

## Youth unemployment, community violence, creating opportunities in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: a qualitative study

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### Abstract

**Background:** Tanzania has consistently shown in recent decades to have a high overall crime rate. Although its homicide rate is moderate, Dar es Salaam has an unusually high amount of community violence; more than half of all homicides were due to lynching and vigilantism. Most of these homicides were a reaction to petty theft of purses, cell phones, and domestic meat animals. Employment is hypothesized to decrease petty theft and the resulting homicidal community violence. The objective of this research is to characterize appropriate interventions.

**Methods:** In-depth interviews took place with proxy respondents of youth who had been killed through community violence. Most respondents were relatives of youth killed by community violence or youth who had directly experienced community violence. A focus group was held with at risk youth.

**Results:** "Lack of employment" was the largest node in terms of number of references and sources. It is reported with "Business Ability" and "Normal Life". Occupational categories for uneducated youth in Dar es Salaam were: formal employment, agriculture, petty business, and day labour. Stealing, begging and emigration occur when other options have failed. Suggestions for decreasing death by community violence fell into three categories, all to do with employment: employment creation, working with youth in groups, and creating a supportive environment for small enterprises.

**Conclusions:** Productive occupations are needed, including the revivification of traditional natural resource based industries such as fisheries and forestry. The physical and legal environment must be made conducive for "self-employed non-agricultural workers". To optimize potential effectiveness, rigorous experimental research should be conducted, to facilitate humane, equitable, and environmentally sound scale up of youth employment opportunities.

**Keywords:** community violence, employment, youth, Tanzania

### Introduction

Tanzania is a low-middle income country with an economy based on agriculture and tourism. The formally employed are about 6% (FSDT, 2009). The mean age of the citizens is 19 years. About 850,000 new jobseekers enter the market every year (Kweka & Fox, 2011). Tanzania has consistently shown high overall crime rates in recent decades. For example, Afrobarometer, a comparative series of public opinion surveys, found that in 2012 Tanzanians reported higher rates of crime and anxiety about their safety than people in all 35 other African countries that were surveyed (Aiko & Kinyondo, 2013). Tanzania is not a leader in violent crimes such as murder, rape, and armed robbery, but rather petty theft and burglary. A few years earlier the highest overall crime rates were reported from Tanzania, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe; 63% of respondents in these countries reported victimization in the previous year (Naude *et al.*, 2006).

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Dar es Salaam region is Tanzania's premier metropole, a major port on the Indian Ocean from where the natural resources of the African continent are shipped out and manufactured goods are shipped in. The population is growing at the rate of 5.6% per year, much of it due to in-migration of male youth from rural areas; the total unemployment rate for those 15 years and above was 31.5% in 2006 (NBS, 2007). Dar es Salaam had a moderate rate of homicide overall, about 12.57 per 100,000 population (22.6 per 100,000 for males and 2.64 per 100,000 for females) (Outwater *et al.*, 2008). About 64% of all homicides were a result of community mob violence (locally called *Sheria mkononi*) which is unusually high (Outwater *et al.*, 2013).

Victims of community violence and assault differed from one another in terms of sex, age, occupation, primary cause of death, and injury site (Outwater *et al.*, 2013). It follows that interventions to address the problems will need to be different. Therefore, this paper focuses on those who were involved with community mob violence (including vigilantism and lynching) as a victim, relative of a victim, or observer. Victims of lynching and vigilantism in Dar es Salaam in 2005 were 99.5% Tanzanian males (Outwater *et al.*, 2013). Their mean age was 27.5 years. According to relatives of the deceased the occupations of those who died from community violence were: thief (30.2%), unknown (28.3%), unemployed (15.6%), street vendor (15.6%), employee with less than or equal to minimum wage (7.8%), farmer (2.0%) and student (0.5). The vast majority fell into the occupational category described in the Labour Force Survey as "self-employed non-agricultural workers without employees" (NBS, 2007). Seventy three percent died in the city ward in which they had lived. Nobody with monetary wealth was killed by community violence. Most of these homicides were a reaction to petty theft of purses, cell phones, and domestic meat animals

Theoretically, according to Senechal de la Roche's (1996) propositions, a decrease in lynching and vigilantism is predicted to occur when the occurrence of functional dependence, inequality, and deviant acts are decreased. Likewise data from Kibusi *et al.* (2013) suggest that when people depend upon one another in their daily lives and when their economic status is more equal, the occurrence of deviant acts and thus retaliatory community violence decreases. Youth employment is hypothesized to promote economic equality and functional independence and is therefore a potentially effective way to decrease deaths by lynching and vigilantism. Therefore this paper is examining occupations of the youth at risk for community violence in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The aim is to characterize appropriate interventions to decrease homicides due to community violence. It is important because it illuminates the need and some ideas to increase youth employment.

## **Materials and Methods**

### **Study setting and population**

This study was carried out in Dar es Salaam, the most populous region in Tanzania. Many interviews were conducted on an outside veranda at the mortuary of Muhimbili National Hospital where, at that time, all non-natural deaths (police cases) in Dar es Salaam were brought. Others were conducted at public outdoor settings within the city. The population of concern were victims of community violence in Dar es Salaam region.

### **Data collection**

These qualitative data were collected as part of a larger violent death surveillance project that was conducted in Dar es Salaam (Mgaya *et al.*, 2008; Outwater *et al.*, 2011). In 2005, surveillance data was collected on all homicide deaths in the city (N=367 of which 205 were characterized as "mob deaths"). After completing the surveillance questionnaire the proxy respondents, usually senior male relatives of the deceased, were asked if they were willing to be interviewed further. Most of them were, although a few said they had no time, and others were too upset by the death. Four respondents were

interviewed several times and became key respondents. Key respondents recruited other at risk youths to be interviewed through in-depth interviews (IDIs) and a focus group discussions (FGD).

To confirm the trustworthiness of the data given by proxy respondents, interviews were conducted with companions of the deceased, themselves youth at risk for homicide death and community witnesses to mob violence. In addition eight petty businessmen/petty thieves participated in a FGD. In-depth interviews and FGD were audiotaped. Proxy respondents were asked, “What led up to the death of the deceased?” At risk youth were asked “How is your life?” Respondents were also asked for their suggestions about how to decrease “mob violence”. Respondents were not asked specifically about employment or lack of employment in the IDIs or FGD.

### **Data analysis**

Data were transcribed and entered into NVivo 9 software package (QSR, 2011). Translation was done in the program, and passages in Kiswahili and English were kept together paragraph by paragraph and sometimes phrase by phrase. Translation was checked by specialists in Swahili culture and language. Coding was tailored to the understanding of the particular data; codes with two or more sources were gathered into nodes, which were 47. Data were explored in NVivo through (i) graphs of source interviews and codes, (ii) cluster analysis of word and coding similarities, (iii) tree maps (dendrograms), and (iv) models. Memos were written throughout.

### **Ethical considerations**

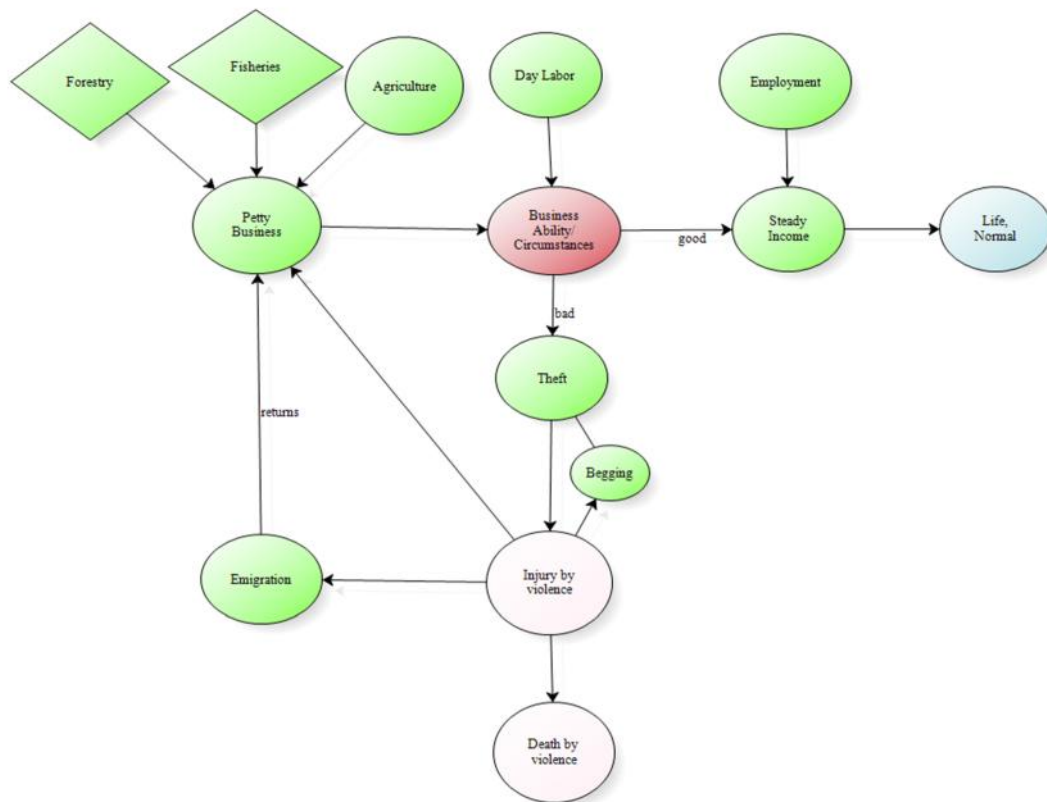
Ethical approval for this research was granted by Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, Tanzanian National Institute for Medical Research and Johns Hopkins University. Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology granted research permit. Each respondent signed an informed consent before being interviewed.

### **Results**

All IDI and FGD respondents who specifically spoke about “lack of employment” as a key factor in homicide death were included in the analysis. Thirteen of the 29 IDI respondents who had experienced community violence as a recipient, relative or witness spontaneously spoke of lack of employment. Nine of these respondents were relatives of youth killed by community violence; two were witnesses to community violence; and two were youth who had personally experienced community violence. All members of the FGD discussed lack of employment. The data were credible in that there were no contradictions in what was reported by proxy respondents and at risk youth respondents.

The codes being reported emerged from the data *in vivo*, without being planned for explicitly. Three nodes are being reported: “Lack of Employment”, “Business Ability/Circumstances”, and “Normal Life”. Lack of employment was the biggest node in terms of number of references and sources; it included nine categories (formal employment, day labour, petty business, forestry, fisheries, agriculture, theft, begging, and emigration). These nodes are reported together because in NVivo cluster analysis using Pearson’s correlation coefficient, the Word Similarity Cluster analysis and dendrogram revealed strong word similarity.

As shown in Figure 1, ten codes are being reported under “Lack of Employment” and the mediator of success is “Business Ability” which can lead to a “Normal Life”. Categories of Dar es Salaam occupations are: formal employment, agriculture, petty business enterprise, day labour; stealing, begging or emigration. Occupations that are reported as no longer viable include fisheries and forestry. Some, who have good business ability and benefit from luck, family support, capital, emotional intelligence, and patience, transition to a steady adequate income into a normal life as a member inside the community.



**Figure 1. Model of employment opportunities for youth by business ability good and bad, 2005**

**Key:** Green Node: Lack of Employment and Codes: Occupations; Red: Business Ability/Circumstances; Blue: Normal Life; White: Codes; Diamond shape: Currently non-viable occupation.

A common refrain exemplified by the neighbour of a victim, the owner of a kiosk, was: *Those youth say there is no work! And they need to eat. They need to get money to eat because it is the city.* (ID5616AOi)

### **Formal Employment**

In terms of formal employment, specific jobs were not mentioned; a steady income is the defining aspect of formal employment. The formal employment opportunities available for uneducated youth are few, often less than minimum wage: guards, grounds people, or cleaners. If a youth cannot find employment he often has to live the life of *kubahatisha*, i.e. depending upon luck.

### **Natural Resources**

The rich natural resource base within Tanzania was described by several respondents. As the neighbour of a victim of community violence exclaimed: *"Tanzania, is a country which Almighty God blessed with land, valleys good for farming. Mh! It has minerals. It has forests. It has the sea.* (ID5616AOi).

A strong natural resource base has historically been available to youth in Dar es Salaam: agriculture, fisheries, and forestry.

### **Agriculture**

In the village, there are very few ways to earn money except for once a year when cash crops are being sold. Youths may migrate between their natal village and the city many times over decades. They may help with planting, harvesting in the village and return to the city in between. Pastoralists may return to the village for their animals' birthing season and then return to the city when there is less to do. A newspaper seller, a Form 3 leaver, who owned no phone or shoes other than the worn rubber slippers he was wearing, explained that he has been back and forth from his home village in Songea for twenty years. He explained: *"I have come here (to Dar es Salaam), but inside my life, I have seen for sure it is not good. I have gone home, I have stayed. I have tried to farm. I was able to get a little. But it wasn't food more than subsistence. There was no development. I decided now I return here again from home to city, to come search again for life.* (ID5810AO).

### **Fisheries**

Near shore fisheries are no longer productive. Deep distant areas of the ocean which are difficult to reach, are still reported to have plenty of fish. But the local fisherman cannot compete with big ships coming from outside. *Fishermen are saying there are no fish - it's true. Because of what? They are using boats of poor quality. ... The boats and tools are not enough to arrive at distant places having enough fish ... but those (outside) fishermen have big vessels! Still they are getting enough fish... Others are even getting more than are needed. But because the (local) fishermen have little capital, they are going with a class of small vessels. You meet a person going deep, he is getting fish of which a few will satisfy his needs* (ID5616AOi).

### **Forestry**

Forestry included charcoal, poles, and timber production. Beekeeping was not mentioned. Charcoal, poles, and timber production are usually short term projects. Small groups go to the forest and make camps for a few weeks or months to accomplish the task.

### **Petty business**

The most common petty businesses reported by these youths and their relatives were selling farm produce in small piles alongside the road or near a larger market. Some businesses were site specific such as car washing and coffee roasting. Other businesses were mobile, hauling water, walking and selling used clothes, peanuts, newspapers, and cups of coffee to people along the street. The 46 year old uncle of a deceased victim of community violence explained that these types of businesses are fragile. *He was not having big customers, because he was more basic. You understand well? Therefore he put his bananas out; then woman and different people came to buy. Customers like those who come to the market, for it was a market. Therefore equal to our environment, we believe, because that business is a business which maybe is seasonal, maybe a day comes when it can't work* (ID5725AO).

There were many constraints. The environment was not supportive of small enterprises. An uncle of a youth killed by community violence gave an example: *"A loan, you give him money. If he has already taken that business, on his back, on his head, he travels with his store (machinga). City (the Police) comes, it catches him. It takes away those resources by force. And they don't help him at all there. Now you have left him such and so. He hasn't a thing. Now what will he do? He has no capital and that money he borrowed... Now he agrees to go steal"* (ID5616AOi).

### **Day or Piece Labour**

Even day labour was hard to get. Youth provided labour for construction, stevedoring and fixing boats at the Port, and cleaning fish at the fish market. They were often paid by the job. The minimum wage was very low and not enough to sustain them. A 32-year old a youth who moved between burglary

and petty business explained: *“Even if you work hard, even if you carry concrete (zege), you cannot get ahead”* (ID6420AO).

The available construction jobs such as carrying concrete use a lot of energy. The youth sometimes cannot earn enough money to re-gain the calories spent. A skilled labourer and builder, the uncle of a deceased victim noted that, *“The compensation isn’t enough. They can’t get the calories that they invested in the heavy construction work, with the daily wage that is paid. They get used up”* ID5409AO. If these occupations fail, then youth resort to stealing, begging or emigration.

### **Stealing**

Stealing included pickpocketing, burglary, and petty theft. An uncle, a fish trader of a youth killed by community violence explained: *“They are pushed into ways that are not inside life (katika maisha), meaning outside life. So they steal knowing they are not extricating themselves inside life. They are stealing because they can’t see another way. They don’t have the tools that education provides, to think their way out of the situation”* (ID5616AOii).

Stealing was not a preferred option. A young man who had been punished by community violence for petty thieving argued, *“He who is going to steal knows (he will be committing a deed) for which he could be burned, he will be murdered. Therefore it is not easy that you tell me that there is a person who likes to steal, according to the state of this environment”* ID6503AO.

However, there were many factors that can push a youth to steal. An uncle of a victim of community violence said, *“If he doesn’t have capital funds it is necessary that he passes inside the way of thieving or passes into any path of conning...all those ways which cause troubles later for the community”* (ID5014AO). In addition, a mortuary attendant further explained, *“For example you meet a person, he can awake in the morning, he hasn’t eaten since yesterday... Those who can’t be patient, they see they can’t just stay. They see they have a problem with money. They see him over there has money. He thinks: Did that rich man come with his wealth into the world? No, it didn’t come with him; it was met. I am going to take my rights”* (ID6530AO).

### **Begging**

Formal begging of young men visible on roadways is almost always those who have been injured in some way, most often by motor vehicle accidents or community violence.

### **Emigration**

Some youth had been stowaways on ships, or travelled overland to, most often reported, South Africa. As an uncle claiming the body of a relative at the mortuary explained, *“The deceased was occupying himself with his pursuits. There beginning in 2000 already he managed to get on a boat (stowaway). And the very first time he went there to South Africa to travel around to find employment (patapata). The first time he stayed a long time there, but as usual they were caught. They caught them and returned them here to Tanzania. That was the first time. He stayed again. He returned again. Later he was returned again. ... Therefore he was struggling with life with difficulty. It’s not like he had a permanent steady job”* (ID5622ETii).

### **Business ability**

Few youth had marketable skills. An uncle of a youth who was killed, pointed out that most uneducated youth have little ability to control money constructively, *“Even if you give him a loan – he will not use it well. He cannot re-pay the debt. You can meet someone who has finished 7<sup>th</sup> grade. He can’t write his name... You can’t give a person the needs of business without the education of business. It’s like he is going to throw it away.... He promises,” Bwana, me here, I will pay you this. I will go this way. I will live here” ... he is using what he wants. If you come to hit the accounting, it’s a complete loss’* (ID5014AO).

As shown in Figure 1, if circumstances were good, it was possible that an individual youth could go beyond the level of petty business to acquire a steady income which would bring him a normal life. A normal life was described as including a small family, perhaps one room in which to stay, and simple food two or three times a day. Otherwise youth cycled between petty business and petty theft.

### **Respondents Suggestions**

When asked about how to decrease community violence, respondents did not suggest increasing police presence or jail sentences for victims or perpetrators. Suggestions for decreasing death by community violence fell into three categories, all to do with employment:

(i) Employment creation. Youth need employment. Many respondents said the government should provide employment opportunities. Examples were given, such as, *“The government could make wells and pipes for water so that the youth could distribute and sell it. That would provide employment”* (ID5014AO). The local company Bakhresa Group was praised for providing employment by packaging products such as water, biscuits, and juice into small packets that youth could sell; others noted the company has taken jobs from women selling chapattis and other foods along the street. Several of the older respondents expressed the belief that *“There are no miracles of employment. The only employment for sure is farming – and it can be satisfying... But it is rainfed agriculture, so if there is a drought they have to leave the farm, they come to town... But the farming life used to be good – and people lived many more years than they do now”* (ID5622ETi).

(i) Work with groups. Respondents advised that working with groups of youth would be more effective than working with individuals. Several of the uncles of victims of community violence suggesting going to places where the jobless gather, and work with them to develop projects. *“Get youth with good behaviours; create a group so they can be helped. Create any kind of work”* (ID5616AOii).

(iii) Supportive environment. Tools and Markets. The citizens need support. One respondent a 32 year carpenter, brother of a victim, shouted: *“Farmers need hoes (jembe), water, just sparks (cheche). .... Farmers produce well, but then they sell for 200 shillings per kilo. There is no market”* (ID510AO).

It was noted by several respondents that government needs to be responsive to the needs of ordinary citizens. *“Government needs to improve the state of the wananchi. People need a good life. They need inputs for farming – rather than cars for Parliamentarians”* (e.g.ID5409AO).

### **Discussion**

Youth traditionally expected to find an occupation within the category of natural resources – following their parents’ way of life. But due to environmental degradation, many youth could not earn a sufficient living if they followed their fathers’ occupation. Helgesson (2006) also found that many youths practice subsistence agriculture in the village while in town they attempt to build a business enterprise. In fisheries for example the respondents’ understanding concurs with scientists’. Tanzania’s territorial seas and near shore fisheries are open access. There is increasing pressure on the fisheries by local and foreign fishers. There is decreasing catch per effort. Degradation of key habitats has resulted in loss of productive habitats including destruction of spawning and nursery grounds through dynamite fishing and trawlers. There has been loss of biodiversity and habitat, leading to an inability of fishing to serve as means to escape poverty by Tanzania’s coastal people (World Bank, 2013). Likewise, the forests around Dar es Salaam, as in almost all of Tanzania, were experiencing serious degradation and deforestation. Highlights of the most current National Forest Policy (1998) were to increase employment through sustainable forest-based industrial development and trade as well as ensure ecosystem stability. However even forests with the express purpose of protecting water catchment areas were heavily degraded from unsustainable use (Kaale, 2001). Environmental degradation was leading to loss of productive jobs. Viktor *et al.* (2008) describe the case of *Bonde la*

Mpunga in Dar es Salaam, formerly an area of employment for rice and fisheries is now “an island of poverty surrounded by some of the wealthiest areas of Dar es Salaam”.

Other occupations available for Dar es Salaam youth with little or no education are fragile. They can sometimes become minimum wage employees, or work as day labourers, but generally they have “low productivity capabilities” due to lack of education, access to business premises and financial capital. For primary school leavers operating a small enterprise is likely to be the only alternative to agriculture (Kweka & Fox, 2011). The most common outcome was to become a petty businessmen, in informal markets. Mugoya (2012) found that in Dar es Salaam one-third of the total economically active labour force was employed in the informal sector as self-employed non-agricultural workers without employees. Their enterprises were mostly carried out on the urban pavement. These types of enterprises were a major source of employment for those with low productive capability. Yet, youths who attempted to alleviate their income and non-income poverty through self-employment, found themselves severely constrained. Some of the major constraints include lack of skills, no capital, and little know-how (Awinia, 2014). Moreover, they are constrained by municipal regulations, business by-laws and associated administrative restrictions (Kweka & Fox, 2011). Similar challenges have been reported in our current study. Being unable to access business premises in turn limited youth ability to secure loans and access microfinance. Not having business premises also illegitimized them in front of the law. This left them open for having to make informal payments and bribes, as well as fines and penalties.

Revitalizing former occupations based on natural resources, such as fisheries and forestry, needs to be prioritized. If fisheries were revitalized, by protecting the reefs from dynamiting, trawlers and small nets, as well as extreme pollution, and protecting the internationally recognized coastal economic zone from non-national fisheries, long term employment opportunities would occur, as well as increased food and nutrition. The new beekeeping initiative of the Tanzania Forest Services (TFS) is an important move in refurbishing the beekeeping sector. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism through TFS is supporting the establishment and promotion of beekeepers into groups or associations; interested youth are encouraged to form groups in order to get extension services and incentives that will improve production. Interventions such as this incorporate the respondents’ suggestions: that Government should create employment and create a supportive environment for youth working in groups.

The sector of self-employed non-agricultural worker, that is petty trading, is the main source of employment in urban areas. This sector is job rich and inclusive. The important question is how to make it work. Awinia (2014) advocates liberalizing the urban pavement economy, integrating urban youth employment into the design of new urban roads. Space should be made for road reserves, trading places, and pedestrian paths. Trading could be organized on specific days of the week, specific times of day, and specific places on the street. For this to happen municipal authorities need to liberalise street trading by enacting by-laws that would allow urban youth to trade alongside streets (Kweka & Fox, 2011).

New avenues of youth employment are possible. In recent years the advent of *bodaboda* (commercial motorcyclists) and *bajaj* (motorized tricycle) transport has emerged as an avenue of gainful employment for uneducated youth. The police acknowledge the effectiveness of such enterprises in employing youth in decreasing crime (Silla, 2012). The discouraging side of *bodaboda* transport is that hospitals and mortuaries are filling with victims. For example between March 2009 and February 2010, 37.2% of all road traffic injuries admitted to Bugando Medical Centre in Mwanza, Tanzania were motorcyclists (Chalya *et al.*, 2010). Besides the obvious need to guide *bodaboda* drivers better, more and other gainful occupations need to be found for youth. Complementary non-governmental organization initiatives such as *Ruka Juu* developed by Femina HIP are potentially useful. *Ruka Juu* is an economic empowerment initiative using entertainment-education to inspire youth and



provide skills to enable successful entrepreneurship. The impact evaluation of the first season of the show showed that *RukaJuu*, to a large extent had been inspirational and that using role models had been powerful (Helgesson Sekei, 2011). A randomized trial intervention with microfinance loans and structured training provided to the poorest women in South Africa was shown to decrease levels of intimate partner violence in programme participants. Pronyk *et al.* (2006) found that social and economic interventions have the potential to alter risky environments and decrease violence.

Intervention research is needed to determine what jobs are appropriate for youth what business skills would be most beneficial, and what markets are available for new business opportunities which can expand to accommodate an influx of new entrepreneurs.

An important limitation to this study is that youth with the same demographics who are not stealing were not included. Thus it is not clear how generalizable these results are to the broader population of youth. Since the study site was Dar es Salaam, some of Tanzania's important occupations such as pastoralism and mining are not considered. Data were collected in 2005-2006. However they are still highly relevant. Since the time of data collection, Tanzanian youth of the same socio-demographic of the youth described in this paper, have rioted in all major cities. Their major complaint is lack of employment.

In conclusion, more urgency is needed to address the problem of disaffected youth and lack of employment opportunities. The job opportunities for uneducated Tanzanian youth are inadequate. The lack of viable occupations and poor business ability is leading to high rates of petty theft and increasing violence. Probably these crimes can be curbed by sustainable occupations, with appropriate training for youth and a supportive legal environment. Appropriate government and NGO interventions have been initiated. To optimize their potential effectiveness, rigorous experimental research should be conducted, to facilitate humane, equitable, and environmentally sound scaling up.

### Competing interests

Authors declare no conflict of interest.

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