Her savings rate is 97 per cent and she has taken two loans to a total value of TZS 175,000 (~£52). They were used to buy a plot in another community. She is involved in another 'merry-go-round' saving scheme.

Unique ID 12, a 14-year-old boy, is a member of Group 2. He is the last-born of eight siblings and a student in Form 1. He reports that his father farms on a 'big plot' and sometimes leases land to other farmers. His economic activities consist of collecting cashew nuts with his brothers from his father's land. He also reports having purchased Chinese-made clothing for re-sale to his peers. He has been accepted to attend a government secondary school, and in the future would like to be a medical doctor plus run a business such as a pharmacy or hospital. His savings rate is 51 per cent and he has taken two loans to a total value of TZS 240,000 (~£72). One was for school fees which his brothers helped pay back. Half of the second loan was also for school fees, while the rest was used by his father to buy seeds and pay labour. His father gave him the money to repay that loan.

Unique ID 13, a 22-year-old married woman, is a member of Group 2. She completed Standard 4, but dropped out because family circumstances meant the fees could not be paid. She married at 18 and has a 4-year-old girl. She joined the group because she heard good things about the savings group from her neighbours. She wanted to cater for her child's and family's needs (e.g. clothes, food), and for added security for her family (i.e. she mentioned access to loans). She farms for home consumption and for the last year has been making and selling samosas and fried cassava. Her husband is a casual farm worker. Her plan is to buy a plot, build

Annexe Table A2.4 Group 2, Tanzania: Economic activities

Unique Interview ID	Current work	Previous work	Future work	Spouse's/boyfriend's [parents'] work
8 F, 22 years	Farmer Casual labourer			Husband – farmer, cutting trees for charcoal, casual labour
9 F, 36 years	Operates small general store Farms for commercial purposes	Stall selling vegetables and small fish Farming		
10 M, 20 years	House painting Day labouring in off season	Apprentice painter		[Father – mechanic in Dar es Salaam]
11 F, 26 years	Laundry-soap selling	In a small restaurant	Selling vegetables in the market	Husband – farmer
12 M, 14 years	Student Collects cashews from father's land Sells clothing		Doctor, plus a business such as a pharmacy or a hospital	[Father – farmer on big plot]
13 F, 22 years	Makes/sells samosas and fried cassava Farms for home consumption		Rent out building	Husband – Casual farm worker
14 M, 25 years	Trades and sells maize flour	Cashew trading	Open wholesale shop	

a house and rent it out. She got this plan from the CRP during the EYL training. Her savings rate is 70 per cent and she has taken three loans to a total value of TZS 250,000 (~£75). The loans were used for household expenses and stock for her income-generating activity, and some funds were given to her husband.

Unique ID 14, a 25-year-old single man, is a member of Group 2 and also serves as one of the group's money-counters. He completed Form 4 and lives with his parents. He previously traded in cashews but this was not very successful. His current economic activity consists of buying and milling maize, and selling the flour to small shops in the surrounding area. He reports selling 5–10 180 kg sacks per week. His business is doing well and is growing – to the extent that he has managed to buy a small plot of land for himself. He would like to open a wholesale shop and buy a motorcycle to help transport the flour. His savings rate is 105 per cent (see note above at Unique ID 9 about being able to buy additional shares) and he has taken three loans to a total value of TZS 360,000 (~£111), all of which were related to the maize flour business.

Annexe Table A2.3 provides information that helps situate the interviewees in relation to the other members of their respective groups.

Annexe Table A2.4 summarises information about the economic activities of the interviewees from Group 2, and where available, those of their immediate family members.

Group 3, Uganda

Unique ID 15, a 25-year-old married woman, is a member of Group 3. She completed Secondary School 1. She has three children, and the oldest is six. Her economic activities include tailoring, farming and trading tomatoes, but it is through tailoring that she derives most of her income. Her husband farms and is a motorcycle driver. She appears to be of modest means but not extremely poor. Her savings rate is 39 per cent and she has taken four loans to a total value of UGX 370,000 (~£68). She explains her low savings rate by the seasonal nature of the tailoring business, the fact that her house burned down during the first cycle and the ups and downs of farming. She also saves with a different savings group. The first loan was used to buy a sewing machine, the second to buy materials for the income-generating activity.

Unique ID 16, a 28-year-old married man, is a member of Group 3. He completed Primary 7. He has four living children, and the oldest is 11. He used to be a *boda-boda* (bicycle taxi) rider, transporting people around Busia town and to and from the Kenya border. Now he engages in a number of economic activities including farming with his wife on a 1.5-acre rented plot; making bricks; making and selling doughnuts (in 2007/08 he was employed to cook doughnuts in Kenya). He is also a member of another savings group and uses mobile money. His savings rate is 93 per cent and he has taken five loans to a total of UGX 690,000 (~£127). The first loan was for the brick income-generating activity, and he invested one of the others in a silverfish venture, but this was not successful.

Unique ID 17, a 35-year-old married woman, is a member of Group 3. (This is a mother-and son-combination – the son was the original member, but his mother stepped in when he moved elsewhere. The interview is with the mother.) She completed Primary 3. She has eight living children, and the oldest is 20 (i.e. she gave birth to her first child when she was around 15). It is this 20-year-old son who was the original group member. He completed Primary 5 and is single. She farms, does casual labour and sometimes collects and sells firewood. Her husband is a farmer and casual labourer. The son worked as an agricultural labourer. Her savings rate is 30 per cent and, between the mother and son, four loans were taken to a total value of UGX 182,000 (~£33).

Unique ID 18, a 22-year-old married woman, is a member of Group 3. She completed Primary 6. The oldest of her three children is seven. She joined the group because she wanted to develop herself via saving and borrowing – indeed, she said 'you can't save when you're alone'. She farms a 1.25-acre plot of family land and also rents another 1.5-acre plot. She also sells charcoal (although she was out of stock at the time of the interview). Her husband does upkeep work on someone's house in Kampala. Because of this they don't live together. Her savings rate is 73 per cent and she has taken three loans to a total value of UGX 148,000 (~£27).

Unique ID 19, a 19-year-old single man, is a member of Group 3 and is also its treasurer. He completed Secondary 3. He lives in his own mud house on the family plot. His economic activities consist of farming and working as a DJ in a club in the evenings and on his own account at the weekends. His income is quite stable but he spends quite a lot on clothes (related to the DJ work) and his social life. He used a loan to buy medicine for the piglets he owned, but they all died. He left part-way

Annexe Table A2.5 Group 3, Uganda: Interviewees in their group context (those in red were interviewed)

Number of original members	Number of original members still in the group	In baseline?	Number	Age group	Age	Number	Gender	Number	Ledger ID	Unique ID
30	20	Yes	1	>24	25	1	F	1	7	15
		No	19	15–24	18	13	F	4	25	
					22				10	18
					24				9	
					24				20	20
					16		M	9	8	
					18				11	
					19				14	19
					20				24	17
					21				21	
					22				13	
					23				4	
					23				16	
					24				30	
				>24	30	6	F	2	3	
					30				6	
					28		M	4	18	
					28				27	16
					34				26	
					35				19	

through some training in welding which he hopes to complete, and eventually he would like to open a barbershop. His savings rate is 33 per cent and he has taken at least five loans to a total value of UGX 267,000 (~£49). He gives the impression of being eager and anxious to make money as soon as he can – i.e. making 'quick money'. He has invested in, or plans to invest in, many different income-generating activities, though he does not seem to pursue these in great depth. He speaks candidly about his activities – particularly his expenditures on 'entertainment'.

Unique ID 20, a 24-year-old married woman, is a member of Group 3. She completed Secondary 2. She has four children, and the oldest is five. Her economic activity is farming. She and her husband farm on a 2-acre family plot, and also rent another 0.5-acre plot. Her husband also has a small silverfish

Annexe Table A2.6 Group 3, Uganda: Economic activities

Unique Interview ID	Current work	Previous work	Future work	Spouse's/boyfriend's [parents'] work
15 F, 25 years	Farmer Tailor Food vendor			Husband – motorcycle driver
16 M, 28 years	Farmer Brick maker Doughnut maker	*boda-boda* (bicycle taxi) rider	Livestock	Wife – farmer, also helps with doughnut making
17 M, 20 years	Casual agricultural labourer [Son] Farmer [Mother] Casual agricultural labourer [Mother] Collects and sells firewood [Mother]			Father [Husband] – Farmer and casual labourer
18 F, 22 years	Rents land and farms Charcoal trader			Husband – does upkeep on a house in Kampala
19 M, 19 years	Farmer DJ	Piglets (all died)	Barbershop Welding	
20 F, 24 years	Farmer		Build and rent out building in town	Husband – small silverfish income-generating activity

income-generating activity. Their plans are to put up a building in town and rent it out for income. She got the idea of investing in an asset from the training. She says that she brought this idea to her husband, who approved of it, and thereafter 'he implemented it'. Her savings rate is 73 per cent and she has taken three loans in the second cycle to a total value of UGX 130,000 (~£23). She buys shares with the proceeds of farming, but when money is scarce her husband helps to cover her share contribution

Annexe Table A2.5 provides information that helps situate the interviewees in relation to the other members of their respective groups.

Annexe Table A2.6 summarises information about the economic activities of the interviewees from Group 3, and where available, those of their immediate family members.

Group 4, Uganda

Unique ID 21, a 20-year-old married woman, is a member of Group 4, and also a signatory to the group's bank account. She completed Primary 7. She married seven months ago and is now pregnant with her first child. She and the husband farm on family and rented land. She used a loan to start trading in cassava flour, but this was not successful. Three months ago she used another loan to start a duck-rearing activity (i.e. she bought two ducks). The husband also works as a truck loader. Her savings rate is 56 per cent and she has taken three loans to a total value of UGX 50,000 (~£9). She plans to use the next group share-out to buy a female pig and start a piggery. During the interview she was timid, speaking in a hushed voice.

Unique ID 22, a 16-year-old single girl, is a member of Group 4. She completed Primary 6, and lives with her mother and two older brothers. She previously helped her parents with farming and worked as a casual labourer, but for the last year and a half she has sold palm oil and tomatoes from home. She also grows beans on a rented plot. She rents the land with her own money, and keeps the profits since she has 'the full mandate' over the operation. She owns a goat and wants to invest in more. She was motivated to join the group as she expected her savings to grow by the time of the share-out and also because she felt it was a more secure place to save. Her savings rate is 89 per cent and she has taken six loans to a total value of UGX 843,000 (~£155). Her mother contributes some of the savings. The loans were used to purchase palm oil and to finance her farming activities.

Unique ID 23, a 22-year-old woman, is a member of Group 4. She completed Primary 6. She has two children, and the oldest is eight. She is no longer in contact with the children's father, who is in the army. She previously had a charcoal and cassava income-generating activity, but this was ruined by thieves. Her current economic activities include agricultural labour and selling fish which she brings from the DRC border. Her savings rate in the first cycle was only 35 per cent, but improved to 100 per cent in the second cycle, to give an overall rate of 74 per cent. She says the improvement is due to the fact that she was unhappy with the small size of the first cycle share-out, and the fact the fish income-generating activity is doing well. She has taken five loans to a total value of UGX 73,000 (~£13). The first she invested in the failed charcoal and cassava income-generating activity, the others were for the fish trade.

Unique ID 24, a 22-year-old single man, is a member of Group 4 and is its acting chairperson. He completed Primary 7, and lives with his parents and one of his siblings. His economic activities consist of farming, brick making and some building. He is raising a piglet he bought with a loan, and hopes to expand his livestock activities. His savings rate is 35 per cent and he has taken six loans to a total value of UGX 221,000 (~£40). He presents himself as a modest and honest individual. He appears to lack confidence despite being the acting chairperson.

Unique ID 25, a 20-year-old married woman, is a member of Group 4. She completed Primary 2. She has three children, and the oldest is eight (if this is correct it would make her only 12 years old at the time of her first birth). She farms on the husband's family land, and the resulting produce is for home consumption. Previously she did casual labour, but now trades in fish and charcoal. Her husband

Annexe Table A2.7 Group 4, Uganda: Interviewees in their group context (those in red were interviewed)

Number of original members	Number of original members still in the group	In baseline?	Number	Age group	Age	Number	Gender	Number	Ledger ID	Unique ID
20	20	Yes	6	15–24	16	6	F	4	17	22
					20				13	21
					21				6	
					22				7	23
					22		M	2	5	24
					24				1	
		No	14	15–24	15	14	F	11	19	
					18				9	
					18				11	
					18				12	
					18				18	
					19				15	
					20				2	
					20				20	25
					24				4	
					25				3	
					25				8	
					18		M	3	16	
					20				10	26
					24				14	

works as a baker in Kampala. Her savings rate is 93 per cent and she has taken eight loans to a total value of UGX 635,000 (~£115). The loans were used to invest in her income-generating activity and pay medical bills. She also invested her share-out in her income-generating activity. She is assertive, confident, alert and focused, and was in a hurry to go to the market (to buy more fish).

Unique ID 26, a 19-year-old single man, is a member of Group 4. He completed Primary 6 and lives at home with his parents. His economic activities include farming with his parents, brick making and trading coffee. He is also rearing a small number of pigs and chickens that he hopes to expand into a business. Eventually he hopes to open a hardware shop and to invest in a motorcycle to generate income from the transport of people. Acquiring land is also a priority. In the first cycle his savings rate was only 17 per cent, but this improved to 97 per

Annexe Table A2.8 Group 4, Uganda: Economic activities

Unique Interview ID	Current work	Previous work	Future work	Spouse's/boyfriend's [parents'] work
21 F, 20 years	Farmer Duck rearing	Cassava flour seller	Piggery	Husband – farmer and truck loader
22 F, 16 years	Palm oil and tomato vendor Rents land and farms	Casual labourer	Raise goats	
23 F, 22 years	Agricultural worker Fish seller	Charcoal and cassava selling (ruined by thieves)		Father of her children (now not in contact) – in army
24 M, 22 years	Farmer Brick maker Builder Pig raiser		Livestock	
25 F, 20 years	Farmer Fish and charcoal seller	Casual labourer		Husband – baker in Kampala
26 M, 19 years	Farmer Brick maker Coffee trader Pigs and chickens		Hardware business Motorcycle for transport	

cent in the second cycle, to give an overall rate of 64 per cent. He explains this improvement by the growth in the coffee trading activity which was made possible by the loans from the group. He has taken four loans to a total value of UGX 256,000 (~£46). The loans were invested in the coffee trading and livestock. He is serious, smart and alert, and gives the impression that he is looking for 'quick money' to achieve his goals.

Annexe Table A2.7 provides information that helps situate the interviewees in relation to the other members of their respective groups.

Annexe Table A2.8 summarises information about the economic activities of the interviewees from Group 4, and where available, those of their immediate family members.

Group 5, Zambia

Unique ID 27, a 25-year-old married woman, is a member of Group 5. She completed Grade 7, although could not sign her name. Her oldest child is seven years old, and the second five; neither goes to school. Her economic activities include maize farming which she does with her husband on his land, and which is only for home consumption. She, the husband and his second wife also produce tomatoes and other vegetables throughout the year on a smaller irrigated plot. She is also a tomato trader, collecting them from fellow gardeners and selling them in Lusaka (150 km away) and Livingstone (620 km away) with other women in the community. Her husband is a local house builder and furniture maker. She has a savings rate of 20 per cent. She has taken four loans worth ZMW 660 (~£41).

Annexe Table A2.9 Group 5, Zambia: Interviewees in their group context (those in red were interviewed)

Number of original members	Active member having participated in at least two cycles?	Number	Cycles?	In baseline?	Number	Age group	Age	Number	Gender	Number	Ledger ID	Unique ID
28	No	1	1–2	Yes	11	15–24	20	1	M	1	1	30
			2–3			<15	10	1	F	1	47	
			2–3			15–24	15	7	F	5	49	32
			2–3				17				40	
			2–3				18				36	
			1–2–3				21				7	29
			2–3				24				45	
			2–3				15		M	2	37	
			2–3				18				41	31
			1–2–3			>24	28	2	F	2	14	28
			1–2–3				40				8	
	Yes	23	2–3	No	13	<15	13	1	F	1	38	
			1–2–3			>24	25	12	F	10	20	27
			2–3				27				46	
			1–2–3				28				10	
			1–2–3				28				15	
			1–2–3				29				9	
			2–3				29				34	
			2–3				37				29	
			1–2–3				42				13	
			1–2–3				45				11	
			2–3				50				31	
			1–2–3				29		M	2	21	
			2–3				29				30	

Unique ID 28, a 28-year-old woman, is a member of Group 5 and is its secretary. She completed Grade 8. She lives with her two children – the oldest is 7 years – on a plot with her older and younger brothers and their wives. The father of the children 'has never been seen in two years'. She also caters for her late sister's two young children, one of whom is attending primary school. Her economic activities include the production of aubergines in a garden and casual labour. She previously tried to buy and sell garments and fish. She has a savings rate of 43 per cent and has taken five loans worth ZMW 710 (~£44).

Unique ID 29, a 21-year-old single woman, is a member of Group 5. She completed Grade 9 (elementary school). She is the eldest of seven children and lives with her parents and siblings. Her father is the group coordinator and her mother is also a member of the group. Her economic activities include an irrigated garden plot where she has grown two crops of tomatoes over the last year, 70 per cent of which were sold. In the last two months she has started trading in fish and also preparing and selling fritters. She has a savings rate of 40 per cent and has taken three loans worth ZMW 320 (~£20).

Unique ID 30, a 20-year-old man, is a member of Group 5. He completed Grade 9 in 2014. He is not married and does not have children. He lives with his parents and his five siblings, of whom he is the eldest. His economic activities include gardening on part of his family's land where he usually grows two crops of tomatoes and squash per year, namely during the rainy seasons. He sells about 75 per cent of what he harvests. He also helps on his family farm during the reason seasons, and frequently engages (twice per week) in casual farm labour during the rest of the year. He went to a nearby rural area (24 km from his home) upon finishing Grade 9 to look for 'a more permanent job' as a casual farm labourer. However, he returned to his home after nine months (two months ago), having failed to find more lucrative work. He was thus absent from the group during the most recent savings cycle (third cycle), but planned to return to it in the fourth cycle. In the first two cycles, he had a savings rate of 37 per cent and took one loan worth ZMW 160 (~£10).

Unique ID 31, an 18-year-old single man, is a member of Group 5. He is a student and is currently in Grade 8. He lives with his uncle, aunt and seven cousins, all of whom are members of adult VSLAs, except for two cousins. In addition to being a student, he helps his uncle farm, and gardens himself on a plot allocated to him by his uncle since 2014. He has had two harvests thus far and expects his third harvest the following month. He sells around 60 per cent of his crops and gives the remaining 40 per cent to his family. He does not consider his gardening as a business. He did not join the group in the first cycle because he did not see the benefit. He joined in the second cycle upon hearing about the benefits of the groups from his family members, particularly after their share-outs. In the second cycle, he saved ZMW 120 (~£7.50), or ZMW 13 (~£0.82) per meeting/month. His savings rate was only 13 per cent, but according to him he was saving more on average in the third cycle, at 30 ZMW per meeting/month (~£1.88). This could not be verified, however. He has taken one loan so far (in the second cycle) worth ZMW 200 (~£12.50).

Unique ID 32, a 15-year-old single woman, is a member of Group 5. She is a student and is currently in Grade 7. She lives with her parents and her five siblings. Her economic activities include making and selling fritters at school – she has been doing this since before joining the group – as well as rearing and selling chickens, gardening and doing casual farm labour. She joined in the second cycle, and had a savings rate of 27 per cent in that cycle. She is more committed to saving in the third cycle. She took one loan (in the second cycle) worth ZMW 100 (~£6).

Annexe Table A2.9 provides information that helps situate the interviewees in relation to the other members of their respective groups.

Annexe Table A2.10 Group 5, Zambia: Economic activities

Unique Interview ID	Current work	Previous work	Future work	Spouse's/boyfriend's [parents'] work
27 F, 25 years	Farmer (maize, tomatoes, vegetables) Tomato trader	Fish and clothes seller		Husband – Farmer, house builder, furniture maker
28 F, 28 years	Aubergine producer Casual labourer	Garment seller Fish seller		
29 F, 21 years	Tomato producer Fish trader Fritter maker and seller	Selling sweets in school		[Father – YSG coordinator]
30 M, 20 years	Gardener Casual labourer	Student for the first 2 cycles (until September 2014)		
31 M, 18 years	Student Gardener			
32 F, 15 years	Student Fritter maker and seller Sells chickens (very few) Gardener Pieceworker (casual farm labourer)			

Annexe Table A2.10 summarises information about the economic activities of the interviewees from Group 5, and where available, those of their immediate family members.

Group 6, Zambia

Unique ID 33, a 22-year-old single man, is a member of Group 6 and is its secretary. He completed high school (Grade 12). He sometimes lives alone or with friends either in town or at the roadside marketplace, where he runs one of his income-generating activities. His main economic activity is operating a recording studio and copy centre, which he started in June 2015. He also runs a carpentry income-generating activity out of his studio, and sometimes trades blankets at the Zimbabwean border. He previously traded charcoal in Lusaka, an activity he stopped doing in October 2014. He was part of a savings group before joining the current one, but it was dissolved, mainly because of poor leadership and lack of organisation. Since joining the current group in 2014, his savings rate has been 31 per cent – the highest among members who joined the group after it was reformed. He took six loans worth ZMW 2,029 (~£116). He wishes to pursue tertiary education in evangelic studies in order to become a preacher. He is a serious individual, who, while being the group's secretary since the third cycle, seemed to be the main leader of the group.

Unique ID 34, a 27-year-old single woman, is a member of Group 6 and is its treasurer. She completed Grade 8. She is a mother of two (an 8-year-old and a 4-year-old), and she lives with her children as well as her parents, two brothers and eight sisters. She is the eldest of her siblings. Her economic activities include

farming and gardening, and watermelon trading, which are year-long activities, as well as sweet beer (*monkoyo*) production and grass cutting and selling (for thatching), which she does seasonally. She has also started to rear goats since joining the group. She joined the group in the third cycle, she has a savings rate of 26 per cent. She took eight loans worth ZMW 1,717 (~£98), and has invested them all in her various income-generating activities. She was a vocal member of the group during the share meeting, and also an active participant in the group discussion. She is confident and proud of her achievements since joining the group – she'd used her first share-out and was particularly proud to be the only person among her neighbours to have built a house with iron roofing.

Unique ID 35, a 26-year-old married woman, is a member of Group 6. She completed Grade 9. She lives with her husband, a farmer, and three children, the oldest of whom is aged seven and is in Grade 1. Her economic activities include farming, the hawking of chicken offal and eggs, and operating a small provisions shop. She and her husband grow maize and watermelon as well as additional crops, depending on the availability of water. They consume most of the maize they produce and sell their other produce. When she is not farming she focuses mostly on her chicken product income-generating activity; indeed she used most of her loans to invest in this activity. Finally, although she started a small shop in April 2014, she stopped operating it in April 2015 in order to focus on farming and the chicken product income-generating activity. She aims to restart operating the shop, and even intends to expand it with her next share-out. She is one of the few remaining original members of the group who joined when it was formed in 2012. She'd stayed until now because 'if she stopped [being a member of the group], she would go back to the way she was before, where life was harder'. She has a savings rate of 20 per cent, though she has been saving increasingly since the third cycle, when she said her capacity to borrow and consequently her revenue increased. She took 16 loans over the five cycles worth ZMW 2,429 (~£152) in total. Although she participated actively during the group discussion, she was guarded and reserved during the interview.

Unique ID 36, a 15-year-old single woman, is a member of Group 6. She is a student and is currently in Grade 9. She lives with her mother, baby sister and cousin who is slightly older than her. Among her economic activities is egg trading. She trades them herself in the village market at weekends and gives them to a shop owner who is a friend to sell on her behalf (commission-free) during the week. She also grows rape greens on a garden plot allocated to her by her mother, providing her with regular income throughout the year. She is one of the few remaining original members of the group. Her savings rate is 19 per cent, with her savings not having increased very much since the first cycle. She took 12 loans worth ZMW 1,725 (~£107), at least part of which were used by the mother to cater for family expenses. Her mother was very knowledgeable about her daughter's financial and commercial behaviours, even contributing a number of answers during the interview. The mother has an obvious interest in the group, and has used some of the funds accessed by her daughter.

Unique ID 37, a 24-year-old single man, is a member of Group 6 and is its chairperson. He completed Grade 12 in 2011. He lives with his mother, aunt and younger sister's three daughters. His main economic activities are farming (rainfed

Annexe Table A2.11 Group 6, Zambia: Interviewees in their group context (those in red were interviewed)

Number of original members	Number of members still in the group since the 1st, 2nd or 3rd cycle	Cycle	In baseline?	Number	Age group	Age	Number	Gender	Number	Ledger ID	Unique ID
14	9	1	Yes	4	15–24	15	3	F	2	8	36
		1				16				13	39
		2				24		M	1	19	37
		1			>24	26	1	F	1	7	35
		3	No	5	15–24	22	1	M	1	23	33
		3			>24	27	4	F	2	22	34
		3				26				24	
		3				25		M	2	20	38
		3				25				21	

crops – one harvest per year) and gardening (rape greens, squash, watermelon and green maize, which he harvests and sells throughout the year). He also trades chickens and charcoal and does some casual farm labour. He has grown crops commercially on his garden since 2011, and delved into the other economic activities since 2014 (chicken trading and farming) and 2015 (charcoal trading). He started these other activities so he could save more to pursue tertiary education. He joined the group in the second cycle, i.e. before it was formed anew. He has a savings level of 22 per cent which has been quite stable since the third cycle. He took nine loans worth ZMW 1,570 (~£97) which he used exclusively to invest in his income-generating activities. Although he was the group's chairperson, he was not as confident or vocal as the group's secretary or treasurer.

Unique ID 38, a 25-year-old man, is a member of Group 6. He completed Grade 10 in 2011 but hopes to complete high school (Grade 12) in the future. He has a one-year-old child and is 'soon to marry' the mother of his child, but he does not live with them. Instead, he lives with his grandmother, elder sister and her three children. He said he 'does a lot' for his child. His economic activities include farming and gardening – on plots totalling more than four hectares he inherited from his grandmother and late uncle respectively – as well as brick moulding and running a general provisions store. Although he has been farming and gardening for a number of years, he has only operated his two other income-generating activities since April 2015. He started these because he'd seen that 'being in a savings group is worthwhile', and thus wanted to increase his saving contributions, especially in order to increase his saving and dividend amounts. Since joining the group in the third cycle, he had a savings level of 29 per cent. He took nine loans

Annexe Table A2.12 Group 6, Zambia: Economic activities

Unique Interview ID	Current work	Previous work	Future work	Spouse's/boyfriend's [parents'] work
33 M, 22 years	Trades blankets for charcoal Recording studio/ photocopying centre Carpentry income-generating activity	Charcoal trading only	Wants to be a preacher	
34 F, 27 years	Gardening Farming Sweet beer production Grass cutting-thatching selling Watermelon selling			
35 F, 26 years	Farming Small shop/ Chicken eggs and offal trading			Spouse also farms
36 F, 15 years	Student Sells eggs Gardening			[Mother farms/gardens]
37 M, 24 years	Chicken trader Farmer Gardener Charcoal trader Casual labourer			
38 M, 25 years	Brick moulding Gardening Farming Small general provisions store			
39 F, 16 years	Student Gardening Sells sweets at school			

worth ZMW 2,632 (~£164), which he mostly invested in his gardening activities. He seemed to be quite a confident man and was one of the members with the highest 'levels of engagement', both saving and borrowing more than other members. One reason for this seemed to be the success of his gardening operation. Another reason, however, seemed to be his relatively advantaged position compared with other members in the group, having inherited a number of substantial agricultural assets, including two plots and an ox.

Unique ID 39, a 16-year-old woman, is a member of Group 6. She is a student and is currently in Grade 8; she said she pays most of her school fees. She lives with her parents. Her economic activities include gardening (rape greens), which she does during her holidays, and a sweets selling activity, which she operates when in school. She joined the group in the first cycle, and has a savings level of 14 per cent; she stated she was mainly responsible for her share contributions, with her parents helping her only every few months, typically with a sum of ZMW 20 (~£1.25). She

took eight loans worth ZMW 1,220 (~£76), which she invested mostly in her income-generating activities, but also in household expenditures and in her school fees. She seemed confident for her age and gave assured responses.

Annexe Table A2.11 provides information that helps situate the interviewees in relation to the other members of their respective groups.

Annexe Table A2.12 summarises information about the economic activities of the interviewees from Group 6, and where available, those of their immediate family members.

Group 7, Ghana

Unique ID 40, a 14-year-old female, is a member and key-holder of Group 7. She recently completed Primary 6 and is likely to go to a local junior high school (JHS). She is the last-born of eight siblings, but lives with only one sister and her mother. Her father contributes food to the household but lives in a different house. Two of her sisters are attending boarding school. She receives GHS 1 (~£0.17) in pocket money from her mother on a daily basis. Most of the savings she contributes to the group come from what she is able to save from her pocket money. When she does not have enough to save, her mother contributes. Her mother is a busy and successful petty trader. She has a savings level of 58 per cent but has taken no loans. She used a share-out to buy herself a schoolbag and plans on using her next share-out on school expenses, or anything else she might need.

Unique ID 41, a 13-year-old male, is a member and key-holder of Group 7. He completed Primary 6 and intends to continue his education. He lives with his father, mother and two sisters; he is the last-born. His mother is in another VSLA, having joined in March 2015. He is a student and most of his money he uses for saving comes from the pocket money he gets from his mother. He usually gets GHS 1 per day (~£0.17), except for the days where he eats at home before going to school. His mother also often goes away to visit family or to take care of her ailing husband (the member's father). He then gets pocket money from his sisters. He earns some money from occasional yam packing. His mother is a farmer and seems to be struggling to keep up with the responsibility of caring for children and husband. He has a savings level of 31 per cent (the lowest in the group). He attributes this to a 'fear' he had of the group – he didn't save any money for six consecutive months in the first cycle. He took no loans, and aimed to use his share-outs on his education, 'so that [his] mother can give attention to the other siblings'.

Unique ID 42, a 13-year-old female, is a member and former money-counter of Group 7. She recently completed Primary 6 and is likely to attend JHS in Kumasi. She lives with her mother, her mother's parents, two uncles and her four siblings (she is the second-born). One of her brothers will be replacing her in the group if she indeed goes away for JHS. She receives a generous pocket money allowance from her mother and grandmother. They gave her GHS 1 per day (~£0.17) in the first cycle and increased this to GHS 1.5 (~£0.25) in the second cycle, because of an apparent rise in prices of goods. Her mother is a yam trader, while her grandmother is a cassava and maize farmer. Her savings level has risen dramatically from 35 per cent in the first cycle to 71 per cent in the second cycle

(the highest in the second cycle). This is partly because she now saves more of her money in the group; she lacked trust in the group in the first cycle. However, her mother and grandmother also now provide her with an extra cedi on the day of the meeting to contribute directly to her savings. This reflects the fact that 'the family became convinced of the system' after seeing the share-out. She has taken no loans and used her share-out mostly to pay for school expenses, but she also gave part of her first share-out back to her grandmother.

Unique ID 43, a 15-year-old male, is a member and former key-holder of Group 7. He recently completed Primary 6 and will be going to the local JHS. He lives with his uncle, mother, father, two sisters and brother; he is the second-born. Although he receives a modest pocket money allowance – GHS 0.5 per day (~£0.09) – usually only on school days, he is the highest saver in the group. His father, a farmer, usually gives him enough money to cover all five share purchases and the social fund contribution (GHS 1.10 in total; ~£0.19). He said his father was doing so despite some lack of confidence in the group. His father doubled his savings contribution in the second cycle, because of the doubling of the share value. He has a savings level of 70 per cent (equal in both cycles), but does not always save the maximum number of shares because he sometimes forgets to ask his father for the share contributions, or because his father doesn't always have money. He hasn't taken any loans and has used his share-outs on educational expenses, and on buying livestock (with additional help from his father).

Unique ID 44, a 14-year-old female, is a member and key-holder of Group 7. She has recently completed Primary 6 and is planning to start JHS locally. She lives with her father, mother and five siblings; she is the third-born. In principle, she gets GHS 1 per day (~£0.17) as pocket money, even on weekends and holidays, but in fact does not always receive this amount. Her grandfather sometimes contributes pocket money if the parents are not able to. However, the parents started contributing money directly to her savings after the share-out. Her father is a farmer and her mother a petty trader. Since joining the group, she has had a savings level of 45 per cent; however, she joined later in the first cycle (and her passbook thus shows a 35 per cent savings level overall), because she wasn't around at the time of sensitisation. She 'doesn't like taking loans' and has not taken any. She uses her share-outs to cover her own school expenses as well as expenses for her younger siblings (e.g. clothing, shoes).

Unique ID 45, a 19-year-old single woman, is a member of Group 7 and serves as its secretary. She completed Grade 9 (JHS) a year ago and is currently out of school owing to family financial constraints. Her goal is to further her education. She does not have children and she lives in her father's home. She started a small vegetable-selling income-generating activity a month ago to allow her to save up to pursue her education. She was receiving GHS 2–3 (~£0.34–£0.51), about four times per week, from her father as pocket money, but receives less since starting the income-generating activity. She joined in the second cycle and does not mind being in a group with mostly younger people. She has a savings level of 48 per cent. She took one loan worth GHS 100 (~£17) to start her income-generating activity. She feels '100 cedis is not much' and thus does not fear repayment of the loan. She intends to save her share-out in a bank and use it for school. She was enthusiastic, cooperative and vocal, both during the group discussion and the

Annexe Table A2.13 Group 7, Ghana: Interviewees in their group context (those in red were interviewed. Those in gold were not original members of the group but were still interviewed since they were the only members across all participants to have taken loans)

Total number of participants in the group thus far	Original member?	Number	Number of original members still in the group	In baseline?	Number	Age group	Age	Number	Gender	Number	Ledger ID	Unique ID
29	Yes	22	15	Yes	13	<15	13	7	F	3	11	
							13				18	42
							14				19	40
							13		M	4	3	
							13				6	46
							13				9	41
							13				17	
						15–24	15	6	F	4	4	
							15				21	
							16				22	
							17				10	
							15		M	2	1	47
							15				7	43
				No	2	<15	14	2	F	1	20	44
							14		M	2	5	
	No	7				<15	14	5	F	3	26	
							14				27	
							14				29	
							12		M	2	24	
							14				25	48
						15–24	15	2	F	2	28	
							19				23	45

interview. She seems like one of the leaders of the group. She herself felt this was due to her 'age and knowledge'.

Unique ID 46, a 13-year-old boy, is a member and former key-holder of Group 7. He recently completed Primary 6 and hopes to attend JHS locally. His father passed away five years ago, while his mother passed away soon after he joined the group. Therefore, he lives with his elder brother and sister, with his brother providing for most of his needs. In principle, the member receives GHS 1 (~£0.17) per day from his brother, but he often gets less than this. His brother farms and

Annexe Table A2.14 Group 7, Ghana: Economic activities

Unique Interview ID	Current work	Previous work	Future work	Spouse's / boyfriend's [parents'] work
40 F, 14 years	Student			[Mother – food and oil vendor] [Father – farmer]
41 M, 13 years	Student			[Mother – farmer]
42 F, 13 years	Student			[Mother – yam trader] [Grandmother – maize and cassava farmer]
43 M, 15 years	Student			[Father – farmer]
44 F, 14 years	Student			[Mother – petty trader] [Father – farmer]
45 F, 19 years	Has a small food stall (sells vegetables mostly)			
46 M, 13 years	Student Weeding Makes wooden toy trucks			[Brother – welder and farmer]
47 M 15 years	Student Weeding Loads yams			[Father – farmer] [Mother – farmer and brewer]
48 M, 14 years	Student Poultry income-generating activity			[Father – pastor and farmer] [Mother – farmer]

also does welding. The member himself generates some income through weeding, yam packing and toy making. His savings level increased from 28 per cent in the first cycle to 63 per cent in the second cycle. He became more motivated to save after failing to accomplish his goals (of buying all his schoolbooks) with the first cycle share-out, and he had greater motivation to work in the second cycle. The death of his mother in the first cycle had a major impact on his motivation to contribute to the group. He has not taken any loans, but wishes to buy a bicycle with his next share-out. He is mature for his age and committed to the group, wanting to become chairperson. He also feels he has become a 'mouthpiece' in his family concerning financial decisions, because of the knowledge he has acquired regarding financial matters since joining the group.

Unique ID 47, a 15-year-old male, is a member of Group 7 and is its chairperson. He has recently completed Primary 6 and intends to attend JHS locally. He lives with his mother, father and three of his six siblings; he is the fifth-born. The member works doing yam packing and weeding, especially during holidays. Although he can make some money from these jobs (e.g. up to GHS 40 [~£7] from weeding), most of his savings came from his pocket money and his parents' direct contributions. They increased their contributions in the second cycle when the

share value was increased. His parents farm and 'have a lot of produce', and they raise livestock as well. He has a savings level of 65 per cent. He plans on opening a provisions shop in JHS, in order to save for his senior high school (SHS), though he has not taken any loans. He invested his share-out in his education, but plans to buy some fowl with his next share-out.

Unique ID 48, a 14-year-old male, is a member of Group 7. He recently completed Primary 6 and intends to go to JHS. He lives with his parents. He started a poultry-rearing income-generating activity in 2013, before joining the group, because he wanted to have an economic activity and to support himself. Although he uses some of the income from his income-generating activity to save, most of his savings comes from the pocket money allowance he receives from his parents. Indeed, his savings vary mostly in tandem with the amounts he gets as pocket money. His parents are farmers, and his father is also the preacher and leader of a religious mission. He only joined the group in the second cycle after seeing the benefit of the group, namely through his friends' reactions to the first share-out. He has a savings level of 40 per cent. He took one loan worth GHS 80 (~£14) to invest in feed to increase yields from his chickens. He didn't think he would have a problem repaying the loan.

Annexe Table A2.13 provides information that helps situate the interviewees in relation to the other members of their respective groups.

Annexe Table A2.14 summarises information about the economic activities of the interviewees from Group 7, and where available, those of their immediate family members.

Group 8, Ghana

Unique ID 49, a 22-year-old woman, is a member of Group 8. She completed JHS 2 in 2012, but has since stopped studying. She is married, has a three-year-old child and is expecting another one. She lives with her mother, child and aunt; her husband lives on his own but visits often. She used to sell phone credit at a stall by the side of the road but has been running a provisions shop for the past year and a half. Her husband has a clothing boutique in town and he gets the provisions for both their shops in Accra. The idea of starting the provisions shop was his and he seems to play an important role in her financial success. She has a savings level of 100 per cent but about half of what she saves comes from the money she gets from her husband for her upkeep. Her mother also tops up her savings when she does not have enough to buy all five shares. She took three loans in the first cycle worth GHS 500 (~£85), all for a friend of hers, but she has stopped borrowing as the friend had trouble repaying the last loan. She is also a member of an adult VSLA, which she joined before joining the group. However, she now prioritises the group since she felt pressurised and intimated by the members of the adult group.

Unique ID 50, a 25-year-old woman, is a member and money-counter of Group 8. She completed JHS 1 but has since stopped studying. She has a six-year-old boy (in KG1) but is not married and is no longer in a relationship with the child's father. She lives with her mother and her four siblings; she is the eldest. Her father lives nearby. Her mother has been in an adult VSLA for six years. Her economic activities include mat weaving and running a small food provisions stall. She hopes

to turn her food stall into a kiosk in the near future. From time to time she gets money from her mother to save. She also sometimes uses as savings the money her ex-boyfriend sends her for upkeep, though she then replaces this with her own money. She is a 100 per cent saver and has taken seven loans worth GHS 2,560 (~£437). Two were used to invest in her income-generating activities and the others to support the household or were used by her mother or her neighbours.

Unique ID 51, a 23-year-old woman, is a member of Group 8 and its new chairperson. She completed JHS 3 in 2006 and subsequently did a formal apprenticeship in fashion and design/tailoring. She lives with her boyfriend, whom she has been with for seven years. He is a member of another VSLA. Her main economic activity includes her 'fashion and design' income-generating activity, where she largely makes African dress for female customers. She started her income-generating activity in 2013, after completing her apprenticeship, which lasted from 2010 to 2013. Her savings level is 100 per cent; however, her boyfriend, a motorcycle taxi driver who 'shares her dream of putting up a container [for her income-generating activity]', contributes money to buy over half of her shares. She took six loans worth GHS 2,120 (~£371), and most of these were used by her sister to support her children's education or to invest in her income-generating activity. She was shy and seemed reserved, despite being the newly elected chairperson of the group. She said she was elected because she 'doesn't differentiate between members; she's fair with everybody'.

Unique ID 52, a 20-year-old woman, is a member of Group 8. She completed JHS 3 in 2012. She lives with her parents and her three sisters. One of her sisters is in the same group, and her mother is in the fifth cycle of an adult VSLA. She is currently undertaking a tailoring apprenticeship, and her main economic activity at the moment is to collect the interest from loans she made to local businesswomen. However, after completing school and before starting her apprenticeship, she hawked clothes and shoes in her village, but the income-generating activity slowed down in October 2014 and she abandoned it shortly thereafter. She has a savings level of 80 per cent, which drops to 57 per cent when her share cancellations are taken into consideration, and to 36 per cent overall if a loan default in the second cycle is factored in. She took six loans worth GHS 1,360 (~£213), most of which were used by her mother or family. She defaulted on her last loan (GHS 400, ~£68) when a family friend, for whom she had taken a loan, was not able to repay her. She intends to repay the remaining balance in the current (third cycle). Prior to her defaulting her shares were cancelled to service the interest charges on her loans.

Unique ID 53 is a clear case of a 'surrogate saver' within Group 8. Two 18-year-old men (cousins) save money on behalf of their great-uncle, their primary caregiver. Both young men have only just completed JHS 3. One, who was the member of the group in the first two cycles, was recently replaced by his cousin in the third cycle when he moved back to Western Region with his parents. The new member continues to live with his great-uncle and grandparents (the grandmother is the sister of the great-uncle). The great-uncle is also a preacher and pensioner and also has a canopy-rental business that both cousins have helped him with. Together, they have a savings level of 91 per cent (90 per cent after factoring in share cancellations). The grandmother sometimes helps to save when the great-uncle does not have enough money. However, he was unable to explain the

gap in savings, nor the reason why some shares (very few) were cancelled. The members and great-uncle took five loans worth GHS 1,750 (~£305), most of which were used by the grandmother to invest in her fish trading activity or to care for her husband. The share-outs were mostly used to invest in the canopy business and to reinvest in the savings group. The great-uncle seemed quite well off, owning a new-looking car, which was parked in front of a well-built house.

Unique ID 54 is a case of a 'surrogate saver' within Group 8. The first member, an 18-year-old, was replaced by his 13-year-old brother after the first cycle. Both saved on behalf of their mother, a 33-year-old married woman, who is a member of two other VSLAs. The two brothers live at home with their mother, father and two younger siblings (including a newborn). The older brother is a driver, and left the group because of the nature of his job. The second brother is a primary school student (going into Primary 6). The mother's principal economic activity was distilling alcohol, but she stopped this and recently switched to selling second-hand shoes, mainly because of her pregnancy (i.e. she couldn't cope with the heat given off from the distilling). She plans to return to this activity, however. She gets money to save both from her income-generating activities, and from her husband's 'upkeep' money. Her husband is a farmer. The mother's savings level is 67 per cent (63 per cent after share cancellations). Part of the reason for the missed savings is because the current member sometimes fails to attend meetings – he sometimes just doesn't feel like going. However, she also said her participation in the two other VSLAs reduced her savings in the BoC group. She took eight loans worth GHS 1,800 (~£306). She used all of her BoC group loans and share-outs to invest in her income-generating activities.

Unique ID 55, a 22-year-old single woman, is a member and key-holder of Group 8. She completed JHS 3 in 2014. She lives with her mother, uncle, four siblings and her nieces; she is the last-born. Her brother was the initial group coordinator. She has not worked since finishing school a year ago. She saves mostly what she puts aside from pocket money she received from her mother (when she was in school), and which she now receives from her sister. Her mother also contributes to her savings. The mother is a farmer and mat weaver; her sisters own businesses (one owns a provisions shop, the other a restaurant). She has a savings level of 99 per cent. She took two loans worth GHS 100 (~£17), one of which was used by one of her sisters, and the other by a fellow group member. She is saving up her money and share-outs in a mobile money account until she has enough money to invest in a container for a provisions shop. She is shy and reserved and she said she 'naturally doesn't like [depending on other people]'.

Unique ID 56, an 18-year-old single woman, is a member of Group 8 and is its secretary. She has just completed JHS and will attend SHS in a nearby town. She lives with her mother, father and seven siblings; she is the eldest. She is in fact a 'surrogate saver' for her mother. Her mother's main economic activity is selling spices, onions and soups, and the member often helps her mother with her income-generating activity. The member also saves the pocket money she receives from her mother, using a money box. Her recorded savings level is 91 per cent (82 per cent when factoring in the share cancellations). She took two loans worth GHS 750 (~£127), which were used by the mother to invest in her income-generating activity. Her share cancellations were due to her mother failing

Annexe Table A2.15 Group 8, Ghana: Interviewees in their group context (those in red were interviewed)

Number of original members	Number of original members still in the group	In baseline?	Number	Age group	Age	Number	Gender	Number	Ledger ID	Unique ID
30	17	No	17	<15	13	1	M	1	19	54
				15–24	15	11	F	8	26	
					18				7	56
					19				2	
					20				8	52
					22				13	49
					22				27	55
					23				17	51
					24				28	
					16		M	3	11	57
					18				24	53
					23				15	
				>24	25	5	F	3	5	50
					26				12	
					28				4	
					25		M	2	20	
					28				1	

to provide money to cover service charges on the second loan. The member said she stopped saving her own money as it was not accumulating interest. She said she would like to save money in a savings group, but only if the share value was reduced to GHS 1. This would allow her to perform well in such a group.

Unique ID 57, a 16-year-old male, is a member of Group 8. He has completed JHS 2 and is going into JHS 3. He lives with his mother and two sisters; his father passed away five years ago. He is in fact a 'surrogate saver' for his mother, who is in her 40s and who is also in another adult VSLA. In addition to being a student, the member occasionally transports firewood for local people. The mother, however, has multiple occupations, the most important of which is alcohol distilling. She also weaves mats, does casual labour, and processes oysters. The member's savings level is 84 per cent (79 per cent after share cancellations) and he took 10 loans worth GHS 2,260 (~£394), which were all used to invest in the mother's distilling activity. At least some of the shares were cancelled because the mother failed to provide enough money to cover service charges on loans. The mother said she was better able to provide for the household and for her children's education with funds through the son's group. The member himself was saving on his own, but expressed an interest in joining a group where the share value would be set at GHS 0.50 (~£0.08).

Annexe Table A2.16 Group 8, Ghana: Economic activities

Unique Interview ID	Current work	Previous work	Future work	Spouse's / boyfriend's [parents'] work
49 F, 22 years	Has a provisions shop	Sold phone credit		Husband – has shop where he sells clothing
50 F, 25 years	Weaves mats Small food stall		Kiosk / provisions shop	Ex-boyfriend – mason
51 F, 23 years	Has an income-generating activity in 'fashion and design' – a seamstress, producing African dress	Did an apprenticeship in fashion and design from 2010 to 2013		
52 F, 20 years	Tailoring apprentice Small money-lender	Hawking clothes		[Mother – food vendor] [Father – farmer]
53 M, 18 years	Student Helps out with great-uncle's canopy business			[Great-uncle – pensioner, preacher and renter of canopies]
54 M, 13 years	Student			[Mother – alcohol distiller, shoe seller] [Father – farmer and mason] [Brother – taxi driver]
55 F, 22 years	None	Student	Wants to own a provisions store	[Mother – farms cassava; used to weave mats] [Sister – owns restaurant] [Sister – has provisions shop]
56 F, 18 years	Student – just completed JHS			[Mother – sells spices, soups and onions]
57 M, 16 years	Student – JHS 3		Wants to be an electrician	[Mother – alcohol distillation, oyster processing, mat weaving, casual labour]

Annexe Table A2.15 provides information that helps situate the interviewees in relation to the other members of their respective groups.

Annexe Table A2.16 summarises information about the economic activities of the interviewees from Group 8, and where available, those of their immediate family members.

Annexe 3 Classification of interviewees by category

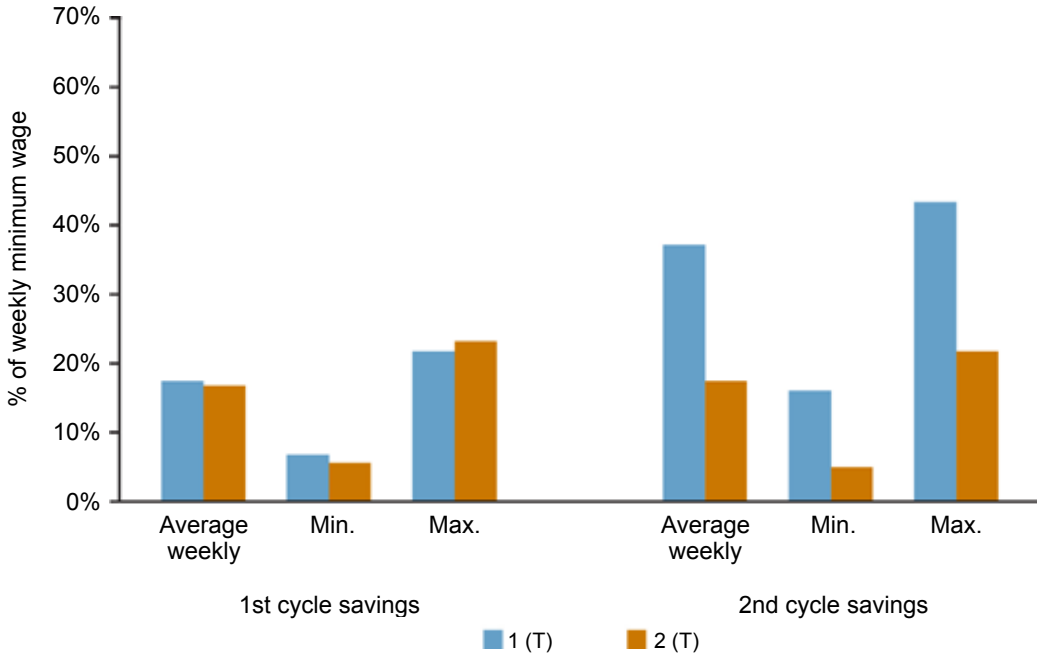
Annexe Table A3.1 Classification of interviewees

Category	Females, age in years	Males, age in years
1. Student	ID 6: F, 23* ID 32: F, 15 ID 36: F, 15 ID 39: F, 16 ID 40: F, 14 ID 42: F, 13 ID 44: F, 14 ID 56: F, 18	ID 12: M, 14 ID 31: M, 18 ID 41: M, 13 ID 43: M, 15 ID 46: M, 13 ID 47: M, 15 ID 48: M, 14 ID 53: M, 18 ID 54: M, 13 ID 57: M, 16
2. Working; no children; not with a partner	ID 2: F, 22 ID 22: F, 16 ID 29: F, 21 ID 45: F, 19 ID 52: F, 20 ID 55: F, 22	ID 10: M, 20 ID 14: M, 25 ID 17: M, 20 ID 19: M, 19 ID 24: M, 22 ID 26: M, 19 ID 30: M, 20 ID 33: M, 22 ID 37: M, 24
3. Working, no children; with a partner	ID 21: F, 20 ID 51: F, 23	
4. Working; children; not with a partner	ID 9: F, 36 ID 23: F, 22 ID 28: F, 28 ID 34: F, 27 ID 50: F, 25	
5. Working; children; with a partner	ID 1: F, 33 ID 4: F, 23 ID 3: F, 21 ID 5: F, 30 ID 7: F, 27 ID 8: F, 22 ID 11: F, 26 ID 13: F, 22 ID 15: F, 25 ID 18: F, 22 ID 20: F, 24 ID 25: F, 20 ID 27: F, 25 ID 35: F, 26 ID 49: F, 22	ID 16: M, 28 ID 38: M, 25

* University student

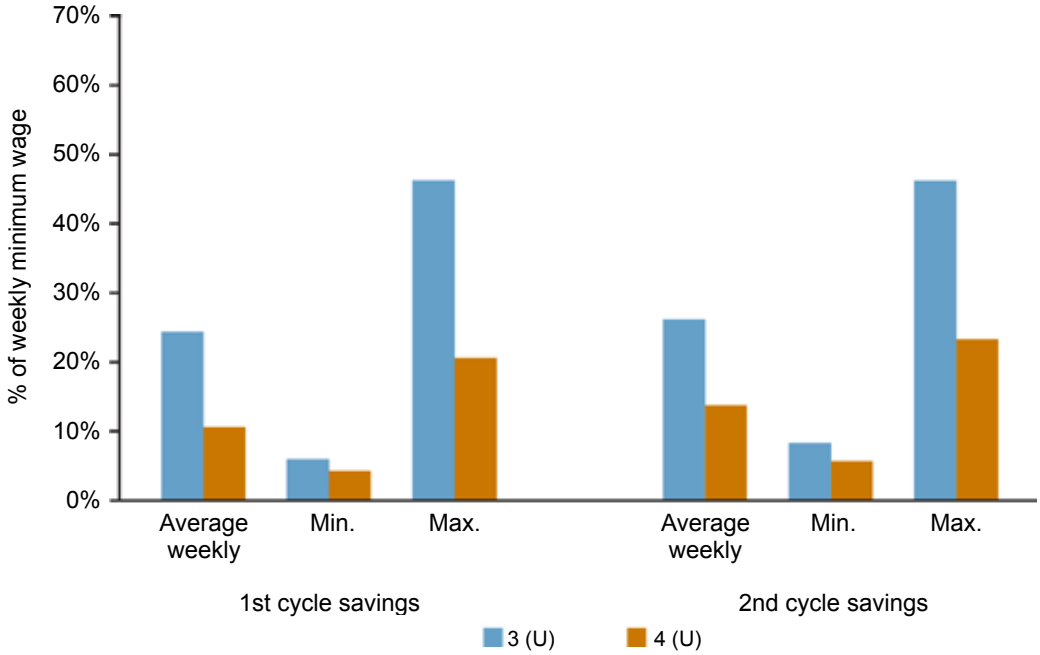
Annexe 4 Savings amount per group and cycle (as % of local minimum weekly wage)

Annexe Figure A4.1 Savings amount per group and cycle, Tanzania



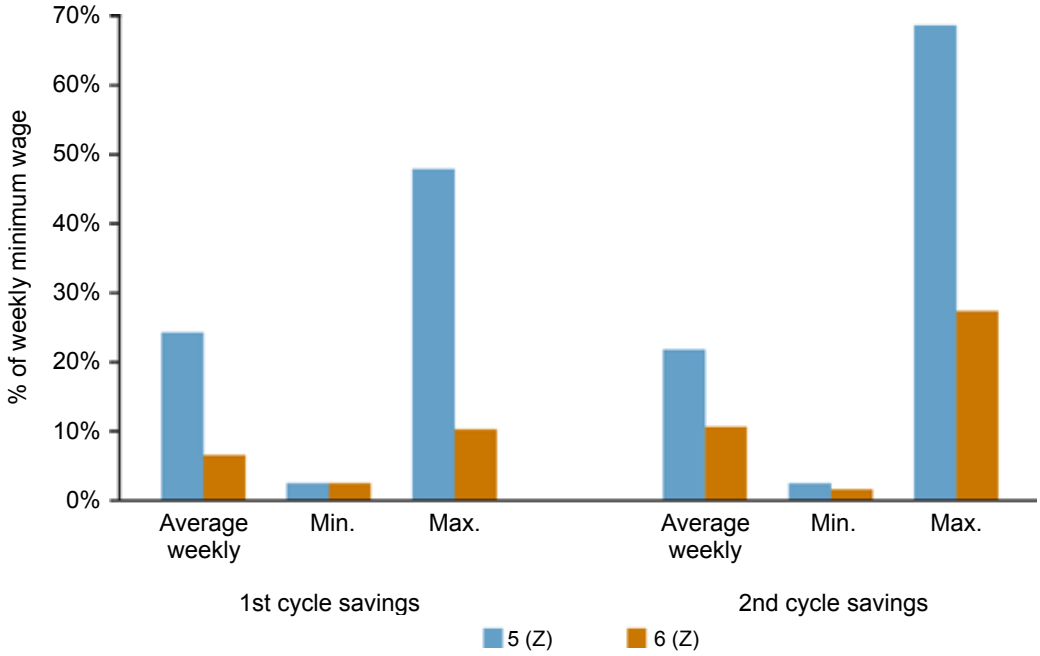
Source: Authors' own

Annexe Figure A4.2 Savings amount per group and cycle, Uganda



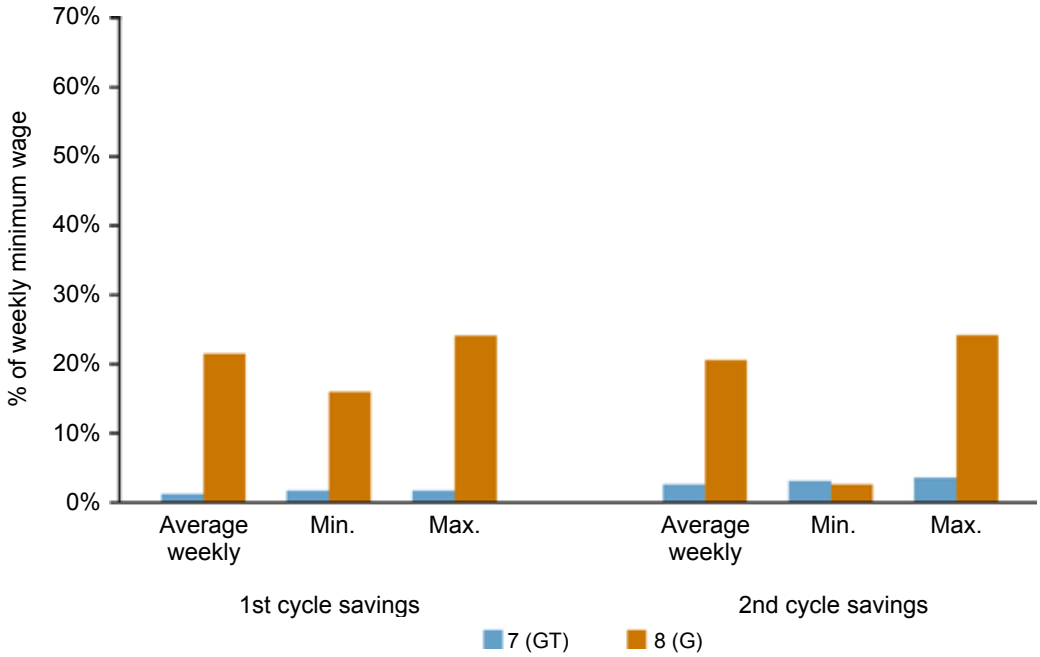
Source: Authors' own

Annexe Figure A4.3 Savings amount per group and cycle, Zambia



Source: Authors' own

Annexe Figure A4.4 Savings amount per group and cycle, Ghana



Source: Authors' own

Annexe 5 Information on minimum wage

Annexe Table A5.1 Information on minimum wages in Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Ghana

Country	Hourly	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	Notes	Sources
Tanzania		3,847	23,078	100,000	1,200,000	Agricultural/ undefined work	2013: www.tatotz.org/downloads/2013/NEW%20MINIMUM%20WAGES%20FOR%20PRIVATE%20SECTORS.pdf
GBP		*1.17*	*6.99*	*30.29*	*363.50*		
Uganda		1,800	10,800	54,000	648,000	Agriculture and fisheries sector; UGX 75,000 unskilled labour proposed monthly wage, mentioned in another article	2013 article (2009/10 survey): www.fes-uganda.org/media/documents/Final_Policy_Brief_Minimum_Wage_An_urgent_call.pdf 2014: www.voanews.com/content/uganda-debates-minimum-wage/1936439.html"
GBP		*0.32*	*1.93*	*9.63*	*115.55*		
Zambia	0.37	23	140	700	8,400	General worker, not specified elsewhere	2012: www.zambialii.org/files/zm/legislation/statutory-instrument/2012/46/S.%20I.%20No.%2046%20for%202012.pdf
GBP	*0.02*	*1.24*	*7.42*	*37.12*	*445.48*		
Ghana		7	42	189	2,268	National Daily Minimum Wage, supposed to affect all types of work, however, according to various studies, 1/5 to 1/2 of informal sector employees receive less than this	2015: www.ghana.gov.gh/index.php/media-center/news/161-basic-salaries-for-public-sector-workers-increase-by-13-per-cent-national-minimum-wage-by-16-7-per-cent 2011: library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/ghana/10496.pdf
GBP		*1.23*	*7.40*	*33.32*	*399.82*		

Source: Authors' own

Annexe 6 Savings consistency

Annexe Table A6.1

Code	Reason
1	Family / friends contribute to savings
2	Household (HH) funds/pocket money used to save
3	Thriving income-generating activities
4	Surrogate saver
5	Uses accumulated savings to save
6	Few expenses
7	Motivated by share-out
8	Many expenses
9	Hazard / shock
10	Mistrust of group
11	Involved in multiple savings groups
12	Seasonality
13	Increased trust in group
14	Income-generating activities not thriving
15	Benefits of training
16	Used funds for other purposes
17	Borrowed for others and had no problems
18	Borrowed for others and had problems
19	Afraid / hesitant to borrow
20	High savings allows more borrowing
21	Low savings limits borrowing
22	Positive effect of group
23	Reduction of HH funds / pocket money
24	High borrowing needs
25	Loan default
26	Low borrowing needs
30	Other
99	No apparent reason

Annexe Table A6.2 Consistently high savers

G1, ID 6 (Cat. 1): Has been involved in various income-generating activities since high school and currently sells sweets and has invested in a mobile-money business. Has few commitments (lives at home, father pays for university-related expenses and food, is single with no children). Has reduced expenses since joining, helping her to save. Mother is CRP. [3, 6]
G7, ID 43 (Cat. 1): Saves mostly due to father's direct contributions to his savings (he gives full share and social fund contribution at the majority of meetings). Father is farmer and owns 10-acre plot. Also saves and contributes a bit of pocket money to buying shares, in case father does not contribute. [1, 2]
G7, ID 47 (Cat. 1): Usually receives about GHS 5 per week in pocket money, of which he is able to save half and contribute to the group. He also uses money from weeding he does from time to time. Parents help him to save, though 'infrequently'. [1, 2, 3]
G8, ID 53 (Cat. 1): Is a surrogate saver for the great-uncle. Great-uncle is relatively well off: has a canopy rental business, is a pensioner and a preacher. Reinvests money from share-outs into next cycle savings. [3, 4, 5]
G8, ID 56 (Cat. 1): Is a surrogate saver for her mother. Mother in another YSG for past five years. Reduction in second cycle savings due to decrease in mother's income-generating activity, and higher cost of sister's education (went from JHS to SHS). [4, 99]
G1, ID 2 (Cat. 2): Has a steady income – works at men's hair salon six days per week. Sometimes borrows money from relatives in order to buy all the shares. Said she reduced expenses since joining which also helps to save. Has few commitments (lives with relatives, is single, has no children). [1, 3, 6]
G2, ID 14 (Cat. 2): Successful maize trading business (started in 1st cycle). Initially used previous savings to contribute to the group. Has few commitments (single, has no children, and still lives at home). [3, 5, 6]
G4, ID 22 (Cat. 2): Has few commitments. In 1st cycle saved to start palm oil and tomato selling, which she did, and then expanded it in 2nd cycle. Chance to earn interest on savings motivates her. [3]
G5, ID 29 (Cat. 2): Father is the group coordinator. She has few commitments as her parents pay for all her schooling-related expenses. Receives pocket money from her parents, part of which she uses to save. She also sometimes gets help to save directly from her parents. [1, 2, 6]
G6, ID 33 (Cat. 2): Mainly mentioned the FE training helped him save more than anything else. **Note:** he had received this training before formation of the group, in the context of a youth mentorship scheme for which he was selected in 2012. However, he also seemed to have quite active and thriving income-generating activities. [3, 15]
G6, ID 38 (Cat. 2): Stated his main sources of savings were from his income-generating activities, which seem to be going quite well. It is worth noting he seemed wealthier than other members in the group, as he owned both a farming and a gardening plot totalling approx. 4.5 ha altogether, which he'd inherited from his grandmother and late uncle. He also inherited an ox. [3, 30]
G8, ID 55 (Cat. 2): Student in first cycle, used mostly savings from pocket money to buy shares, though mother also helped to save. Now, saves less from pocket money, but mother helps to save more. Training solidified motivation to save towards a goal. [1, 2]
G8, ID 51 (Cat. 3): Has a modest income from a fashion and design income-generating activity. However, is very reliant on boyfriend, particularly to save: he contributes money for about half her share purchases, and he also pays for much of her 'upkeep' expenses. [1, 6]
G2, ID 9 (Cat. 4): Gets help from parents. Steady income from small shop, and from farming. Says she reduced her expenditures (on things like meat, and clothes). [3, 30]

G8, ID 50 (Cat. 4): Has steady income from mat weaving and from operating a food stall. Mother sometimes helps her to save. Takes money from ex-boyfriend's contribution to childcare to save also, but replaces this money. Said she has reduced expenses since joining group, such as food and clothes when these weren't necessary. [1, 2, 3]
G8, ID 49 (Cat. 5): Has a lot of support and relatively few expenses or commitments. Stated at least half her savings came from the upkeep money sent to her by husband. Despite having a child, expenditures are relatively low as husband pays for the 'whole house'. Also used money from income-generating activities and from mother to save. [1, 2, 6]
G1, ID 5 (Cat. 5): Is involved in three different income-generating activities and has a steady income. Works a lot. Said the FL training helped to save long term and to reduce expenses. Said she wished members were allowed to save (and borrow) more. Has joint income-generating activity with husband, who is also a carpenter. [3]
G2, ID 11 (Cat. 5): Uses money from her income-generating activity and the family budget to save. Also used previous savings to buy shares. Husband owns 1-acre plot by the river. [2, 5]
G3, ID 16 (Cat. 5): Started making and selling doughnuts which increased income and savings. He mentioned trainings as another important reason for improved savings; they motivated him to work hard and get out of poverty, and taught him to plan better and save. Promoted to assistant CBT. [3, 15]
G4, ID 25 (Cat. 5): Retails fish. Motivated at first by interactions with fellow members (was not very committed during first few weeks). Large 1st cycle share-out motivated her to keep her savings high. Joined another savings group due to saving restrictions. Trainings encouraged her to invest in long-term goals. [3, 7, 22]

Annexe Table A6.3 Consistently low savers

G6, ID 36 (Cat. 1): She is a student but she had modest egg-selling and gardening income-generating activities – her egg-selling activity hasn't really expanded since joining the savings group. Doesn't have help from anyone to save. [14]
G7, ID 41 (Cat. 1): Was reluctant to save in the 1st cycle, due to mistrust of group. Mother was also away, taking care of ailing father. This was the case during the 2nd cycle as well. Encouraged and motivated to save by employer in 1st cycle. Higher trust in the group in 2nd cycle after the 1st cycle share-out. [9, 10]
G8, ID 54 (Cat. 1): Divides income from income-generating activity and savings from husband's upkeep payments between three savings groups. Feels she would save more if she was part of fewer groups. [11]
G3, ID 17 (Cat. 2): Casual farm labourer. Mother is a farmer and also a casual labourer; she took over group membership from son during 2nd cycle. [14]
G3, ID 19 (Cat. 2): Farmer and DJ. Diverted savings to pursue a welding course in the 1st cycle. Obligations and broken audio equipment reduced income in 2nd cycle. [9, 16]
G4, ID 24 (Cat. 2): Mostly depends on brickmaking and bricklaying and is unable to save during certain periods (i.e. in the rainy season when bricks don't dry properly). Said the 1st cycle was just a trial as he did not trust the group in the beginning). He says the trainings made him develop goals, which motivated him to save more, but results are not evident. [10, 12]
G2, ID 8 (Cat. 5): Both she and her husband are casual farm workers and he periodically makes charcoal. Own a 0.5 acre plot. Self-identified as one of the lower-income households in the community. [14, 30]
G3, ID15 (Cat. 5): Earns income through tailoring. Splits income to save into two savings groups. [11]

Annexe Table A6.4 Increasing savers

G7, ID 42 (Cat. 1): Was sceptical of the group at first – actually saved more with friends than with the group in the 1st cycle. More trust in group in 2nd cycle particularly after 1st cycle share-out, and decided to 'double her efforts'. Parents also started contributing in 2nd cycle. [1, 7, 13]
G7, ID 44 (Cat. 1): Increase in savings in 2nd cycle mainly due to parents starting to contribute directly to savings group. Says she feels more motivated herself to save. Savings in 1st cycle also particularly low as she joined group one-third of the way into the cycle. [1, 30]
G7, ID 46 (Cat. 1): Mother died in the first weeks of the cycle. Brother was still in school and unable to provide much money to member. Share-out motivated member to save maximum amount of shares; also has more employment (weeding) in 2nd cycle than in 1st. [2, 3, 7, 9]
G8, ID 57 (Cat. 1): Explained this mainly by the increased success of her income generating activities, particularly the sugar cane distillation. Reasons for the increase seemed to be related to seasonality. [3, 4, 12]
G4, ID 26 (Cat. 2): He attributed dramatic increase in saving to increase in income after he invested loans and share-out. He says trainings improved budgeting and he cut unnecessary expenses (gambling and 'boozing'). 1st cycle share-out also motivated him in 2nd cycle. [3, 7, 15]
G4, ID 23 (Cat. 4): Did not fully trust security of group in the 1st cycle. Was frustrated at low share-out after 1st cycle, and pledged to herself to save all the shares at 'each sitting'. New fish-selling activity is doing well, in part because Selection Planning and Management (SPM) training showed the importance of customer care, i.e. not to 'bark' or 'shout back' at customers. [3, 7, 13, 15]
G5, ID 28 (Cat. 4): Access to loans enabled her to invest in income generating activities in the 2nd cycle, and they prospered. 1st cycle share-out motivated her to save more in the 2nd cycle. [3, 7]
G2, ID 13 (Cat. 5): No obvious explanation for improvement in 2nd cycle. [99]

Annexe Table A6.5 Decreasing savers

G2, ID 12 Cat. 1): Gets money to save from father, whose income largely depends on farming. No specific explanation given for reduction in 2nd cycle. [99]
G7, ID 40 (Cat. 1): Due to disagreement with the group over the share value increase after the 1st cycle, she decided to 'boycott' the rise in share value and keep saving as in the 1st cycle. She said this was by choice rather than by financial constraint – adding that 'the 2 cedis [2nd cycle max. share contribution value] is easy to save'. [30]
G2, ID 10 (Cat. 2): Got malaria at the start of the second cycle. [9]
G5, ID 30 (Cat. 2): 2nd cycle coincided with growing season, meaning he was unable to do casual labour or get income from gardening. In contrast, 1st cycle coincided with the harvest season. [12, 14]
G1, ID 4 (Cat. 5): No obvious explanation for decrease in 2nd cycle. [99]
G1, ID 7 (Cat. 5): No obvious explanation for decrease in 2nd cycle, though she did mention she found it difficult to save when she took a loan (which she did do in the 2nd cycle). [99]
G3, ID 18 (Cat. 5): Moved off the family land, where she lived and farmed rent free. Now pays rent in her husband's home village, and also rents land to farm. [9]
G3, ID 20 (Cat. 5): Husband gave her less money for the family budget because his income decreased. Pregnancy reduced her ability to farm successfully. [9, 23]
G5, ID 27 (Cat. 5): Defaulted on a loan in the 1st cycle and had to repay outstanding amount during the 2nd cycle. She was pregnant during 2nd cycle, making it difficult for her to gain income or to go to group meetings. Did not want to borrow, to avoid defaulting again, and this may have reduced incentive to save. [9, 25]

Annexe 7 Borrowing consistency

Annexe Table A7.1 Consistently high borrowers

G8, ID 53 (Cat. 1): Guardians (particularly his grandmother) had high and consistent demand for loans. Grandmother especially requested loans consistently for her tilapia selling activities, and for medication for her ailing husband. [4, 24]
G6, ID 33 (Cat. 2): Interested in 'free' access to loans, particularly to 'boost' his income-generating activities. Indeed, invested heavily in his charcoal-selling activity especially, which he was able to do as it was a 'fast-moving business'. Continued to borrow more than others as he is involved in multiple income-generating activities. [3]
G8, ID 51 (Cat. 3): Took loans mostly for her sister to invest in children's education and in her income-generating activity. Sister requested loans because of the limited availability of loans in her own VSLA. Sister serviced and repaid the loans, without incurring additional charges for the member or share cancellations. [17]
G5, ID 28 (Cat. 4): No obvious reason for this. Did mention that she felt borrowing made her income-generating activities prosper. [99]
G8, ID 50 (Cat. 4): Borrowed a lot of money on behalf of people within her social network: i.e. her mother, friends, and even neighbours. Also borrowed a moderate amount for herself. Despite feeling some uneasiness when taking some loans she seemed particularly indulgent of others' loan requests. [17]
G4, ID 25 (Cat. 5): Mentioned accessing loans is a priority for her within the group. Seemed like a very serious, responsible, committed and successful individual. With more experience and a seemingly more acute business sense than most, she was able to use loans effectively, investing them primarily in her income-generating activities. Actually felt limited by availability of funds in group. [3]

Annexe Table A7.2 Consistently low borrowers

G6, ID 39 (Cat. 1): Mostly invested loans into her gardening, which she conducted only during school breaks. Also displayed a somewhat conservative attitude to borrowing, being hesitant to borrow early in her engagement with the group. Being a student also probably affected scope of loan use. [14, 19]
G8, ID 56 (Cat. 1): Member said her mother felt limited in her access to loans in own VSLA, and thus had decided to engage in another savings group, particularly to 'top-up' and satisfy her loan needs. [4, 11]
G8, ID 55 (Cat. 2): Had little interest in borrowing for self – wanted to wait to start her income-generating activity (i.e. have a source of income) to start borrowing. Was quite an independent person, and seemed to have little demand from social network to borrow on their behalf. [19]
G4, ID 21 (Cat. 3): No obvious reason for this, though conservative attitude may stem from failure of first income-generating activity and near failure to repay 1st cycle loan. Also quite a timid and shy member in general. [99]
G4, ID 23 (Cat. 4): No obvious reason for this – simply does not seem necessary to satisfy her needs (she was the only saver who saved the maximum in 2nd cycle). [99]
G1, ID 3 (Cat. 5): Hesitant to take loans, feels they can be somewhat unsafe as the investment may or may not succeed in generating further income. Prefers to use share-outs. [19]

Annexe Table A7.3 Borrowing increasers

G8, ID 57 (Cat. 1): Invested loans in alcohol distillation activity. Seemed to be a good market for her alcohol in 2nd cycle. She explained she borrowed more when she felt there was a market for her products. [3, 4]
G4, ID 22 (Cat. 2): Decided to expand to more capital-intensive income-generating activities in 2nd cycle – i.e. farming -– and decided to use loans to do this. [3]
G4, ID 24 (Cat. 2): No apparent reason, but did say that one should be trained before using loans. Indeed, from the trainings (SPM and FL trainings provided in 2nd cycle), learned to plan and handle a loan. [15, 99]
G1, ID 2 (Cat. 2): No obvious reason for increase in 2nd cycle. Loan amounts are similar and nothing indicates more frequent borrowing. Average is higher perhaps simply because less time has elapsed in the cycle (in which she happens to have taken a loan). [99]
G4, ID 26 (Cat. 2): Mentions benefits of loan management training, thus potentially increasing motivation/confidence to borrow. Also, increase in loans probably related to increase in savings (four-fold increase in saving and borrowing, though the leverage ratio remained virtually the same). Also signalled a more motivated and serious attitude towards group after share-out. [7, 15, 20]
G2, ID 9 (Cat. 4): No obvious reason for increase in 2nd cycle. Loan amount similar to 1st cycle loan amounts. No indication that loan use overall will increase in 2nd cycle, when taking the entire duration of the cycle into account. [99]
G1, ID 1 (Cat. 5): No obvious reason for increase in 2nd cycle – loan amounts are similar. Borrowed sooner in the 2nd cycle, but difficult to assess indication of increased frequency in borrowing pattern. Did have difficulty borrowing more than once in 1st cycle, due to difficulty in repaying the 1st cycle loan. Does not fear to borrow (may explain quicker loan uptake in 2nd cycle). [99]
G1, ID 7 (Cat. 5): No obvious reason for increase in 2nd cycle. Though, loan amount in 2nd cycle equivalent to combined 1st cycle loan amounts. May indicate increased confidence in group and ability to repay. Also unclear if she intends to borrow further in 2nd cycle. [99]

Annexe Table A7.4 Borrowing decreasers

G8, ID 54 (Cat. 1): Categorically said she (the mother) used all her loans for her alcohol distillation activity. However, stopped distilling alcohol in latter half of 2nd cycle, because of her pregnancy. [4, 9]
G2, ID 10 (Cat. 2): Got malaria at start of 2nd cycle and had accumulated very little savings. [10]
G2, ID 14 (Cat. 2): No apparent reason. Did seem to use loans to establish and expand income-generating activity in 1st cycle, while only thus far using loan for research purposes in 2nd cycle. [99]
G5, ID 30 (Cat. 2): Income was lower in 2nd cycle (due to seasonality) and felt he didn't make enough income to repay loans. Didn't want to use shares as insurance as he 'didn't want to go out with nothing'. [12, 14]
G6, ID 34 (Cat. 4): She specifically said she felt a reduced need to borrow after 1st cycle since she'd been able to increase her capital base with previous loans and satisfy the needs of her economic activity. [26]
G5, ID 27 (Cat. 5): Defaulted on a loan in 1st cycle and had to pay back remaining amount in 2nd cycle. Saved very little in 2nd cycle and expressed reluctance to borrow. [19, 25]
G6, ID 35 (Cat. 5): She mentioned this was rather related to poorer demand for her products – thus giving less scope to invest in an income-generating activity and sell. [14]
G8, ID 49 (Cat. 5): In 1st cycle borrowed solely for friend but stopped doing so when friend failed to repay a loan. In 2nd cycle didn't want to borrow for herself, as wanted to wait for income-generating activity to expand further. [18]
G2, ID 8, 11, 12: None of these interviewees indicated an intention of reducing their borrowing in 2nd cycle. It is likely that simply too little time had thus far elapsed to satisfy the demand for loans. Demand for loans was indeed high in 2nd cycle, as many new members had already taken loans. [30]
G6, IDs 36, 37, 38: Structurally, there seem to be various reasons for the reduction in borrowing in 2nd cycle. First, savings dropped dramatically in 2nd cycle, thus limiting the amount available for loans. Second, whereas the larger loans happened later in 1st cycle, 2nd cycle was short, and perhaps did not permit a large accumulation of funds to issue larger loans. [12, 21]. ID 37 essentially gave these reasons when referring to the general decrease in borrowing of members in the 2nd cycle, stating it was due to seasonality, and to the fact that there were less savings available for loans in 2nd cycle, due the cycle coinciding with the lean season.

Annexe 8 Insights on engagement drawn from interviews

Why do people join savings groups?

The interviews revealed that people joined the savings groups for a variety of reasons, but the two most common were to save and to gain access to loans.

Some wanted to learn to save. This was particularly the case for students in Ghana, who had the aim of using their savings to cover part of their school-related expenses.

- ID 46 (a 13-year-old male student, Cat. 1) said he joined the group to 'know how to do savings for the future', which he explained as saving to continue to support his schooling, but also, later on in life, to be able to 'take care of himself – like a man'.
- A number of members also said learning how to save was important mainly because it helped them to avoid 'misusing their money'. ID 37 (a 24-year-old single man, Cat. 2) said he joined in order to save money and 'use things [e.g. money] properly'. Similarly, ID 39 (a 16-year-old female student, Cat. 1) said she joined simply to know 'how to save' and 'how to use money without misusing it'. She then added that she had two objectives when joining, the first of which was supporting her schooling in case her parents couldn't, and the other was simply to have money for her other needs. ID 40 (a 14-year-old female student, Cat. 1) said the awareness (sensitisation) campaign 'made her realise she was wasting money'. She thus felt she 'needed' to join the group in order to save money and avoid wasting it. School was not a priority for her when joining the group (she said her mother was already catering for her school expenses). ID 42 (a 13-year-old female student, Cat. 1) said the sensitisation campaign made her realise she was spending surplus money unnecessarily, and that it would thus be better to save it. She developed the goal of saving money to support her schooling, particularly in case her parents wouldn't be able to. She said she developed this goal through the initial trainings. ID 50 (a 25-year-old single mother, Cat. 4) said she joined the group because she knew she was misspending her money (even before the sensitisation campaign/joining the group), and instead wanted to 'save towards her future'. She explained she was making reference specifically to saving in order to build a kiosk for her food-selling activity.
- ID 43 (a 15-year-old male student, Cat. 1) said the sensitisation campaign gave him the idea of saving money which was not currently being used for the future. This motivated him to join the group. Particularly, he developed the aim of saving money in case his father wasn't able to cover his school-related expenses. ID 44 (a 14-year-old female student, Cat. 1) said she joined because she was 'thinking of the future'. She explained this as saving to support her schooling, but also to have money 'long term', and to help her parents out if need be. ID 47 (a 15-year-old male student) said he joined the group because he didn't always have money to buy things he needed, such as items for school.

Many highlighted both savings and borrowing

- ID 8 (a 22-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) heard that people could save and access loans; her primary motivations to join were to save money and access loans in case of emergencies, and to cater for family needs. ID 9 (a 36-year-old divorced woman, Cat. 4) wanted to know how to save money, and wanted to be able to have reliable access to loans. ID 14 (a 25-year-old single man, Cat. 2) joined primarily to access loan opportunities; however, he was also interested in accumulating savings. He thought the group would help him go into business (via a loan). ID 18 (a 22-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) wanted to 'develop herself' via saving and borrowing; ID 20 (a 24-year-old married woman, Cat. 2) wanted to learn how to save, and she wanted to take loans, namely 'to develop herself'; ID 23 (a 22-year-old married woman, Cat. 4) was interested both in saving and borrowing; ID 26 (a 19-year-old single man, Cat. 2) was interested in saving and borrowing; he thought it would be good for him. ID 32 (a 15-year-old female student, Cat. 1) joined the group primarily because she had learned that one's money grows when it is placed in the savings group. However, she said she had also been interested in the accessibility to loans when joining the group.

Others highlighted only borrowing

- ID 10 (a 20-year-old single man, Cat. 2) was impressed that he could get access to loans; ID 24 (a 22-year-old single man, Cat. 2) wanted to use loans to invest in his income-generating activity and in livestock; ID 13 (a 22-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) wanted to access loans for added security for her family; ID 30 (a 20-year-old man, Cat. 2) said he joined the group because the accessibility to loans appealed to him specifically.

The interest in joining often related to starting or expanding an income-generating activity or business, or meeting family needs and expenses.

- ID 14 (a 25-year-old single man, Cat. 2) said he wanted to go into business rather than farm, and thought a loan from the group would help him go to do this. ID 2 (a 22-year-old single woman, Cat. 2) joined the group with the goal of owning her own income-generating activity. That is why she took a TZS 100,000 (~£30) loan in October 2014, so that she could invest the capital needed to start an M-PESA business. ID 22 (a 16-year-old single woman, Cat. 2) already had a goal when joining the group, which was to start her tomato and palm oil income-generating activity. She planned on using the share-out to start her income-generating activity. However, she took a loan instead which she eventually topped up with her share-out. ID 3 (a 21-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) wanted to start a '*kef*' (small snack bar) income-generating activity, and thought she would eventually be able to do this after joining the group. She also didn't want to depend on her husband. ID 28 (a 28-year-old single mother, Cat. 4) said she joined the group to expand her fish trading activity. ID 30 (a 20-year-old single man, Cat. 2) said he joined because he thought the group would enable him to invest in fertiliser.

- ID 33 (a 22-year-old single man, Cat. 2) said he was attracted to joining a savings group because of the 'free' access to loans it offers and to which he'd become

accustomed (he had been in another savings group before, which had been dissolved). However, ultimately, he said the reason he joined the current group was because he'd made up his mind about wanting to 'boost' his business.

- ID 8 (a 22-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) wanted to be able to respond to emergencies to cater for family needs; ID 12 (a 14-year-old schoolboy, Cat. 1) wanted to help pay his school fees as well as to help cater for other family expenses; ID 13 (a 22-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) wanted to be able to cater for her child's and family's needs (e.g. clothes, food). ID 27 (a 25-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) said her husband allowed her to join the group because she explained to him that she felt she was too dependent on the money he provided to cater for the family's needs. Through the group, which supported her income-generating activities, she felt more independent as she was now able to buy household items, even without his consent.
- ID 36 (a 15-year-old female student, Cat. 1) said she joined the group in order to 'find money to help herself', i.e. pay for her school fees, school expenses and personal expenses. Although she uses the money now to cater for these expenses, she also invested in her income-generating activity, i.e. buying eggs and reselling them.
- ID 45 (a 19-year-old single woman, Cat. 2) said she joined in order to access a loan, which she wanted to use to invest in and start an income-generating activity. She wanted to use this income-generating activity primarily to enable her to save and accumulate money in the group, to then allow her to further her education. Thus, she joined the group for two reasons, first to access loans, and second as a saving vehicle. Finally, she mentioned another reason for joining the group, which was to have access to money in case of emergencies.

Some highlighted the safety of savings

- ID 22 (a 16-year-old single girl, Cat. 2) felt the group was a more secure place to save; ID 3 (a 21-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) was reassured that her savings would be safe; ID 5 (a 30-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) was impressed that the group seemed to be a safe place to save her money.

Family members and friends influence some decisions to join a savings group

- ID 12 (a 14-year-old male student, Cat. 1) has a brother who was a member of a carry-over group, which helped to raise awareness about the potential benefits of joining. ID 2 (a 22-year-old single woman, Cat. 2) has a sister in the group, and she was convinced by her sister that this was a good idea. Her sister said: 'Now you have a job and can save.' ID 6 (a 23-year-old single woman, Cat. 1) was convinced by her mother (the group CRP) that it would be a good idea to try to save money; ID 9 (a 36-year-old divorced woman, Cat. 4) was talked to by her mother who is a member of a carry-over group.
- ID 29 (a 21-year-old single woman, Cat. 2) said she was motivated to join the group in part because her father is the savings group coordinator. In terms of reasons for saving, she said she initially saved because she just 'wanted to keep money' (her parents were paying for her school fees). ID 55 (a 22-year-old single woman, Cat. 2) said she joined because her brother, the former

group coordinator, told her of the importance of savings. She realised saving in a group could be helpful as she would have 'something to fall back on if need be'. She eventually developed the goal of saving to pay for her national school exam registration fees. After completing her schooling, she developed the goal of saving money to invest in a container in which to start a provisions shop.

- ID 31 (an 18-year-old male student, Cat. 1) said he'd heard the benefits of the savings group from his friends and family members who were in adult VSLAs. Particularly, he'd heard that some of them had been able to double their savings in the VSLA. He said he joined primarily to grow his money/savings. He mentioned that no one forced him to join the group. ID 41 (a 13-year-old male student, Cat. 1), on the other hand, said he joined mainly because his friends were joining the group and he didn't want to be left out. He said he joined in order to help cover his school expenses, particularly in the event that his parents would not be able to. He said he could use the group to support himself by selling shares and by using the money consequently made accessible to him (this was done in the school-based group, often in lieu of borrowing).
- ID 51 (a 23-year-old woman in a relationship, Cat. 3) said she got the idea of joining the savings group from the 'madam' who trained her during her tailoring apprenticeship; she said she used to save in a group on her behalf. Through her participation in that group, and through conversations with the madam, she said she realised she was misspending her money, and that joining a savings group would help her to manage her money better. Finally, she said the aim of saving in the group was specifically to allow her to find a more suitable place in which to conduct her income-generating activity, i.e. a 'container' she would set up along the side of the road.

Surrogate savers join on behalf of their caregivers (most often one of their parents)

- ID 53 (an 18-year-old student saving on behalf of his great-uncle, Cat. 1) said he joined the group in order to save for his great-uncle, his primary caregiver. He said the great-uncle wanted to use the group to save and to use share-outs to support his great-nephews' educational and household needs. Partly, he said he would be able to do this by using part of the share-outs to invest in his canopy-rental business, which would generate further income used to support his great-nephews. The great-nephew (the surrogate saver) said he saved on behalf of his uncle as he wanted to render a service to his great-uncle who was taking care of him. He did this because he also realised he was the ultimate beneficiary of the great-uncle's participation in the group.
- The mother of ID 54 (a 13-year-old student saving on behalf of his mother, Cat. 1) said she saved in a group (her third savings group) specifically so that her children would be able to benefit in the form of support for their education from the savings accumulated in this group. She also said she joined the group because 'her savings were limited' (i.e. it seemed that participation in two VSLAs was perhaps still not enough to store all of her excess money).
- ID 56 (an 18-year-old female student, Cat. 1) said she joined on the advice of her mother (i.e. her mother may have urged her to join the group to save on her – the mother's – behalf). She said the aim of joining the group was to save

money in case she or her mother needed money. She also said a motivation to join for her was the potential access to loans, and to social fund grants. Both her mother and father were members of other VSLAs.

- ID 57 (a 16-year-old male student, Cat. 1) said he joined the group after sensitisation. He talked to his mother about the group and she agreed to have him join the group so that he would benefit from exposure to the trainings. The mother said her reason for contributing to his savings was mainly to allow her to accumulate money 'little by little' specifically to pay for his (and her other children's) school fees. She felt it would be easier to do this by saving in a dedicated group. However, she also relied heavily on the loans to invest in her income-generating activity, which she said she in turn also used to support her children's household and educational needs.

Engagement with savings groups is embedded in family and social relations

Savings group members use the funds of other individuals (e.g. spouse/boyfriend, parent, ex-partner, other family members), or funds from other sources (e.g. existing savings, informal loans), to save and to re-pay loans.

- Nearly two-thirds of women in relationships report either setting aside money for savings from that given to them by the husband for family expenses (ID 1, ID 3, ID 11, ID 13, ID 15, ID 20, ID 35, ID 49, ID 50, ID 54), or the husband/boyfriend giving them money when they did not have sufficient funds to buy shares (ID 17, ID 21, ID 27, ID 35, ID 51).
- ID 2 (a 22-year-old single woman, Cat. 2) and ID 31 (an 18-year-old student, Cat. 1) reported borrowing from relatives, and ID 1 (a 33-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) reported borrowing from neighbours in order to buy shares.
- ID 11 (a 26-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) reported using savings she had accumulated previously in order to buy shares. ID 53 (two 18-year-old males saving on behalf of their great-uncle, Cat. 1) reported using at least half of both his share-outs to reinvest and buy shares in the group.
- Several respondents mentioned receiving help from family members (mostly parents) or relatives when they did not have money to save (ID 12, ID 22, ID 24, ID 34, ID 39, ID 40, ID 49, ID 50, ID 52, ID 55). For example: ID 12 (a 14-year-old school boy, Cat. 1) reported that he gets money to save from his father and brothers; ID 22 (a 16-year-old girl, Cat. 2) reported that twice a month her mother helps her to buy shares by giving her money; and ID 24 (a 22-year-old male, Cat. 2) reported that he sometimes 'pesters' his parents to give him money to buy shares.
- ID 17 (a 35-year-old married woman, Cat. 2) reported buying shares with money sent to her via mobile money by her son who lives elsewhere. She also reported that the family helped repay a loan she took to pay the children's school fees.
- ID 12 (a 14-year-old school boy, Cat. 1) reported that his brothers helped him pay back a loan he took for his school fees, and that his father paid back a loan he (the school boy) took and gave to his father to use to support his farming activities.

- ID 4 (a 23-year-old woman, Cat. 5) reported that her parents helped repay loans that she took so they could do work on their house.
- ID 13 (a 22-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) reports giving her husband half of a loan she took.

In both groups in Ghana, group members who are not autonomous – i.e. who do not have income-generating activities that can sustain them independently – contribute to the savings group primarily through money they receive from their caregivers.

- All the members of a school-based savings groups in Ghana reported buying shares using money they save from the pocket money they receive from their caregivers (parents or other legal guardians) (ID 40, ID 41, ID 42, ID 43, ID 44, ID 45, ID 46, ID 47, ID 48).
- The majority of these members' caregivers also contribute money directly towards their share purchases (ID 40, ID 41, ID 42, ID 43, ID 44, ID 47). ID 40 (a 14-year-old female, Cat. 1) reported receiving money for savings from her mother when she did not have any; ID 41 (a 13-year-old male, Cat. 1) reported 'infrequently' receiving an additional cedi on the day of the share meeting to contribute to his savings; ID 47 (a 15-year-old male and chairperson of the group, Cat. 1) also reported 'infrequently' receiving money expressly for his savings, with the amount sometimes as much as GHS 2; ID 42 (a 13-year-old female, Cat. 1) reported receiving GHS 0.5 directly for her share contribution on the share meeting day in addition to her regular pocket money allowance in the 2nd cycle; ID 44 (a 14-year-old female, Cat. 1) reported receiving two additional cedis from her parents on the day of the meeting, though 'sometimes' she got half this amount, and 'sometimes' she got nothing at all; and ID 43 (a 15-year-old male who was the 'top saver' in the group, Cat. 1) reported receiving the full value of the maximum share contribution (i.e. GHS 1 in the 1st cycle and GHS 2 in the 2nd cycle) 'half of the time' in the 1st cycle, and even more frequently in the 2nd cycle.
- Even outside of school-based savings groups, members living at home but who did not have an income-generating activity able to sustain them reported receiving pocket money from caregivers which they then saved (ID 52, ID 55).

Some members in the groups are being replaced by other family members.

- ID 33 (a 22-year-old single man and secretary of his group, Cat. 2) reported that a member who left the area after getting married was desperate for her sister to save on her behalf (labelled as a 'proxy') so that she could keep her place in the group. Although the group resisted the idea at first, on the grounds that the replacement member was young and seemed potentially not mature enough to be a committed member of the group, they then did allow the member to be replaced by her sister. The sister, however, became an independent member of the group, saving on her own account.
- ID 42 (a 13-year-old female student, Cat. 1) said her brother would replace her if she continued her education at JHS in Kumasi (two hours away), as was likely to happen. This did not seem to be a problem for her group.

- ID 53 (an 18-year-old male, Cat. 1) said he replaced his cousin as the group's member (though both he and his cousin were/are saving on behalf of their great-uncle) after the 2nd cycle, when his cousin returned to live with his own family in Western Ghana. ID 54 (a 13-year-old student, Cat. 1) said he replaced his 18-year-old brother, a driver (taxi) after the 1st cycle – this seemed to be because of the brother's busy schedule as a driver.

Members are passing their share-outs and/or loans to others.

- ID 6 (a 23-year-old single woman, Cat. 1) reported giving her share-out to her mother to use as she wished. ID 17 (a 35-year-old married woman, Cat. 2) reported that the share-out was 'presented' to her husband as the head of the household.
- ID 4 (a 23-year-old woman, Cat. 5) took a loan that her parents then used to improve their house so they could generate some rental income. ID 19 (a 19-year-old single man, Cat. 2) used a loan he took to help his family buy windows for their house – they did not help with the repayment.
- ID 12 (a 14-year-old schoolboy, Cat. 1) took a loan that his father used to finance his farming activities. He has an agreement with his father that the share-out or any profits from an income-generating activity he (the schoolboy) gets involved in are returned to his father in the form of contributions towards his school fees). ID 31 (an 18-year-old male student, Cat. 1) reported taking a loan that his uncle (his caregiver) used to invest in his garden (he bought fuel for the water pump and chemicals).
- ID 32 (a 15-year-old female student with several income-generating activities, Cat. 1) said she no longer gave in to her mother's demands for money during cycles. Rather, the member now waits until the share-out to give her money.
- ID 36 (a 15-year-old female student, Cat. 1) reported giving her loans to her mother to 'help the family', e.g. when a child in the household is sick; she also reported taking a loan so that her mother could buy fertiliser for her farming activities. In these cases, her mother repays the loans. When asked whether it was part of her original intention to borrow on her mother's behalf, she said it wasn't, rather it was something that simply emerged.
- ID 37 (a 24-year-old single man and chairperson, Cat. 2) reported using one of his share-outs to invest in his farming activities and giving part of it to his family.
- Many members in one of the Ghana groups (the majority of those we interviewed) took loans primarily for their family members, friends, neighbours or even fellow group members. ID 49 (a 22-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) took three loans to help a friend with her fish trading activity; she said her friend's delay in repaying one of the loans made it more difficult to purchase the five shares on her own, meaning that her mother had to contribute to her savings. She took a break from borrowing after this as she was not borrowing for herself. ID 50 (a 25-year-old single mother and eldest of five children, Cat. 4) reported using only two of the seven loans she took for herself, giving a number of them to her mother so that her mother could cater for the other children's needs, including their school fees; the member helped repay some

of these loans. ID 51 (a 23-year-old woman in a relationship, Cat. 3) reported giving five of her six loans to one of her sisters so the sister could invest in her business. ID 52 (a 20-year-old single apprentice, Cat. 2) took six loans, of which she used only one for herself – she gave loans to her auntie, her mother, her friends and even to a family friend (who failed to repay the loan, causing her to cancel shares to pay for the service charges, and to default on the loan). ID 55 (a 22-year-old single woman, Cat. 2) said she gave both her loans to family members – her sister and her mother; she said she wanted to wait until she opened her provisions store before accessing loans for herself.

- The share-outs and loans of all four 'surrogate savers' who were interviewed (ID 53, ID 54, ID 56, ID 57) were used by those providing the savings, to invest in their income-generating activities or to cater for household expenses.

Members are being 'topped up' by spouses/partners or other family members when they make investments with their share-outs.

- ID 43 (a 15-year-old male student, Cat. 1) got help from his father when he told him he wanted to use part of his share-out to buy a goat. The student had used the other part for school-related expenses. Indeed, to buy the goat the member contributed GHS 16 (~£2.75) out of his GHS 27 (~£4.60) share-out while his father contributed the remaining GHS 54 (~£9).
- ID 51 (a 23-year-old woman, Cat. 3) said she fully expected her boyfriend – who contributes 50 per cent of her shares – to help her pay for a container in which she would set up her fashion and design (tailoring) income-generating activity. She did mention having given her two previous share-outs to him to buy motorcycles for his motorcycle taxi income-generating activity.

Members' income-generation activities

Interviewees reported involvement in a wide variety of income-generating activities. The majority of these activities, particularly among members of groups in rural areas, are essentially the same as the activities that have characterised Africa's economies for decades: small-scale agriculture and livestock, casual farm labour, mud block and charcoal making, small-scale food preparation, services like hair plaiting, and petty trade. Activities which fall outside these well-established areas are few and far between. The only examples we encountered were ID 2 (a 22-year-old single woman living near Dar es Salaam, Cat. 2) and ID 6 (a 23-year-old female university student, Cat. 1) who reported establishing an M-PESA 'business' together, as well as ID 33 (a 22-year single man, Cat. 2) who established a recording studio by the side of a main road, a few kilometres away from his home village.

There are three examples of economic activities that could be termed a business (in the sense of Figure 2.1).

- ID 5 (a 30-year-old married woman living near Dar es Salaam, Cat. 5) runs a shop and bar. She started the shop with her husband using funds he had saved from his work as a carpenter. In addition to the doughnuts she makes, she sells water, *ugali* (maize) flour and other items. During the interview more than ten customers of all ages entered the shop and purchased beans, airtime,

oil, treats, juice and other wares. She has taken two loans from the YSG to establish a bar/drinks business that is attached to the shop.

- ID 10 (a 20-year-old single man, Cat. 2) is a house painter with two employees. He reports that he usually writes out contracts for large jobs, but otherwise agrees verbally with his clients. He gets cash advances to help pay for materials. His customers come from various places in the nearby regions, not just his immediate village – they contact him when seeing work that is currently being done by him elsewhere.
- ID 14 (a 25-year-old single man, Cat. 2) buys maize through traders from various regions in Tanzania, mills the grain and resells the flour to small shops in the surrounding area. He buys 180 kg sacks for TZS 45,000-60,000 (pays upon delivery of the sacks) and resells the milled grain and husks (animal feed) for TZS 73,000. He usually buys and sells about 5–10 sacks per week. He used a small loan to visit the Tanga area to try to identify cheaper suppliers. He wants to open a wholesale shop.

Some economic activities start out on a very small scale or are one-offs.

- ID 2 (a 22-year-old single woman living near Dar es Salaam, Cat. 2) reported buying and re-selling four handbags.
- ID 21 (a 20-year-old married woman, Cat. 3) initially bought two ducks; ID 26 (a 19-year-old single man, Cat. 2) reported using part of a loan to buy one chicken; ID 22 (a 16-year-old woman, Cat. 2) used part of a loan to buy one goat.

Different strategies are evident

- Some individuals seem to go all out to try to develop multiple economic activities: the current activities of ID 26 (a 19-year-old single man, Cat. 2) include farming, brick making, coffee trading, and raising pigs and chickens, and he hopes to open a hardware shop and buy a motorcycle for transport. ID 24 (a 22-year-old single man, Cat. 2) is a farmer, brick maker, builder and pig raiser. ID 34 (a 27-year-old woman, Cat. 4) is a gardener, farmer, sweet beer producer, grass cutter and thatch seller, and watermelon trader. ID 37 (a 24-year-old single man, Cat. 2), who was only involved in agricultural activities in the 1st cycle, had gone into chicken as well as charcoal trading since joining the group. Two members from Uganda (ID 26) and Zambia (ID 37) respectively said the enterprise trainings had specifically encouraged the diversification of incomes among YSG members.
- A few appear to be much more focused: ID 10 (a 20-year-old single man, Cat. 2) specialises in house painting; ID 14 (a 25-year-old single man, Cat. 2) specialises in the sale of maize flour.

The value of training

There are some very clear examples of members finding the trainings of direct relevance to their economic activities.

- ID 10 (a 22-year-old single man, Cat. 2), a house painter, reported that he had learned to treat his work as a business, and that it is important to deliver the expected outputs on time, as agreed. ID 19 (a 19-year-old single man, Cat. 2) also reported that he had learned to treat his DJ activities as a business, not something he does for fun.
- ID 11 (a 26-year-old married woman who sells soap, Cat. 5) reported that she learned how to deal with customers who bought on credit and then did not settle their debts.
- ID 23 (a 22-year-old woman who trades in fish, Cat. 4) reported that she has learned to treat her customers better. While previously she was emotional with the customers, and would sometimes 'bark' or 'shout back' at them, she now knows to use 'good language' to explain things to them. She says that knowledge about customer care was the most useful thing she learned from the SPM training. ID 26 (a 20-year-old mother) also mentioned that the customer care lesson she received from the enterprise training was partially responsible for helping her to increase her customer base.

Members felt the trainings on financial literacy helped them to increase their savings.

- Some said they were able to reduce their expenses or to budget more effectively (ID 5, ID 7, ID 10, ID 11, ID 14, ID 15, ID 16, ID 19, ID 25, ID 26, ID 31, ID 33, ID 34, ID 37, ID 40, ID 43, ID 57).
- For example, ID 5 (a 30-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) said she'd learned to plan for long-term expenses rather than only for short-term ones. She also learned to save money for emergencies – she attributed these to the FL training. ID 10 (a 20-year-old single man, Cat. 2) said that through the trainings, he'd learned the importance of saving, and the need for patience when saving and planning for one's investments, such that he'd learned to budget and better manage his money. ID 16 (a 28-year-old married man, Cat. 5) said he increased his savings after received FL training, which he said had helped him better budget and plan the use of his money.
- ID 33 (a 22-year-old single man) said that above all, his participation in the YSG and particularly the FE training had helped him to improve his savings. He said the goal he'd established for himself through the training helped him budget and avoid trivial expenses. ID 19 (a 19-year-old single man, Cat. 2) and ID 26 (a 19-year-old single man, Cat. 2) also talked about reducing unnecessary expenditure; as did ID 37 (a 24-year-old single man, Cat. 2) who reported that the training helped him to manage his money. ID 34 (a 27-year-old single mother, Cat. 4) said the FE trainings helped her to 'focus on the future' and to prioritise her spending.
- ID 14 (a 25-year-old single man, Cat. 2) said the trainings had helped to provide him with an aim; indeed he stated that 'the aim of saving is to change your life', thus implying that if you don't have that aim, you will not be able to save adequately.

Empowerment

A number of women, particularly in rural Tanzania but also in Uganda, planned to invest in land, to increase their independence from their spouses.

- ID 8 (a 22-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) said she was planning to invest in a half-acre plot to take care of herself and her children in case her husband left her. ID 13 (a 22-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) said her goal and plans were to invest in a plot and house of her own because she thought she would get more control of her own affairs and respect from her husband, with the ability to leave him if things did not go well. She did not hide her plans from her husband, and as things were going well with him for now, her plan was to build the house and rent it out as a source of income. She said she set her goals of acquiring land and a house as a result of the CRP and the trainings, which emphasised the importance of investing in assets, especially for women, who usually otherwise have no security if separating from their husbands. ID 20 (a 24-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) said she planned on using her third share-out (her YSG was in its 2nd cycle) to invest in her own property to increase her independence in case her husband 'turned on her', for example, by marrying a second wife. Trying to remain secretive about her ambitions, she said that in order to make these investments, she would pretend to use the money from her next share-out on household items (e.g. children's clothes, sanitary pads, etc), and invest part of it in another VSLA or bank account instead.
- ID 11 (a 26-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) said she was able to use a loan from the YSG to invest in a plot in a different community. She was planning to build a house there for herself as well, and had already bought the iron sheets for the roof with her first share-out.
- ID 27 (a 25-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) said she no longer had to exclusively rely on her husband for money to pay for expenses as she was able to access her own money through her participation in the YSG.

Both women and men reported feeling more respected and having a greater role in decision-making.

- ID 23 (a 22-year-old single mother, Cat. 4 – the highest saver in her group's 2nd cycle) said she felt highly respected within her community because her fellow community members now asked her for financial advice, as well as for loans.
- ID 22 (a 16-year-old single woman, Cat. 2) said she felt her confidence had increased since joining the group. She attributed this mainly to her experience with income-generating activities, which she'd started with loans and share-outs from the group. She also had increased her income, enterprise knowledge, and ability to negotiate with vendors in the market (she used to rely on her mother for this). She also felt more respected by her family members because she was able to cater for her own expenses and stop asking her family members for money, but also contribute to family expenses.
- ID 25 (a 20-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) cited many benefits from her participation in the YSG. First, she felt more confident due to her increased

enterprise knowledge gained through the trainings, and due to the increased access to capital she had to invest in her income-generating activities. She also mentioned her 1st cycle share-out contributing to her confidence (she was the highest saver in the group in the 1st cycle), and feeling empowered by the realisation of her ability to fulfil her dream of acquiring land (she planned on saving her 2nd cycle share-out in order to be able to invest in land with her third share-out), which she previously exclusively relied on her husband for. She suggested that this had been the case because she was a woman. Finally, she said she benefited from increased respect because community members asked her for loans, and because she was able to contribute to the expenses of her extended family (with whom she was currently living). She said the respect her husband gave her also increased; she mentioned having a greater say in family decisions, particularly relating to expenditures, since she now had money of her own which she contributed to the family budget, and since her husband recognised her increased capacity to manage money.

- ID 34 (a 27-year-old single mother, Cat. 4) said she felt more respected within her community, particularly because her neighbours could see the house – the only one built of brick and with metal roofing in her immediate vicinity – she'd been able to save up for and invest in with money she mobilised through the YSG. People also respected her because her income-generating activities had not 'decreased' (i.e. they had survived).
- ID 24 (a 22-year-old single man, Cat. 2) said his membership in the YSG was responsible for the increased respect other community members gave him, since they now 'know where he belongs'. He said his family also now trusted him more financially and did not hesitate to lend him money as they knew he would put it to good use.
- ID 31 (an 18-year-old male student, Cat. 1) said community members now 'approached him like an adult', because of how he planned things. He referred particularly to the fact that he'd been able to save up some money and buy goats.
- ID 46 (a 13-year-old male student, Cat. 1) said he'd gained a lot of respect from his family members since joining the YSG. His family (composed primarily of his two older siblings – both his parents had passed away) was happy that he was able to mobilise and spend money on his own. They also recognised his increased 'knowledge on money matters' since joining the YSG, such that he said he 'got a mouthpiece' within his family, meaning that he had a say in the family's financial affairs. He gave the example that he was now called upon to negotiate the sale of livestock on the family's behalf (he had recently sold a family goat). He said the trainings were responsible for his increased financial knowledge.

Additional savings vehicles and formal financial services

Some group members have access to and use one or more additional savings and/or banking vehicles. There are different views about the need for and/or desirability of formal bank accounts.

Some are members of other savings groups.

- Four were members of savings groups before joining this one: ID 11 (a 26-year-old married woman, was in a Plan carry-over group, Cat. 5); ID 15 (a 25-year-old married woman, was in a LUDIPO [another local NGO] group, Cat. 5); ID 16 (a 28-year-old married man, Cat. 5); and ID 49 (a 22-year-old married woman, Cat. 5).
- Three reported joining other savings groups because of the savings limits of the VSLA model (ID 3, ID 25, ID 26). ID 25 (a 20-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) reported that two other members of his group were also members of the other savings group. ID 3 (21-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) reported that she had not told her husband that she joined the other group, so she could have more security.

Eight reported they used mobile money. (Note: seven of the eight are from Tanzania.)

- ID 3 (a 21-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) uses mobile money for savings. ID 4 (a 23-year-old woman, Cat. 5), ID 7 (a 27-year-old woman, Cat. 5), ID 8 (a 22-year-old woman, Cat. 5), ID 12 (a 14-year-old schoolboy, Cat. 1), and ID 16 (a 28-year-old married man, Cat. 5) do not use mobile money for savings, but rather to facilitate transactions.
- ID 2 (a 22-year-old single woman, Cat. 2) also likes the security mobile money provides, as she previously lost some cash when her house burned down. ID 55 (a 22-year-old single woman, Cat. 2) has a mobile money account in which she keeps her share-out (over GHS 600 or ~£105). She felt this was a safe place to save her money while she waited to have enough to invest in a container (to open a provisions shop). When asked how she felt about opening a bank account, she said she had 'no desire to open a bank account'. She explained that she'd experienced going to a bank before with her sister, but that she 'just [was] not interested' in saving in a bank. What appealed to her about the mobile money account was that it was 'easy to access the money on her account'.
- ID 31 (an 18-year-old male student, Cat. 1), who didn't currently use any other financial services, stated that he wished to use mobile money simply to 'experience the good part of it', and not to save particularly. He thus seemed attracted to this service because of its novelty.

Three reported having bank accounts. (Note: all three are from Tanzania; two of them are from the urban group.)

- ID 2 (a 22-year-old single woman, Cat. 2) reported that she has had a bank account from the time she was in school, and this was how she learned to save. However, she prefers the group for savings because it also gives her access to credit. ID 6 (a 23-year-old single woman, Cat. 1) reports that she has had a bank account for three years and still uses it for savings although the group has become her main method of savings. She thinks that other members are not really thinking about linking to a formal financial institution (FFI) – they are just saving as a group. ID 10 (a 20-year-old single man, Cat. 2) has a bank account and uses it for savings that he cannot put into the group, but he prefers the group because he can easily get loans.

Eleven saw no need for a bank account.

- ID 3 (a 21-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) does not feel the need for other formal banking services. ID 4 (a 23-year-old woman, Cat. 5) uses mobile money but does not have a bank account because she thinks she does not have enough money to put in it. Similarly, ID 7 (a 27-year-old woman, Cat. 5) and ID 8 (a 22-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) use mobile money but do not have a desire or plan to have a bank account. ID 12 (a 14-year-old schoolboy, Cat. 1) uses mobile money but does not have or want any other bank account, nor does anyone in his family. He reports that he has never heard any other group members discussing bank accounts (or wanting to open one). ID 29 (a 21-year-old single woman, Cat. 2) said she wasn't currently accessing other financial services, and that she didn't have a particular desire to at the moment. ID 50 (a 25-year-old single mother, Cat. 4) said she had no interest in opening a bank account. She said she preferred the group, namely because she is sceptical of other financial institutions; she felt microfinance institutions (MFIs) were unsafe and that there weren't any banks around. Although she eventually admitted that rural banks existed, and that they could be credible, she still did not trust these. She said she trusted the savings group (even from the start) since she'd seen BoC VSLAs operate in the community before (her mother was in a VSLA for six years).
- ID 2 (a 22-year-old single woman, Cat. 2) uses mobile money, but reports that she does not want or need an individual bank account now. She may need one in the future if she has more money than she could save in the group. ID 55 (a 22-year-old single woman, Cat. 2) also used a mobile money account to save, and said she had no interest in having a bank account.
- ID 9 (a 36-year-old divorced woman, Cat. 4) uses mobile money; she does not have a bank account yet, but would like to have one. She said a problem was that the nearest bank branches were actually quite far away.

Eighteen said they would like to have a bank account in the future.

- ID 25 (a 20-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) reported that she would like to have (be linked to) a bank account; while ID 16 (a 28-year-old married man, Cat. 5) reported that he wanted to open a bank account because it is more secure than leaving his money in the house (when he sells his bricks he gets a lot of cash that cannot go into the savings group), and because it would give him further access to loans.
- ID 32 (a 15-year-old female student, Cat. 1) said she would like to open a bank account to avoid using the money she could get at any time from the group, and to enable her to 'keep money for a longer time'. She actually saw the distance to a bank as a positive thing in this regard, as she deemed her savings would be safer there as she would have even less access to them than in the savings group.
- ID 5 (a 30-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) makes doughnuts and runs a general store and bar. She does not have a bank account, but thinks of getting one in the future. She said she would like one because she views a bank account as another safe place to save, and also because it provides interest.

- ID 24 (a 22-year-old single man, Cat. 2) reported he would be interested in having bank accounts in the future, particularly if his income increased, but he did mention that distance to a bank was a problem. ID 23 a 22-year-old woman, Cat. 4) and ID 14 (a 25-year-old single man, Cat. 2) would be interested in bank accounts if their income-generating activities or businesses continued to expand (ID 14 also noted the savings limits of the group). ID 20 (a 24-year-old married women, Cat. 5) said opening a bank account would depend on the amount of her 3rd share-out. ID 33 (a 22-year-old single man, and the best saver in the group, Cat. 2) said he was interested in opening a bank account as a way to save his excess money, particularly when he would be saving larger amounts. Indeed, his plan was to save up ZMW 10,000 (~£556) over two years in order to attend tertiary education, and he would not be able to save all of it in the group. ID 34 (a 27-year-old single mother, Cat. 4) said she desired to open a bank account, particularly as her economic activities expand – she seemed like a successful businesswoman, having been able to build herself a new house and invest in goats. Much like ID 33, ID 43 (a 15-year-old male student, and the highest saver in his group, Cat. 1) said he would eventually like to open a bank account in case he had excess money he wasn't able to save in the group. ID 44 (a 14-year-old female student, Cat. 1) said she would like to open a bank account in the future, namely 'when she gets more money'.
- ID 36 (a 15-year-old female student, Cat. 1) said she saw other people with bank accounts, and thus wanted to have her own as well.
- ID 38 (a 25-year-old father, Cat. 5) said 'the only way he can desire [to access further financial services]' is when he 'gets big'. He said he would potentially like to access these services in order to gain 'a bit more' access to loans, but this wasn't an absolute necessity at the moment. He said he would potentially look to an MFI or a bank to access more loans, but he was actually reluctant to approach an MFI as he didn't trust them, because they 'harass' clients and are inflexible.
- ID 40 (a 14-year-old female student, Cat 1) said she would like to open a bank account, but took a long time to explain why. She eventually said it would be safer to save in a bank rather than at home. She had plans to go to Kumasi for JHS, and thus would probably not have the option of saving in a group. She said she'd eventually want a bank account, so she could save for the future, but also when she would have more money. ID 41 (a 13-year-old male student, Cat. 1) said that participating in the group and practising saving encouraged him to save in a bank in the future because it would be safer than saving at home. ID 47 (a 15-year-old male student, Cat. 1) said he had plans to open a bank account in the future for safety reasons. He explained the fact that he may not always be a part of a savings group in future, and thus needs somewhere safer than home for his savings.ID 45 (a 19-year-old single woman, Cat. 2) said she potentially intended to open a bank account, to store her share-out in; she felt this would be safer than saving it at home. Reinvesting her share-out in the group did not seem like an option – this is usually only allowed if all members are doing this. ID 46 (a 13-year-old male student, Cat. 1) said he wanted to open a bank account, mainly to protect his savings against theft. He thought someone outside of the group could potentially manage to steal the cashbox.

- ID 42 (a 13-year-old female student, Cat 1) said she would like to open a bank account, but was not able to explain why.

Savings groups and group dynamics

For some people interaction with other group members motivates savings and engagement; for others, the groups have a demonstration or competitive effect that drives savings.

- ID 25 (a 20-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) said she was motivated to save in part through speaking and interacting with fellow group members. Along similar lines, ID 1 (a 33-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) said that the group focuses and motivates members, and that members don't leave others alone – they check in with each other to see how they are doing financially and whether they are achieving their goals. They also provide advice. ID 3 (a 21-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) said that 'at home, it's difficult to save; it's easier to save with the group'. Specifically the group asks what she does with her money, and motivates and helps her to save. It can also help with her financial problems, or to start an income-generating activity.
- But such oversight does not always have the desired effect. ID 4 (a 23-year-old woman and group chairperson, Cat. 5) said that during the 1st cycle, before she became chairperson, other members often enquired about and questioned her savings activities. She found this annoying and sometimes simply decided not to go to group meetings without giving any reason. Interestingly, she suggests that it was because of this 'youthful behaviour' that she was elected as chairperson. It evidently had the desired effect as she says she now feels the pressure to be more committed to the group.
- ID 10 (a 20-year-old single man, Cat. 2) said that witnessing other members save helped to improve his own savings behaviour. Similarly, ID 23 (a 22-year-old women, Cat. 4) said she was unhappy with the small size of her share-out and that seeing others get larger share-outs motivated her to save more. ID 36 (a 15-year-old female student, Cat. 1) also said she felt bad when others shared out more than she did, because she felt she could have 'done better like the others'. She felt particularly bad when certain members of the group, namely those with a similar income-generating activity as hers (she had an egg-selling income-generating activity) saved more than she did – she said their saving behaviour could influence hers (e.g. save more when the others save more). ID 38 (a 25-year-old father, Cat. 5) said he was in a savings competition with his fellow group members; he said he'd been 'provoked' to save more by his experience with the last share-out. He also said that the amount his fellow members saved could influence his own saving, i.e. the amount of money he brings to the next meeting. However, ID 14 (a 25-year-old single man, Cat. 2) cautioned that just being a member of the group, or saving only for the share-out or a loan, would not work. For him the aim of saving is to change your life, and if you don't have an investment goal, you will not be able to save adequately.
- ID 39 (a 16-year-old female student, Cat. 1) emphatically answered 'yes!' when asked whether she was in competition with other members of the

group. She said she would feel embarrassed if she saved little, and added that in comparison to her fellow group members, she wanted to be 'ahead [in savings], or at least in the middle of the pack'. ID 40 (a 14-year-old female student, Cat. 1) said she felt in competition with others and that it motivated her to save. She was at least partly motivated to save because she felt unhappy when she had shares crossed out in her passbook. She also said members were able to keep track of others' performance by requesting to have a look at other members' passbooks, and also because each member's saving contributions were shouted aloud during the meetings. Finally, she said she was in competition particularly with one fellow member, because they liked to tease each other. On the other hand, she did not feel in competition with the highest saver of the group, because he wasn't 'the type to tease'; she also said that member was private and didn't share his saving information with others. ID 45 (a 19-year-old single woman, Cat. 2) said she was in competition, mainly with those 'who have goals and who are serious' – she said she had goals herself and was serious and motivated about achieving them herself. ID 46 (a 13-year-old male student, Cat. 1) said he felt himself to be in competition with others, particularly after share-out, where he saw he had less than the others. He said that the competitive element was 'forcing him to do his best'. ID 56 (an 18-year-old female student, Cat. 1) felt that competition among group members was motivated by people's desire for 'more profits', which she qualified as 'good competition'. She added that some members do try to show off by being the leading saver; indeed she said members give 'special respect' to higher savers by asking them to take loans on their behalf.

- ID 43 (a 15-year-old male student and highest saver in the group, Cat. 1) said he felt he was in competition with other members, but he didn't feel this influenced his saving behaviour. Indeed, he simply stated that he 'just relies on what he can get' to save.
- Some said they didn't feel as though they were in competition, however (ID 41, ID 42, ID 44, ID 47, ID 50). ID 50 (a 25-year-old single mother, Cat. 4) said she felt pressure to save, but emphatically said that this was because of her goal, not because of the group!

There can be disagreements within groups

- ID 10 (a 20-year-old single man, Cat. 2) said that group members sometimes argued as they each conducted their own economic activity on their own terms. Along similar lines ID 9 (a 36-year-old divorced woman, Cat. 4) said that everyone in the group has their own attitude, which sometimes causes friction. She said that members needed to be patient with each and try to understand the other members. ID 4 (a 23-year-old woman and group chairperson, Cat. 5) also said that sometimes disagreements emerge between group members, but that these weren't of any great significance.
- ID 11 (a 26-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) is in another Plan carry-over group which focuses on women. She said she prefers her current group, because she feels she has more in common with members in the younger group – the members share more common challenges and goals. Similarly, ID 49 (a 22-year-old married woman, Cat. 5), who is also in a Plan carry-over

group, said the members in that group used their authority as her elders to put pressure on her to borrow, including on their behalf when they had also taken out a loan of their own. She said she thus preferred participating in the YSG since the younger group members did not put such pressure on her.

- ID 40 (a 14-year-old female student, Cat. 1) was irritated and said she 'boycotted' the new rise in share value in her group (from GHS 0.2 to GHS 0.4) because group members had not sided with her on the question.

The social fund is appreciated, but the boundary between the social fund and borrowing can be blurred. There is at least one example of a group trying to grow the social fund by using it to invest in a 'group business'.

- ID 1 (a 33-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) cited the group's beneficial impact linked to the social fund, which she said members can draw on in times of emergencies, such as funerals of close relatives (i.e. spouses, parents, children). For example, ID 3 (a 21-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) received TZS 50,000 (~£15) from the social fund when her daughter fell sick.
- However, when ID 23 (a 22-year-old woman, Cat. 4) wanted to use the social fund to help her to purchase firewood there were insufficient funds, so she took a loan for UGX 1,000 (~£0.20). Similarly, ID 24 (a 22-year-old single man, Cat. 2) had to take a loan for the same small amount to treat himself when he was sick because there was not enough money in the social fund.
- One group is using the social fund to capitalise a group business. ID 11 (a 26-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) reported that her group uses the social fund to buy a 50 kg sugar bag from a wholesaler for TZS 60,000 (~£18). Members are then obliged to buy 2 kg of sugar every two weeks for TZS 4,000 (~£1.20). The group makes approximately TZS 40,000 (~£12) profit per bag. The social fund contributions and profits from the sugar business are then redistributed as part of the share-out.

Members leaving the group

- ID 28 (a 28-year-old single mother and group secretary, Cat. 4) said the last chairperson left because he had a balance to pay after share-out. Although he repaid, he did not remain in the group. Another member left after remaining with a balance, though they also paid it back and, eventually, rejoined the group. ID 35 (a 26-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) said some people leave because they borrow money, misuse it, and aren't able to repay; they leave because 'things were not going how they thought they would'. She also said people leave the group upon finishing school.
- ID 44 (a 14-year-old female student, Cat. 1) said some members did not have the time to attend meetings and thus left; she was thinking of one group member in particular. She also said two members had left the group to attend JHS elsewhere.
- ID 47 (a 15-year-old male student and chairperson of the group, Cat. 1) said he wasn't sure why people left the group; he did mention that one member had been told by his mother to stop attending the meetings, though he wasn't sure why.

Other

- ID 14 (a 25-year-old single man, Cat. 2) said that some people feel that savings groups are for women, which stops some young people from joining. For his part, he does not fear other people's judgements. ID 38 (a 25-year-old father, Cat. 5), however, said he felt there was no prejudice against the involvement of men in savings groups in his community (this man was from Zambia).
- ID 24 (a 22-year-old single man, Cat. 2) agreed that the group helped bridge savings and credit gaps – it allowed people to save without incurring transport costs.
- ID 38 (a 25-year-old father, Cat. 5) said he wasn't exactly sure of the criteria, but he thought that what determined the ending of a cycle was the fact that the savings eventually surpassed the amount requested for loans (in his group, cycle lengths had varied, from five months to eight months). ID 37 (a 24-year-old single man, Cat. 2), a fellow group member and chairperson of the group said he himself wasn't sure how cycle lengths were determined, because he was 'not so sure of the constitution'.
- ID 47 (a 15-year-old male student and chairperson of his group, Cat. 1) said the (GHS 0.20) share value in his group had been determined according to group members' 'financial strength'. Yet, he did admit the share value had been set particularly low, because the group was 'a new thing' and members wanted to see 'what will happen'.
- ID 50 (a 25-year-old single mother, Cat. 4) said she felt there was not enough money in the group to cover the demand for loans at the beginning of cycles, but that there was 'more than enough' as the cycles progressed.
- In response to how group members settled borrowing arrangements if demand for loans exceed supply at a particular loan disbursement meeting, ID 51 (a 23-year-old woman who is in a relationship and is chairperson of the group, Cat. 3) explained that group members usually came to an agreement on reducing the amount of money disbursed to group members (more or less proportionately) in order to ensure that all loan applicants at least got some money lent to them.

Improving the savings group model

The most commonly suggested improvements to the savings group model are the provision of more training and greater access to credit.

Training

- ID 1 (a 33-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) suggested that the project should put more emphasis on training. She also felt that project staff should provide support by visiting the members and their economic activities.
- ID 4 (a 22-year-old woman and group chairperson, Cat. 5) suggested that further training could be used to explain and reinforce good practice in using money. ID 6 (a 23-year-old single woman and group treasurer, Cat. 1) felt that people needed to be educated better on what income-generating activity to

invest in, and how to repay loans. She said she felt the group strongly desired further training.

- ID 10 (a 20-year-old single man, Cat. 2) said he felt there is a need for refresher trainings. He would also like vocational training. ID 15 (a 25-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) said that 'education doesn't end', and that she wanted vocational training. ID 11 (a 26-year-old married woman) also felt there was a need for refresher trainings, as people often forget what is taught to them, or they do not grasp the concepts fully. She also thought it would be useful to have further training as it was always possible to learn new strategies for saving and expanding one's economic activity. She would like vocational training, particularly in tailoring, as she 'admired tailors'. ID 7 (a 27-year-old woman, Cat. 5) thought trainings for group members should be kept up, since, as adults, 'they need to be reminded' of good financial and business practices.
- ID 31 (an 18-year-old male student, Cat. 1) showed the potential importance of refresher trainings. He said the group should receive more trainings, particularly as he'd never attended any. However, this was revealed not to be true; indeed when asked about receiving EYL training, he remembered actually receiving it, but he said that at the time he 'didn't really know and didn't really get much', but this was due to his lack of concentration. However, becoming more committed to the savings group (after the share-out), he said he was now 'ready any time to listen'. This shows the importance of refresher trainings as members may not fully benefit from trainings the first time round, especially if they are not yet fully committed or motivated to save.
- ID 47 (a 15-year-old male student and chairperson, Cat. 1) felt it would be useful to have refresher trainings on Further Financial Education (FFE) in particular, especially for the new members. However, he also thought other group members could benefit from refresher trainings on FFE, and on modules related to savings especially, such as on 'the setting of goals' and on 'reasons to save'. ID 27 (a 25-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) said she would like refresher trainings as well as new trainings. ID 29 (a 21-year-old single woman, Cat. 2) said she would like refresher trainings.
- ID 14 (a 25-year-old member, and group money-counter, Cat. 2) thought the groups could use more training, particularly vocational training for group members who use more practical skills in their profession. ID 29 (a 21-year-old woman, Cat. 2) also felt vocational training would be useful, particularly in catering. ID 36 (a 15-year-old female student, Cat. 1) said she would like training in tailoring. ID 42 (a 13-year-old female student, Cat. 1) said she would like to receive vocational training on learning to decorate people's houses. ID 50 (a 25-year-old mother of two, Cat. 4) said she thought receiving additional 'regular' trainings would be fine, but she said she actually hoped to receive vocational training, namely on pastry-making, so that she can sell these products in her food stall (and in her kiosk, once she builds it). ID 51 (a 23-year-old woman in a relationship, Cat. 3) also spontaneously said receiving training on pastry-making would be useful. ID 56 (an 18-year-old female student, Cat. 1) said she would like vocational training on making liquid or powdered soup (her mother had an income-generating activity making soups, among other things, which she helped out with sometimes).

- ID 38 (a 25-year-old soon-to-be-married man, Cat. 5) said he would like vocational training, but he couldn't say on what. However, he did feel that the group should receive further training on the share-out process, as the group always relied on the group coordinator to come and do it, and could not do it alone. The member felt the process was made complicated by the varying 'dynamics' that emerged during a cycle, such as loan defaults. ID 35 (a 26-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) felt additional trainings would be useful, but failed to provide a response when asked which training would be useful, thus also showing a potential lack of great conviction in regard to her position on the need for further training. When asked whether additional trainings should cover previous material or new material, she said she thought they should focus on teaching new concepts, particularly related to business.
- ID 57 (a 16-year-old male student, Cat. 1) said he would like the project to provide the village with computers so that they could practise their ICT skills. He also thought the group should be taught about sanitation and take part in a cleaning-up exercise in the community. He said this was because people left their rubbish around, which attracted mosquitoes and flies during the rains and which helped to spread diseases.

Greater access to credit

- ID 16 (a 28-year-old married man, Cat. 5) stated that the value of the loans could be increased by having access to additional capital from a bank. ID 17 (a 35-year-old married woman who replaced her 20-year-old son in the 2nd cycle, Cat. 2) said it would help to find a way to inject money into the group account to increase the ability of members to borrow. ID 5 (a 30-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) would like to have access to more loans. She thought this could be provided by 'an organisation'. She also said that increased access to loans could come from increasing the loan limit, currently fixed at three times the amount of shares contributed. In a similar vein, ID 2 (a 22-year-old single woman, Cat. 2) wished that members would take more loans to increase the returns from the shares (this despite her slight complaint that people took loans and did not repay them).
- ID 30 (a 20-year-old man, Cat. 2) said he felt group members should contribute more savings to the group to increase the amount of money available for loans. He suggested establishing a minimum savings contribution amount of ZMW 100 per meeting as a way to increase the amount of savings and credit available (although few members ever contributed this much money to the group, including the member himself – thus this seemed unrealistic). ID 10 (a 20-year-old single man – the house painter, Cat. 2) would like to be able to increase the share value, but feels he would need to speak about this with his fellow members first. ID 14 (a 25-year-old single man – the maize flour trader, Cat. 2) also wants to increase the value of shares, but he feels that some members of the group who have lower incomes would be intimidated. He also suggested a two-year cycle to get an even bigger share-out. ID 5 (a 30-year-old married woman, Cat. 5) said also she would be willing to increase the share price to allow her to save and borrow more, but that she didn't think this was reasonable for other members in the group.

- ID 50 (a 25-year-old mother of two, Cat. 4) said she thought increasing the number of meetings at which loans can be issued would be a good idea since some members monopolised the amount of money available for loans at the monthly loan issuing meeting. Loans were only issued once a month in this group, as in the other Ghana group.

There were some suggestions about ways of increasing the interest generated on members' saving contributions.

- ID 36 (a 15-year-old female student, Cat. 1) said she would like the amount of interest that was generated on members' saving contributions to be increased. She thought one way to achieve this was to increase the number of members in the group as well as the share value; however she was not able to explain exactly how or why this would help the group.

There was some interest in training for and initiating group-based businesses.

- ID 2 (a 22-year-old single woman, Cat. 2) thought it would be a good idea if the group started its own income-generating activity. ID 7 (a 27-year-old woman, Cat. 5) said that training on how to run a group business could be beneficial, and it would be good for the group to own and run one income-generating activity together.
- ID 14 (a 25-year-old single man, Cat. 2) thought it would be useful for the group to learn how to run a group business in order to help improve the sugar business they currently have. It would help to also open another business, and consequently, to increase the share-outs. Similarly ID 12 (a 14-year-old schoolboy, Cat. 1) thought the group should even have other group businesses in addition to the existing sugar business.

There were mixed, though generally positive, views about increasing the frequency of share meetings in Zambia (where most groups only meet once a month, including the two groups we visited).

- ID 27 (a 25-year-old married woman, Cat. 5), ID 28 (a 28-year-old single woman with two children, Cat. 4), ID 29 (a 21-year-old single woman, Cat. 2), ID 33 (a 22-year-old single man and vocal secretary of the group, Cat. 2) and ID 36 (a 15-year-old female student, Cat. 1) all thought it would be a good idea to increase the frequency of meetings.
- Members felt it would be a good idea to increase the frequency of meetings mainly because it would motivate members to increase their saving contributions (ID 27, ID 29, ID 33, ID 36). For example, ID 29 (a 21-year-old single woman, Cat. 2) thought it would motivate people to 'work harder' to try to save more.
- Two members felt meeting more frequently would help members avoid 'misusing' their money, or at least to reduce the amount of money they spent before the next share meeting (ID 27, ID 29). ID 29 (a 21-year-old single woman, Cat. 2) attributed this to the fact that members would have a safe place in which to save, which would contribute to a reduction in their spending.
- Two members felt saving more frequently would benefit the group because it would give members more opportunities to borrow money (ID 27, ID 33). ID 33

(a 22-year-old single man and vocal secretary of the group, Cat. 2) reported that, among other things, this would contribute to increasing the interest paid on members' savings.

- ID 39 (a 16-year-old female student, Cat. 4) preferred to meet on a monthly basis, since she felt it would be 'difficult to find the money' otherwise. She said this was because of school's 'many requirements' (i.e. expenses), and that having to meet more often would place a 'burden' on her as she did not think she would be able to generate savings at every meeting. Members in this group had a mandatory minimum saving contribution at every meeting of ZMW 10 (~£0.61). ID 30 (a 20-year-old single man, Cat. 2), ID 32 (a 15-year-old female student, Cat. 1) and ID 39 (a 16-year-old female student, Cat. 1) supported the status quo, and ID 32 (a 15-year-old female student, Cat. 1) thought the current set-up was adequate. While ID 30 (a 20-year-old single man, Cat. 2) thought meeting more often could potentially help, he thought it would be difficult to raise money for each meeting.

There was some interest in allowing members increase their share contributions at certain meetings.

- ID 40 (a 14-year-old female student, Cat. 1) said she wished she could sometimes buy more shares than the allowed maximum because she sometimes had the ability to do so. She also favoured a rise in the share value from (GHS 2 to GHS 3), to accommodate her ability to save more than the permitted amount. ID 43 (a 15-year-old male student, Cat. 1) said he wished members could sometimes contribute more than the permitted amount, particularly to make up for weeks where they hadn't saved the maximum number of shares. When asked whether this meant he could sometimes save more than the GHS 2 which constituted the maximum permitted saving contribution, he said it did.

There were some suggestions for improving how a group was run.

- ID 46 (a 13-year-old male student, Cat. 1) felt an improvement needed to be made to the 'executive'. He thought they should be more strongly committed to collecting fines, for example, when members were not able to recite rules from the constitution (which they were supposed to do at the beginning of each group meeting).
- ID 50 (a 25 year-old mother of two, Cat. 4) felt action was needed to be taken to recover outstanding debts from members who'd defaulted on loans and left the group. She said the group had discussed various strategies, such as going to the local authorities and potentially the police, but that they hadn't implemented these strategies yet.
- ID 51 (a 23-year-old woman in a relationship and chairperson, Cat. 3) said she thought members were 'speak[ing] to her harshly'. She also said some members did not arrive on time – at the share meeting, she seemed hesitant to collect fines for such behaviours.

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