Opportunities for Youth and Women’s Participation in Ghana’s Labour-Intensive Public Works Program

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Abstract: Ghana’s public works program, Labour-Intensive Public Works (LIPW), was initiated in 2010 with the goal of providing short-term employment opportunities to the poorest and building community assets. Public works programs have the potential to promote social inclusion by benefiting vulnerable groups, particularly youth and women. The LIPW program in its operational design, included provisions to support women workers, including having on-site crèches and latrines and provided flexibility of employment so that women could easily access the program. Although, the program did not exclude qualified youth, operational designs did not lay emphasis on youth engagement. The LIPW program could be positioned as a youth employment avenue, as well as promoting social inclusion and enhancing the overall well-being of its beneficiaries. As such, this study reviews the operational opportunities within the Ghana LIPW program design targeting women and youth and provides recommendations for enhancing social inclusion for these groups in future programming. This study will be useful for public works program implementers, as well as policy makers, looking to boost social inclusion within their programming.

Key words: Public Works Programs; Labor-Intensive; Employment; Labor; Safety Net Programs; Productivity; Youth Employment; Women; Gender; Social Inclusion

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1 INTRODUCTION

Ghana has a population of about 30.4 million and is classified as a lower-middle-income country. The country has made significant gains with economic growth, particularly in the 2000s, which was mainly attributed to an increase in prices for commodity exports, especially in cocoa and gold, and subsequently commercial oil and gas in 2011. The economic growth translated into a substantial reduction in the prevalence of poverty. The extreme poverty rate was 36 percent in 1991/92, then fell to 16.5 percent in 2005/2006, then further to 8.4 percent in 2012/13, making Ghana the first sub-Saharan African country to meet the United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goal of halving poverty by 2015. However, the rate of poverty reduction has slowed over the years, and inequality is still very high. According to statistics from 2016/2017, Ghana has approximately 2.4 million of its population as extremely poor and 6.8 million as poor. Poverty reduction in recent years has been strongest in the Greater Accra region. The recent pace of poverty reduction outside of Greater Accra has generally been much slower, and some ecological zones and administrative regions—many with the highest rates of poverty in the country—have in fact seen virtually stagnant, or even rising, poverty rates.

With this backdrop, the availability of social programs for the poor and vulnerable are crucial. The government of Ghana has, over the last two decades, made a concerted effort to introduce various poverty alleviation programs to address this issue. The phenomenon of social protection and the need to provide a series of interventions and systems together toward tackling poverty was adopted in the early 2000s with the inception of the Livelihood Empowerment Against Poverty (LEAP) cash transfer program,primarily sponsored by the government, and subsequently with development partner assistance. In 2010, the World Bank partnered with the government to design the Ghana Social Opportunities Project (GSOP) with the objectives of improving targeting in social protection spending, increasing access to cash transfers nationwide, increasing access to employment and cash-earning opportunities for the rural poor during the agricultural off-season, and improving economic and social infrastructure in target districts. GSOP was implemented between 2010 and 2018, and supported the LEAP program; introduced the Labour-Intensive Public Works (LIPW) program; and developed several systems to improve service delivery, including support to a National Social Protection Policy, the launch of the Ghana National Household Registry to improve targeting, the development of a streamlined grievance redress mechanism, and leveraging of technology to track program progress through management information systems infrastructure, and transforming payment modalities from manual processes to electronic systems. In 2019, the World Bank supported a follow-on project—the Ghana Productive Safety Net Project (GPSNP)—to solidify the gains made under GSOP, expand programming, and enhance systems to promote service delivery.

This study focuses on the LIPW, Ghana’s public works program initiated under GSOP. The LIPW program was intended to maximize local employment while building and rehabilitating productive assets that would potentially generate local secondary employment effects and protect households and communities.

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1 All statistics in the paragraph have been obtained from World Bank (2018) and World Bank (2020).
against external shocks. As such, the LIPW program was implemented during the dry season (agriculture “off” season) between November and May, in 60 of the poorest districts in the country.

The LIPW program, which targeted districts and communities with the highest poverty levels, focused on three main categories of community assets (known as subprojects)—rehabilitation of small-earth dams and dugouts to improve water supply for agriculture; rehabilitation of feeder roads to promote linkages to markets and services; and cultivation of economic and fruit trees to support environmental management programs of participating districts (see figure 1.1 for pictures on LIPW activities). The LIPW program is very community-focused with a decentralized governance system: Activities were selected by beneficiary communities with the support of the respective District Assemblies; machine-required works and management of activities undertaken by local contractors; labor-intensive activities were executed through employed local labor from within the community; and overall monitoring was provided by technical specialists and local government authorities. This system ensured that the public works were sustained by the communities beyond the duration of the program. Ghana’s LIPW program, while a safety net with the goal of providing short-term labor and income for the poorest, was also very focused on producing high quality community assets; the latter greatly shaped the design and implementation of the program.

Figure 1: LIPW Activities

Photo credit: LIPW Program Operations.
A total of $81.9 million was allocated to LIPW under GSOP, over eight years, for wages and operations. By the end of project in 2018, approximately 168,000 beneficiaries had been reached. Table 1.1 provides a summary of achievements under the project.\textsuperscript{3}

\textbf{Table 1: Summary of LIPW Achievements}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Restructured Project Development Objective indicators</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Status at closing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Person days of unskilled labor</td>
<td>9.5 million</td>
<td>13.6 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average earnings of unskilled workers in LIPWs</td>
<td>GHS 200.00</td>
<td>GHS 560.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct project beneficiaries</td>
<td>190,000</td>
<td>168,791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of female beneficiaries</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Source:} GSOP Implementation Completion and Results Report 2019; GSOP MIS

Two impact evaluations were conducted during the LIPW program’s implementation, first in 2014 and then in 2016. This study provides data from the 2016 impact evaluation. The evaluation selected 117 subprojects and randomized them into treatment and control (comparison) groups. The study drew on data collected from 2,341 households in November and December 2015, of which 1,389 worked for LIPW earlier in the year, between January and October 2015. In addition to the quantitative data collection, there was a qualitative component of this study.

Overall, the evaluation found positive impacts of the program on the lives of beneficiaries. Key highlights from the evaluation include:

\textbf{Impact on crop production:} The value of crops produced by beneficiary households under the climate change and small-dam subprojects increased by GHS\textsuperscript{4} 337.00 and GHS 236.28 more than the value recorded for control households. Similarly, the average revenue from the sale of crops increased by approximately GHS 173.83 for households who benefited from small-earth dam subprojects compared to their counterpart non-beneficiary households.

\textbf{Impact on nonfarm enterprise:} Beneficiary households who benefited from the small-earth dams and dugouts subprojects gained about GHS 70.44 (for all households in general) and GHS 78.55 (for male-headed households) more as income from nonfarm enterprises than from non-beneficiary households.

\textbf{Impact on lending, borrowing, and formal savings:} The decision to lend by the entire sample beneficiary households of feeder road and small earth-dam subprojects increased significantly by 3.4 and 4.8 percentage points, respectively. Also, the decision to borrow by beneficiary households of all three subprojects increased significantly in excess of 4.4, 6.3 and 5.5 percentage points respectively over their control group. The project also had positive impact on formal savings. The decision to save in a formal financial institution by households

\textsuperscript{3} World Bank 2019.

\textsuperscript{4} GHS is Ghana Cedis – the local currency of Ghana.
who benefited from the climate change and small earth-dams subprojects significantly increased in excess of 8 and 10.7 percentage points respectively over the comparison households.

**Impact on consumption expenditure:** Only the climate change subprojects in the southern part of Ghana had a significant impact on household consumption expenditure and also led to significant reduction in extreme poverty. Household consumption expenditure increased significantly in excess of GHS 168.21 for beneficiary households of climate change projects over the average household expenditure in control communities, which is estimated at around GHS 914.71. This translated into a reduction in extreme poverty incidence by 3.7 percentage points over the extreme poverty incidence of control households.

**Impact on children’s food security:** The climate change subproject also had a positive impact on food security. For households which benefited from the climate change project, the incidence of a child going hungry because of no money for food in the house decreased by 3.1 and 3.9 percentage points for the entire sampled households and male-headed beneficiary households respectively. Similarly, the incidence of a child ever not eaten the whole day because of no money decreased by 5.1, 5.9 and 6.9 percentage points for the entire sampled beneficiary households, male-headed beneficiary households, and beneficiary households in the three northern regions respectively of the climate change subproject.

**Impact on labor force participation and unemployment:** Labor force participation increased by 6.2, 2.8 and 7 percentage points for individuals in households that benefited from the feeder road; climate change and small earth-dam and dugout subprojects respectively during the off-farming season. LIPW projects decreased the unemployment rate in the intervention communities by 24.2 percentage points for the feeder road subproject, 18.5 percentage points for the small earth-dam/dugout subprojects, and 26.7 percentage points for the climate change subprojects.5

Social benefits were also generated through the participation of women in the program, such as provision of childcare arrangements, and some effects on reversing seasonal migration.

While promoting employment, given that the LIPW was a social safety net program, it was important that intentional operational elements were embedded in the design to ensure adequate inclusion of vulnerable people, and enhance the well-being of participants. Some of these were achieved, while others were not. Additionally, after eight years of implementation, lessons were learned and innovations realized that can be useful for informing implementation of public works programs. This study therefore focuses on the experiences of the LIPW program in relation to the opportunities it offered youth6 and women,

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5 Osei-Akoto et al. 2014.
with a goal of identifying prospects for enhancing social inclusion in the program, while improving employment opportunities and community assets. This study provides insights and lessons learned that will be useful for practitioners, leading the implementation of public works programs, to identify ways to promote social inclusion among vulnerable populations, particularly women and youth.

Findings from this study are derived from feedback from LIPW program implementers and stakeholders, reviews of operational documents, and findings from the impact assessments and other studies conducted on the program.

1.1 Why Public Works

Several countries have adopted public works programs (PWPs) to provide income support and alternative livelihood opportunities to address work shortages. PWPs are mainly labor-oriented and focus on building or rehabilitating community assets, public infrastructure, and other initiatives that would have appreciable economic returns.

PWPs refer to the provision of state-sponsored employment for the working age poor who are unable to support themselves due to inadequate, market-based employment opportunities. PWPs entail payment of a wage (in cash or kind) by the state, or an agent acting on its behalf, in return for a provision of labor, with the objectives of reducing poverty and producing an asset or service. Others describe them as safety net programs that provide temporary employment at low wage rates, mostly to unskilled manual workers on labor-intensive subprojects such as road construction and maintenance, irrigation infrastructure, reforestation, soil conservation, among others.

While PWPs have been undertaken over the years, there is renewed interest in the prospects they offer for social protection, poverty reduction, and achievement of inclusive and sustainable development in developing countries. They have been promoted as a complement to cash assistance and transfers that working poor or persons with productive capacity could benefit from.

1.2 Public Works and Social Inclusion

PWPs have the potential to promote social inclusion by benefiting vulnerable groups, including young people and women. For instance, the Sierra Leone PWP successfully provided temporary employment to those with low educational attainments. There was also significant re-optimization of household labor allocation and expenditure among participants. PWPs can contribute to injecting productive resources into local economies and reducing seasonal migration. Findings from countries such as India suggest that

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7 McCord 2014.
8 Del Ninno 2016.
9 Barrienos and Hulme 2009.
10 Rosas and Sabarwal 2016.
participation in PWPs have reduced short-term migration and increased wages for young people engaged in manual, short-term work in urban areas.\textsuperscript{11}

The possibilities that PWPs offer for improving environmental management, especially climate change and green jobs, and rebuilding of infrastructure, could also be attractive to young people. Participation in such initiatives within a PWP could offer opportunities for them to be part of community development. Other international experiences suggest that if PWPs are targeted at high-risk youth, crime and related concerns could reduce.\textsuperscript{12} PWPs could offer options for youth dropouts, including addressing identified skills shortfalls. PWPs have also been used for youth employment in post-crisis situations. The Côte d’Ivoire Emergency Youth Employment and Skills Development (PEJEDEC) project was set up in 2012 to support economic recovery following the post-electoral crisis. It provided earnings for the youth through labor-intensive public works as well as basic life skills training on hygiene, HIV AIDs, and civics. Some participants received additional training at the end of the program in basic entrepreneurship, job search skills, and sensitization on wage employment opportunities.\textsuperscript{13}

International experiences also suggest that PWPs have the potential to close gender gaps and support women’s access to income and employment. Examples from Bangladesh and India indicate that females’ participation in the labor force and earnings were enhanced by PWPs.\textsuperscript{14} PWPs could also improve their access to social services.\textsuperscript{15} However, these programs have not been consistently explicit in their treatment and inclusion of women.\textsuperscript{16}

### 1.3 The Policy Environment around Ghana’s LIPW

Policies are essential to define the environment for implementing social projects. During the LIPW program’s implementation period, a range of national policies were formulated which helped to ground the activities that should be included in the program, who should participate, and how they should be supported. These included the National Youth Policy (2010), the National Gender Policy (2014), the National Climate Change and Environmental Policies (2014), the National Decentralization Policies (2010 and 2015), the National Employment Policy (2015), the National Social Protection Policy (2016), and the Labour Intensive Public Works Policy (2016). These policies, among other things, all focused on improving the circumstances of marginalized and vulnerable groups.

The Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agendas (GSGDA) I and II were formulated for 2010 to 2013 and 2014 to 2017. These policies prioritized young people, women, and persons with disabilities as vulnerable groups. GSGDA II identified employment for young people as one of the “game changers” or the strategic initiatives and enablers of socioeconomic transformation. In various parts of the Agendas, the challenges of youth development were identified as a basis for proposed interventions. For instance,

\textsuperscript{11} Imbert and Papp 2014.
\textsuperscript{12} Blattman and Ralston 2015.
\textsuperscript{13} Bertrand et al. 2017.
\textsuperscript{14} Azam 2012.
\textsuperscript{15} Azam 2012; Afridi, Mukhopadhyay, and Sahoo 2012.
\textsuperscript{16} Holmes and Jones 2011.
under “human development, productivity and employment” the main challenges identified affecting young people were urbanization, migration, poor policy coordination, and weak institutional frameworks to support them. In relation to poverty reduction, GSGDA II proposed that strong links had to be forged between local economic development (LED) and youth development, as well as integrating youth concerns into national development planning processes and programs and providing adequate training and skills development in line with global trends.

During the period under review, particularly in 2014 and 2015, national discussions on “harnessing the demographic dividend” started through the National Development Planning Commission (NDPC) with support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), with the goal of presenting Ghana’s youthful population structure as an investment opportunity that had to be harnessed.

A number of policies and relevant legislations were also in place prior to and during LIPW implementation focusing on gender inclusion and equality. Most of the policies referenced gender mainstreaming. The creation of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) in 2013 consolidated coordination of gender issues in Ghana. In 2015, MoGCSP developed the National Gender Policy and the Affirmative Action Policy to promote gender mainstreaming into national development. The 2015 National Gender Policy focused on improving social, legal, civic, political, economic, and sociocultural conditions in order to mainstream gender equality concerns more effectively. The policy presented five thematic areas, including women’s empowerment and livelihoods, women’s rights, and access to justice and leadership and accountable governance.

The outcomes of the LIPW program included the development of a Ghana LIPW Policy in 2016, and selection of LIPW as one of the key strategies within the 2019 Ghana Rural Development Policy. This demonstrates the government’s confidence in the use of PWPs to promote employment, create public assets, and develop the local economy, as well as contribute to poverty reduction.

The NDPC also integrated gender considerations into the national, sectoral, and district planning frameworks and preparation processes. This was done through the use of cross-sectoral planning groups (CSPGs) in formulating the national development frameworks, as well as the guidelines to support ministries, departments, agencies, and assemblies in their planning efforts (Government of Ghana, 2013).  

The government’s most recent policy—the “Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies (2017–2024): An Agenda for Jobs: Creating Prosperity and Equal Opportunity for All”—also promotes social cohesion and economic inclusion, particularly among youth.

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18 Ghana’s planning process as outlined in Section 15 of Act 479 requires the NDPC to adopt a participatory process involving public and private sector entities, individual experts and civil society organizations (CSOs) through the constitution of CSPGs. Over the years, gender has been fostered through a specialist group, as well as mainstreaming it into the work of the CSPGs.
2 Provisions in the LIPW Program Design for Youth and Women’s Participation

The overall objective of the LIPW program, as defined by GSOP’s design document, the Project Appraisal Document (PAD), was to provide targeted rural poor households with access to employment and income-earning opportunities during the agricultural off-season in response to external shocks, through rehabilitation and maintenance of public or community infrastructure. With the goal to maximize local employment while rehabilitating productive infrastructure assets, the program review that led to the LIPW’s formation also recognized the importance of women and youth inclusion. However, while design and implementation considerations were detailed for women, this was not the case for youth.

The preliminary assessment that supported the project’s development, the Participatory Poverty and Vulnerability Assessment (PPVA) of northern Ghana, included a review of the gender dimensions of poverty and the concerns of young people. The PPVA indicated that local populations were concerned with increasing climate instability and its link to the seasonal droughts, which mostly affected women and youth. Additionally, women had relatively limited income-earning opportunities and limited assets.

The targeting mechanism chosen by the program was an essential means to ensuring increased participation of women and youth. It was envisaged that the targeting strategy would use a combination of geographic (based on the Ghana Statistical Services Poverty Maps) and self-selection, with a community-based validation in situations of oversubscription, to ensure a fair distribution of opportunities for those who could work and wished to take part.

The study also highlighted seasonal rural-urban migration of youth, with young women primarily engaging as head porters (kayayei) at market centers and domestic workers, while young men worked in informal mining and a few others in commercial horticulture. Community consultations emphasized that young women were particularly vulnerable to migration and would be potentially better served by wage opportunities in their home communities. As such, the program design recognized the need to provide viable employment during the dry season with at least 20 days of work per person between December and March, as alternatives to seasonal migration.

Specific to gender, the program would contribute to the national development agenda by promoting gender equality, empowering women, improving maternal mortality, and reducing child mortality, in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). By generating income for participating beneficiaries and their households, the program was also expected to have positive impacts on aspects of household management, such as a reduction in malnutrition and asset depletion.

Given that men and women face different constraints in rural labor markets, program assessments and evaluations incorporated into implementation would track the distinct effects of participation on male- and female-headed households, and where possible, on individual male and female program

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20 World Bank 2010.
21 PDA 2009.
22 The Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy (GPRS II) which runs from 2006 to 2009.
beneficiaries. As such, monitoring indicators included gender-disaggregated data on household-level access to employment, income-earning opportunities, and members’ well-being. Further, given that LIPW was expected to lead to reductions in household malnutrition, as poor households would use the extra incomes for food purchases, the program would also collect and analyze data on gendered division of labor and awareness of the household-level economic decision-making processes.

The project’s operational manual (POM) further prescribed specific provisions for women’s inclusion, as follows:

- Females would be at least 50 percent of the total workforce with the expectation that sensitization activities would intentionally target women.
- Female workers would work for no more than six hours in a day; work should occur in the early parts of the day; and women could work around their own domestic schedules.
- Female workers should not work in risk areas.
- Extra care should be taken for work identified for pregnant women. For instance, they should not work in plants or on equipment that vibrates or carry heavy loads.
- Lactating mothers who are beneficiaries should enjoy at least three months maternity leave with full wages.
- Provision of on-site crèches and caregivers to care for children of working mothers.
- Payment of workers on the task-rate basis to allow better targeting of women workers.

Because issues of youth were perceived as important, the program preparatory process reviewed and recognized existing poverty reduction livelihood creation programs in Ghana that catered to youth, such as the National Youth Employment Program (NYEP) to ensure that the project would not overlap with them. The review noted that the NYEP targeted youth who had completed junior secondary education and mainly focused on educated youth in urban areas; therefore, a gap remained in support for youth in rural areas.

The appraisal process also recognized LIPW’s potential to promote peace building among youth in the then conflict areas of northern Ghana. Young people were heavily involved in existing conflicts, mostly because of limited income-earning opportunities and lack of community-building efforts. The poverty and vulnerability assessment therefore recommended a social appraisal of the conflict dynamics of potential communities to further inform the program’s design. It was also important that the program design did not undermine community traditions and practices of self-help.

Based on the GSOP design elements discussed previously, it is evident that the design acknowledged the need to be sensitive and responsive to the different needs of sections of the vulnerable population, both women and youth. However, while LIPW sought to create opportunities for youth participation where possible, it did not systematically integrate youth-disaggregated considerations in the design, as was done for women.

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The subsequent sections 2.1 and 2.2 provide an in-depth review of implementation, reviewing the extent to which issues concerning youth and women, respectively, were adequately addressed during implementation.

2.1 Youth Participation in the LIPW Program

The LIPW program hired workers between the ages of 18 and 65. This section explores provisions made for youth (ages 18 through 35) and examines whether design parameters posited were actually implemented.

2.1.1 Demographics of LIPW Youth

Data on youth derived from the LIPW program’s management information system (MIS) indicated that at the end of implementation in 2017, approximately 32 percent (53,698) of the 168,791 workers were between the ages of 18 and 35. A further breakdown of LIPW youthful beneficiaries by gender indicated that female beneficiaries between the ages of 18 and 35 constituted 19 percent (31,019) of all beneficiaries, while males were approximately 13 percent (22,679). Additionally, about 30 percent of all female beneficiaries and approximately 34 percent of all male beneficiaries respectively, were youth. Table 2 provides the breakdown based on LIPW program’s MIS.25

Table 2: Breakdown of LIPW Youth Beneficiaries by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Groups</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18–24</td>
<td>837</td>
<td>989</td>
<td>1,826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–35</td>
<td>21,842</td>
<td>30,030</td>
<td>51,872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36–60</td>
<td>38,027</td>
<td>63,764</td>
<td>101,791</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61–65</td>
<td>2,457</td>
<td>4,047</td>
<td>6,504</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 65</td>
<td>2,465</td>
<td>4,333</td>
<td>6,798</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>65,628</td>
<td>103,163</td>
<td>168,791</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The 2016 LIPW impact evaluation corroborates the findings of the program’s MIS indicating that youth constituted approximately 31 percent of LIPW participants.26

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25 The MIS data on ages were based on information provided by beneficiaries, some of which could be inaccurate, arising from lack of reliable birth registration and certification, and other difficulties primarily due to limited literacy.

26 Osei-Akoto 2016.
The evaluation also provided a breakdown of youth by subproject participation as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3: Participation in LIPW by Project Type and Age (in percent)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age category</th>
<th>Type of LIPW project</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feeder roads</td>
<td>Climate change</td>
<td>Small-earth dams and dugouts</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–34</td>
<td>22.71</td>
<td>24.80</td>
<td>22.12</td>
<td>22.88</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35+</td>
<td>67.43</td>
<td>65.78</td>
<td>68.81</td>
<td>67.72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Osei-Akoto et al., 2016.

Youth beneficiaries were involved in the following activities: 712 (32.01 percent) engaged in feeder road subprojects, 761 (34.21 percent) in climate change, and 751 (33.70 percent) in small dams and dugouts. Within the 18 to 24 years age bracket, the distribution of participants across activities was fairly even, though slightly more were involved in feeder roads construction. In the “older” youth bracket of 25 to 34 years, a slightly higher proportion was involved in climate change initiatives. In both categories, the small-earth dams and dugout subprojects had the smallest proportion of youth.

Given that the LIPW program was initiated to alleviate poverty, participants were also categorized as extremely poor or nonpoor as demonstrated in Table 4. According to the impact evaluation, almost 88 percent of participants were extremely poor; 9 percent poor; and a little over 3 percent nonpoor. A breakdown by age group demonstrated that beneficiaries in the 18- to 34-year groups roughly reflected these proportions.

Table 4: Poverty Status of LIPW Beneficiaries by Gender and Age Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Poverty status</th>
<th>15–24</th>
<th>25–34</th>
<th>35+</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extreme poor</td>
<td>87.64</td>
<td>84.90</td>
<td>88.65</td>
<td>87.58</td>
<td>87.77</td>
<td>87.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-poor</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>3.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Osei-Akoto et al., 2016

Program implementers indicated that the relatively low participation of youth within the younger age group was because of school attendance in most of the participating communities, and/or seasonal migration of the youth from rural to urban areas.

2.1.2 Motivation for Youth Participation in LIPW Subprojects

The 2016 LIPW program impact evaluation revealed that most LIPW beneficiaries, across ages and gender, were motivated to join the program because of the prospect of acquiring additional income. LIPW was considered a viable employment option, even though wages were capped below the agricultural rate and not below the minimum daily wage. As depicted in Table 5, about 81 percent of beneficiaries indicated
that the opportunity to supplement their incomes was an attraction, while about 13 percent stated that their main incentive was to gain a new job opportunity.  

Table 5: Attraction to LIPW projects by age and gender categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What mainly attracted beneficiaries</th>
<th>Age category</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18–24</td>
<td>25–34</td>
<td>35+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>85.75</td>
<td>81.00</td>
<td>80.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of job opportunity</td>
<td>10.84</td>
<td>15.30</td>
<td>11.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To acquire skills</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>6.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Osei-Akoto et al., 2016

Similar to the overall finding, among the youth between 18 and 24 years, acquiring “money” was a primary motivation, with higher response rates than those in the 25 to 34 and 35+ age groups. This could point to the need to earn money for survival, given their poor living conditions.

The 25 to 34-year group (15.3 percent) also indicated “lack of job opportunities” as a propelling factor for participation more than any other age category. These individuals would likely be out of school and needing jobs. Skills acquisition appeared not to be a priority across board (approximately 1 percent); the 35 years and over category recognized this more so than the younger participants.

Findings from the impact evaluation also showed that on average, the LIPW program had increased employment rates by 34.2 percent, 28.6 percent, and 32.8 percent for the feeder roads, climate change and small-earth dam/dugout subprojects, respectively, among individual participating youth in program beneficiary households. The survey data were corroborated with the qualitative information, particularly from the focus group discussions (FGDs). Respondents suggested that the program had enabled young people to participate in the rural labor force. A youth beneficiary in an FGD in the Konzokalaa Community stated that getting work from the LIPW program enabled them to earn money regularly and easily during the off-farming season.

2.1.3 Effects of LIPW on Youth Seasonal Migration

As previously discussed, in addition to LIPW’s ability to promote youth employment, the issue of seasonal migration as a dimension of youth unemployment and underemployment was considered as a pertinent challenge to address. As such, the preparatory analysis for LIPW took into account evidence from the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS) 6 from 2012/13, which suggested that a significant number of young people were engaged in seasonal migration. The phenomenon often involved short-term trips, between one to six months, to urban areas during the off-farming seasons. The LIPW program was 100 percent rural, with most participants, approximately 86 percent, residing in northern Ghana—all the small-earth dams and dugouts subprojects were located in the northern part of the country. Sixty-five percent of the climate change subprojects and 80 percent of the feeder roads subprojects were also implemented in

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northern Ghana. Given that the program took place in the off-farming season and international research also suggested the potential use of public works to curb seasonal employment, the use of the LIPW program as a way to curb seasonal migration was a plausible idea.\textsuperscript{29}

A number of studies were conducted during implementation which assessed this issue. Findings on the effects of seasonal migration on the LIPW program were mixed. While the 2016 impact evaluation demonstrated significant impacts on seasonal migration, other targeted studies reported minimal impacts. The impact evaluation reviewed out-migration, in-migration and return migration in the treatment communities. The LIPW evaluation investigated migration incidence from the time the projects started in beneficiary communities compared to the situation in non-LIPW program communities (control). In communities where feeder road subprojects were undertaken, beneficiary households in the three Northern Regions had a significant reduction in the likelihood of at least one household member out-migrating due to paid work, by 3.1 percentage points. On the contrary, male-headed households which worked on the climate change subproject had an increase in out-migration paid work by 4 and 2.1 percentage points, respectively. There were no out-migration effects found for the two other subprojects, climate change and small earth-dams or dugouts.

A further breakdown found the following:

**Impact on return-migration:** All three subprojects had significant positive impact on return migration for the three Northern regions. Return migrants are those who migrated out of their communities but returned for paid employment within the last 6 months before the survey. The increases were 5.2, 4.7 and 10.4 percentage points for feeder road, climate change and small earth-dam or dugout subprojects respectively.

**Impact on out-migration:** In communities where feeder road subprojects were undertaken, beneficiary households in the three Northern regions had a significant reduction in out-migration.\textsuperscript{30} The likelihood of at least one household member out-migrating due to paid work reduced by 3.1 percentage points than among non-beneficiaries.

The quantitative study as part of the impact evaluation further corroborated the quantitative findings. Views expressed perceived positive effects on seasonal migration, including:

“Due to the high unemployment rate, people used to migrate to the South in search of jobs. But since the inception of this LIPW small-earth dam and dugout project, our youths who move to the cities to find work have reduced, especially among young women in our community.” (From Beneficiary Focus Group Discussion in Naaha Community, Wa East District, Upper West Region).

“Before the project, young men and women travelled to urban areas like Kumasi especially during the dry season. But the movement has declined tremendously. Some of these young men and women have

\textsuperscript{29} Banerjee and Duflo 2007; Badiani and Safir 2009; Costella and Manjolo 2010; Morten 2012.

\textsuperscript{30} Note that the three Northern Regions in this study refer to Upper West, Upper East and Northern Region. In 2018, the Northern Region was divided into three regions namely, Northern, Savannah and North East Regions.
indicated that if it weren’t for this LIPW small-earth dam and dugout project in this community, they would have been preparing to move to the cities in search of menial jobs.” (Discussions with the Chief and Elders of Naaha Community, Wa East District, Upper West Region).

On the other hand, a 2018 analysis of the impact of the LIPW program specifically on youth employment and seasonal migration indicated that the program did not have significant effects on seasonal migration.31

Another study that focused on one LIPW district (the Daffiama Bussie Issah District), which considered the impact of LIPW assets on youth out-migration and whether the dams and dugouts had engaged the youth in dry season farming, found that the program did not have an effect on seasonal migration in the area researched. A comparison of three program communities with three nonprogram communities in the district revealed no significant impact on migration.32

It can be argued, as previously posited, that given the LIPW program did not intentionally put in place elements that would promote inclusion of youth, some perceived benefits of the program, in this case reduction in seasonal migration among youth, could have been heightened, although as posited by the 2016 impact evaluation, the LIPW program had significant impacts on overall seasonal migration.

2.2 Female Participation in the LIPW Program

GSOP’s PAD indicated that the LIPW program will ensure equal access for both women and men. It also proposed that since men and women faced different constraints in the rural labor market, the impact evaluations and program assessments would uncover possible differential effects of LIPW on male- and female-headed households, as well as individuals in the program. The project design emphasized gender balance that would be achieved through intentionally targeting women, but also ensured that the program provided flexibility in terms of hours and options as an incentive for women’s participation.33

GSOP’s mid-term review in 2014 revealed that 60.4 percent of project beneficiaries were female, exceeding the original target of 25.0 percent female.34 There was also evidence of improvement in the livelihoods of beneficiaries, including increased expenditure on clothing and housing among female-headed households. The proposal for additional financing that followed the mid-term review revised the target for female participation upward to 65 percent.

The following section explores the design provisions for female participation in LIPW and the actual efforts that were made at promoting women’s involvement and access to employment during implementation.

31 Namara, et al., 2018.
33 World Bank 2010.
34 World Bank 2014.
2.2.1 Achieving High Levels of Women’s Participation in LIPW

GSOP’s Implementation Completion and Results Report (ICR) indicated that the project reached 61 percent female, compared with a revised target of 65 percent.\footnote{GSOP’s mid-term review in 2014 revealed that 60.4 percent of project beneficiaries were female, exceeding the original target of 25.0 percent female. The target was revised to 65 percent at mid-term, making the final female reach very positive.} At the subproject level, women consisted of 63 percent working on feeder roads; 63 percent for small-earth dams and dugouts; and 58 percent engaged in the climate change subprojects. As had been proposed at the project design stage, the 2016 impact evaluation provided information about the differential effects of participation in the LIPW program on women, as compared to their male counterparts.\footnote{World Bank 2019.}

The high levels of female participation are attributed mainly to deliberate sensitization and targeting efforts to reach out to women. Additionally, the project’s operational manual included features such as flexible work hours for women and required that a woman is represented on the three-member Case Management Committee at the community level, which was intended to facilitate women’s access to grievance redress mechanisms. Other mechanisms in the program design to encourage women’s participation included on-site childcare facilities and services where working mothers could leave their children with older women who were hired to tend to the children during working hours.
BOX 1: Increasing Women’s Participation in Public Works – The Motivation for On-site Childcare

The LIPW program is designed to encourage women to participate fully in the opportunities that it presents. As such, the program intentionally includes various provisions to make access and participation of women more viable. The program facilitates access to reproductive health support to female beneficiaries through the local health delivery system and ensures that all LIPW-related activities are carried out during periods that do not conflict with the performance of household chores mostly performed by female participants.

Given that majority of LIPW program beneficiaries are women (about 60 percent), most of whom are nursing mothers or in their reproductive ages, several of them report to work with babies and toddlers. To support these women, on-site crèches are required to be constructed at LIPW sites to: (i) provide a congenial place for nursing mothers to breastfeed their babies; (ii) ensure the safety of the children during working hours; and (iii) offer mothers the freedom to work productively. The provision of childcare facilities at LIPW program sites was initiated under GSOP. These on-site crèches are provided before or just at the start of physical execution of the works, and forms part of the mobilization activities. Each crèche is managed by one or more attendants (depending on the number of children brought to site) who form part of the unskilled workforce under the program, meaning they are paid for being caregivers. The crèches include floor mats, mattresses, and basic toys. The caregivers, who are selected by the women, are provided with basic childcare and safety training. The introduction of on-site crèches has contributed immensely to increasing participation of women in the LIPW program as testified by beneficiaries:

“During the initial sensitization of community members on the program, we were informed that nursing mothers and others who have children that have not reached school going age could participate in the works since provision will be made to cater for the children. This gave me and other fellow mothers the assurance to write down our names to be part of work. Truly, since work started, a crèche has been constructed for us and we also have a caretaker. I can breastfeed my baby as and when needed and go back to work. Again, when we come to work and it is raining, we run for shelter in the crèche. We are therefore very happy with the work” - Gifty Aziedu, from Volo in the North Tongu District, Volta region.

“Thank God for the opportunity. If not for this job, I do not know what I would have been doing by now. The good thing also is that a crèche has been built for us with an attendant and so as we work, we are able to stop and come to breast feed our babies or see how they are faring” - Rosena Normeny, from Volo, Tongu District, Volta Region.

Other reasons posited for high levels of women’s participation included the fact that women constituted more than half of the populations of the targeted rural communities. Also, since women tended to be poorer and had fewer income-earning opportunities in the targeted communities, they were more likely to be satisfied by the wages offered by the program. Some female beneficiaries indicated that women
who had the primary responsibility of taking care of homes and children required reliable, predictable sources of income, and therefore saw the LIPW program as a viable option despite its lower wages. Others also saw the program as viable to them because they could stay with their families, given the proximity of sites to their homes. As indicated in Figure 2, a female beneficiary from the Bongo District in Upper East stated “when I heard of GSOP (LIPW), I stopped being a head porter in Accra and came back home to work. I am very glad I did. I have been telling my friends in Accra to come back home.”

Figure 2: LIPW Female Beneficiary Testimony

![Image of a female beneficiary with a speech bubble]

“When I heard of GSOP (LIPW), I stopped being a head porter in Accra and came back home to work. I am very glad I did. I have been telling my friends in Accra to come back home.”

Mariama Musah, LIPW Beneficiary
Gonogo, Bongo District, Upper East Region

Photo credit: LIPW Program Operations

2.2.2 Implementation Activities and Women’s Participation in LIPW

Sensitization and Access to Information. Women tend to have limited access to information concerning opportunities within their community. As such, the program invested considerably in awareness raising and community sensitization activities, and engagements with different segments of the targeted communities. The impact evaluation found that there were no significant differences between men and women in relation to the efforts that had been made by the program to prepare their communities for the LIPW program participation. Across subprojects and gender groups, more than 80 percent of beneficiaries said they had adequate information and went through sufficient sensitization and targeting processes before being selected. The evaluation also revealed that beneficiaries, irrespective of gender, did not consider the program design to be complex.

Selection, Grievance and Redress Mechanisms. Because there had been an explicit requirement to ensure women’s participation in all aspects of the program, the LIPW program required a woman to be part of the Community Selection Committee. The three-member committee consisted of a representative from the traditional authorities, a community elder or opinion leader, and a women’s representative. This panel ensured fairness of the project’s selection processes. To further promote women’s access and
participation in the project’s grievance mechanism, a women’s representative was also required in the community-level Case Management Committee.

**Division of Labor.** There was visible division of labor on work sites, such as men digging clay and filling head pans and women carrying the pans of clay to the dam sites. In the climate change–related subprojects, women conducted the watering activities. Some contractors indicated that the differences between assigned tasks for men and women were a result of the physical capacities required for individual tasks. At the beginning of the program, lighter physical work had been envisaged for women, such as spreading gravel. However, in actual subproject implementation, women were given the choice to select the activities they wanted (and were able) to work on, and some opted for duties with higher loads such as trenching and felling of trees. Interestingly, there were debates about whether some female beneficiaries would have undertaken felling of trees, for instance, if there had been more men interested in taking up the task. Further, the influence of local customs on who was allowed to take on which tasks could not be discounted. In some communities, traditions did not allow men to carry sand or put head pans on their heads, which meant that women would automatically take on these tasks. There was also anecdotal evidence that some contractors preferred to work with women—a contractor in the northern zone, for instance, indicated that women were more reliable than men, could be counted on to show up for work, and responded more readily to directions. On the other hand, the men did not feel encouraged to apply themselves since they undertook what they perceived to be harder work than the women for equal levels of remuneration.

**Social Impacts and Use of Women’s Earnings.** The LIPW program provided women with opportunities for income earning, capacity building, and other forms of empowerment, including visibility. As was indicated previously, timely and reliable payments were a priority for women, who required income for managing their households. In this respect, the program met their expectations, as confirmed through a beneficiary assessment which stated that over 60 percent of beneficiaries across gender and subprojects were paid within one month of working on LIPW subprojects. Beneficiaries also stated that women’s earnings from the LIPW program supported the upkeep of households and school fees. Apart from support to their homes, female beneficiaries also indicated that the work had given them the financial strength to contribute meaningfully to community initiatives. Socially, they were accorded respect because they had an income and were saved from “shame.” Women also invested their earnings in cultivating vegetables, pepper, groundnuts, maize, and cassava, and also engaged in nonfarming ventures such as petty trading.

Observations from the impact evaluation pointed to enhanced social cohesion and strengthened networks.37 Some women indicated that they did not have to consider employment options outside their communities, which would have required them to leave their homes. As one respondent observed “We can (now) stay back in our communities with our families.” Focus group discussions revealed that having additional incomes for women also reduced domestic disagreements and communal conflicts over water for animals.

Generally, beneficiaries and respondents suggested that participation of women in various LIPW subprojects enhanced their visibility and agency in public decision-making and resulted in their empowerment. About 47 percent indicated improved female participation in decision-making in participating communities. Both female beneficiaries (51 percent) and male beneficiaries (39 percent) strongly considered that women had been empowered as a result of their involvement in the LIPW program. For instance, a male beneficiary from the Eastern Region shared that having additional incomes enabled women to speak up actively and boldly on community issues.
3 Inclusion of women and youth in public works programming—Issues emerging from Ghana’s LIPW program and the way forward

The previous chapters have identified areas through which the LIPW program’s design and implementation processes included women and youth, and areas where there were challenges. This chapter reflects on these findings and proposes recommendations for options that future programming could adopt to increase women and youth participation.

3.1 Issues Emerging and the Way Forward for Youth Inclusion

Overall, while the LIPW program provided seasonal employment alternatives and attained very positive results for providing income to the poorest, there were some missed opportunities by the program to intentionally address the problems of seasonal migration specific to youth, retention, and development of both male and female youth, among others. A 2020 World Bank publication on options for youth employment demonstrates the opportunity for the LIPW program to play a key role in promoting youth employment for both educated and non-educated youth. The program has the opportunity to make contributions towards curbing youth unemployment by implementing some intentional strategic, design and implementation activities. This section sets out key challenges and provides recommendations to better incorporate youth issues in future programming.

**Policy and Institutional Ownership.** One reason attributed to the challenges faced by the LIPW program in adequately incorporating youth in its design and implementation was the policy environment during the program’s lifespan. While the program was situated in the Ministry of Local Government, Decentralization and Rural Development (MLGDRD), this ministry did not have a direct mandate for youth, and it was assumed that young people and other age groups would naturally enroll in the program. Additionally, the relative “back seat” assigned to the Ministry of Employment and Labor Relations (MELR), which had a stronger portfolio of youth employment initiatives, could also have affected the limited focus on young people. However, MELR, who authored the LIPW policy, also did not put in a focus within the policy for youth employment and development, thereby maintaining a general lack of direction for enhancing youth issues in the LIPW program. Additionally, the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS) had no role in the design and/or implementation of the LIPW program.

While MLGDRD is best suited to lead LIPW, given its rural development role and mandate to implement Ghana’s decentralized policy, it will be crucial for MLGDRD to better coordinate with MELR and MoYS in future policy development and programming to improve its engagement and impact on youth employment and development. Existing national policies focusing on youth employment and development, at both the national and local levels, should serve as guidance for LIPW program design and implementation.

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38 Dadzie, Fumey, Namara 2020.
39 Formerly known as the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development (MLGRD).
Project Monitoring Indicators on Youth. The LIPW program did not include high-level or regular monitoring indicators for youth inclusion as was done for female participation, which could explain why implementers did not make a concerted effort to ensure youth participation. Designing public works programs purposefully to promote youth employment and empowerment requires analytical exercises that will include disaggregation on demographic characteristics, location, education, and sociocultural contexts. Future programming will need to include design parameters, and more importantly indicators, that focus on youth inclusion to ensure a greater focus on youth.

Assessment of Youth Time-Use Preferences. An area for further study recommended by the impact evaluation was satisfaction with the LIPW program subprojects and the opportunity costs of beneficiaries’ time. In other words, as compared to other employment and time use options available, would beneficiaries consider their involvement in LIPW program activities an optimal use of their time? A social analysis reveals that these resources vary according to life cycle and generational stages, gender, and other influencing factors such as sociocultural, economic and political factors. An understanding of opportunity costs would also require an understanding of the time use patterns of different sections of the population. For instance, how young men use their time as compared to older men and/or younger and older women. An assessment of the time use of these populations will provide a better appreciation of the implications of their differential productive and community-related activities, and how these would affect their ability and willingness to participate in future PWPs. Such data would aid future PWPs better understand and respond to the social and economic priorities and realities of young people and other vulnerable groups.

Social and Economic Impact Analysis of the LIPW Program on Different Age Groups. The impact study also recommended an assessment of the prospects for higher earnings from climate change–related activities as compared to feeder roads and small-earth dams and dugouts, and how that could potentially determine interest, by age groups, in the various subprojects. It will be useful to conduct an analysis that assesses the level of participation of young men and women in each of the subprojects, as well as a comparison of how their involvement affected them differently. For instance, more specific information could be generated on the effects of feeder roads, small-earth dams, and the climate change interventions on younger, employable persons as compared to older members of the community. Study questions could include: (1) the effects of reliable irrigation facilities on younger people, given their access to agricultural production—land, finances, labor, technology, and markets; and (2) how would good access roads benefit younger men and/or women as compared to older men?

Understanding the underlying factors for gender and age, and the social and economic factors, including distribution of roles, division of labor, access to finance, and career interests, among others, that would incline young people to take up available opportunities, would be useful for defining ways to attract young people into the program.

Inclusion of Youth on Project Committees. The LIPW program implementation arrangements include community committees that are established to monitor various aspects of the program including, beneficiary enrollment verification, grievance redress mechanisms, and facilities maintenance
committees, among others. The current structure of the committees, as required by the POM generally consists of representatives of the leadership of the community (a member of the traditional authority) and other persons of high repute and integrity, who are mostly the elderly. Including youth in such committees would be a good way to (1) attract more youth to the program given that the young committee leaders would potentially have an eye out for youth inclusion; and (2) provide leadership roles for youth, which could assist in boosting their interest, participation, and ownership of the assets.

Box 2: Use of Technology and Similar Innovations to Attract Youth on LIPW

The LIPW program was very successful in incorporating technology into its implementation, which greatly improved its service delivery. The program innovations in technology included transforming its systems from manual to electronic and introducing the use of SMART cards and biometric verification. The daily attendance tracking was also reformed to use tablets that provided real-time tracking of beneficiary attendance. From registration through payments, information and communication technology (ICT) tools and systems were incorporated in program implementation and tracking.

Given that youth are generally attracted to ICT, an effective tactic for youth inclusion could be reserving some ICT roles for young people by hiring them as community facilitators and site supervisors where they would use tablets and other gadgets to track attendance, process payments, monitor site progress, and communicate program results. The program could also consider linking such youth to local skills training opportunities in ICT as a way of ensuring that they can work effectively, but also to provide them with added skills for future job opportunities.

Beyond the ICT roles on staff, activities within agribusiness and green jobs that incorporate ICT and mechanization are also attractive to younger people, both uneducated and educated youth in rural and peri-urban areas. As such, making more of such opportunities available particularly through LIPW’s climate change mitigation initiatives (tree planting, irrigation, forestry, etc.), and conducting intentional sensitization on these opportunities through the program could be another way to increase youth participation, and ultimately promote youth employment, while building lasting skills for the rural youth.

Ensuring Social and Cultural Relevance to Entice Local Youth. In the program design and development of operational manuals and handbooks for implementation, paying attention to various unique cultures and norms within implementation areas that have an impact on youth inclusion would be key. For instance, determining which activities would be more attractive to younger people in a community, and which of them would be appropriate to mix both young and older workers on-site could be useful to intentionally sensitize activities to attract more youth, as well as for training of the program facilitators and agents. Understanding the cultural norms could also be useful for addressing and/or preventing grievances.

Curbing Youth Rural-Urban Migration. The migration issue needs to be interrogated further, particularly considering different trends for youth, compared with other age groups. The application of a social analysis framework would demonstrate that young people and older persons have different reasons for migration aspirations and their migration patterns, as well as potential destinations. Understanding these
issues within various age groups would aid in designing the program in a way that would reduce these trends, and possibly attract more youth. Further, an improved uptake of social services has been linked to participation in PWPs. Therefore, studying the access to social services such as health, education, skills and training in various districts and sensitizing beneficiaries about options available, as well as intentionally linking them to such services, could be a way to entice them to stay in their localities, as well as increase participation in the program. Particularly given that LIPW wages are generally low compared to other opportunities, linking beneficiaries to other services and programs could serve as a way to make the LIPW program more attractive.

Promoting Social Cohesion and Sustaining Community Assets. Building social cohesion and sustaining community assets should result in a stronger sense of community and the ability of the people to leverage social capital. To this end, participants in the program should feel that they are better able to contribute relevantly to the development of their respective communities and participate effectively in public decision-making, as a result of the LIPW program experience. Participation in the program should generate more commitment to the communities and positive relations between young people and other local citizens, thereby bridging gender and social gaps, as applicable, and offering a better quality of life for the targeted groups. Program results should not only contribute to their survival but improve their positions in society.

Some key questions which have been useful for analyzing national programs for their relevance to youth development that can be applied to future public works programs, include:

- What are the implications of the proposed program’s objectives for youth development?
- Will the proposed strategies of the program have positive implications for youth development?
- Are implementing institutions and collaborating agencies sensitive to youth development issues and able to work toward achieving promoting youth employment and development?
- Does the program have the capacity to identify and analyze youth-sensitive issues and institutional legitimacy (trust and suitability) with the key groups?
- Has a needs assessment on youth economic and social opportunities been undertaken prior to design?

In summary, to ensure that PWPs are more responsive to young people, future program preparation should ensure that the objectives, strategies, and resource requirements intentionally take the realities of youth into account, and further offer opportunities for disaggregating data on youth to provide effective support throughout the program’s lifecycle. The appraisal process should also consider the capacities of implementing entities to be sensitive to the young people.

3.2 Issues Emerging and the Way Forward for Increasing Female Participation

Overall, commitment to promoting women’s participation and fostering gender equality in the LIPW program was evident. A World Bank gender assessment on the program in 2017 came to similar
The assessment suggested that the efforts by the LIPW program to put in features to attract and retain women had paid off, since high levels of women’s participation were achieved fairly consistently across all project types and regions. It proposed that good practices adopted by the program could influence future programming, including the existence and monitoring of on-site crèches for childcare. The assessment recommended opportunities for strengthening including the following:

- Promoting the quality of women’s participation by ensuring that project activities are held in safe locations.
- Promoting women’s active engagement through capacity building and mentoring.
- Enhancing women’s participation in project leadership and decision-making structures.
- Increasing engagement of men in efforts to promote gender equality so as not to reinforce norms and views about child health and education being “female responsibilities.”

The program will also need to increase monitoring across individual subproject sites to ensure that all activities defined by the POM are implemented in all sites, and in a timely manner to ensure optimal gains. For instance, should public health campaigns be incorporated in programming, it would be useful to be able to confirm that these activities are done in all areas and their measure effectiveness in order to make swift changes where not effective.

**Promotion of Women’s Leadership.** The LIPW program’s achievements in women’s participation should be leveraged to extend their influence in local governance, economic development, and decision-making within their communities. Efforts to ensure women’s presence on community-level committees were achieved by the mandatory requirement. This was an important starting point and having built women’s confidence and visibility through this measure, their capacities can be sustained to have ripple effects for other women and community members. Future programming should also involve further exploration to analyze the effectiveness or impact on women as a result of their participation in various committees, such as the selection, case management, and facilities management committees. Finally, GSOP field implementation staff were predominantly male; future programming would need to increase women’s participation in program implementation and administrative leadership and decision-making.

**Conduct Analyses with a Gendered Lens.** The LIPW program provides evidence that PWPs can improve economic outcomes for women, their access to social services, as well as social empowerment. However, the project design needed more in-depth monitoring to optimize the opportunities that were presented. For instance, beyond confirming that women were adequately involved in the program and providing high-level information on social inclusion, analyzing in-depth gender impacts were not included in the terms of reference of the various project assessments. To achieve the requisite gendered impacts, a proper analytical lens is required. Increased gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that take into account the different levels of access of men and women to critical productive resources are required. The prospects of what will happen to women’s earnings after the intervention and whether the changes in their well-being can be sustained should also be analyzed. Additionally, the differential

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40 Haddock 2017.
41 Haddock 2017.
42 Holmes and Jones 2011.
effects that tradition, local power structures, history, and religion can have on women’s and men’s participation, and even among different categories of women, should be assessed.

Reducing Seasonal Migration among Women. The LIPW program’s design highlighted the need to curb seasonal migration, particularly among young women who leave their communities for urban areas to engage as marketplace head porters and domestic workers. Providing job opportunities through the program was envisioned as a viable option to reduce such migration. The LIPW program’s impact evaluation explored this situation and found positive impacts; the qualitative data derived from beneficiaries also indicated that the program helped to reduce the migration of women from their communities. Having realized the LIPW program’s ability to prevent seasonal migration, future programming should further explore (1) at the onset of programming, engage women who are known to undertake seasonal migration in program areas to understand why they migrate and what would make them stay to participate in the program; (2) with the information gathered on what or why potential beneficiaries would stay, develop sensitization and communication activities to address the migration issue, as well as conduct systematic monitoring of this issue; and (3) conduct further in-depth studies to confirm specific aspects of the program that could be deterrents to seasonal migration, and encourage increase such activities.

Promoting Women’s Safety and Security. The introduction of on-site crèches was valuable to women and supported their domestic care responsibilities. Interventions that support women’s reproductive roles such as childcare were very essential to promoting women’s participation. Beyond availability of the crèches, future programming should be considerate of distance between communities and the project sites, and/or provide transportation for women to ensure they are not overburdened (and safe) to reach work sites. Further, increasing the safety of women while at the work site is essential. To facilitate secure working environments, it is recommended that, among others, secure latrines for women and temporary fencing for subproject sites, as applicable, are prioritized.43

Conducting Periodic In-Depth Reviews on Grievance Mechanisms and Referral Systems. The LIPW program had codes of conduct and grievance mechanisms in place. However, the project did not conduct a comprehensive review on how the grievance mechanisms worked, particularly with a focus on whether women freely used these mechanisms and whether they were satisfied with case resolution processes. Good practices and national provisions for addressing gender-based violence may be adapted for inclusion in PWP guidelines to strengthen the measures the LIPW program adopted. The social workers of the local authorities or district assemblies who play a major role in addressing grievances should be involved in developing responsive frameworks for this aspect of women’s security. Further, additional social workers may be needed to include monitoring of LIPW female beneficiaries to check on their well-being (similar to the regular household visits which are conducted for LEAP cash transfers program beneficiaries). The creation of a single window citizens engagement service system at the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection to streamline grievance redress mechanisms took place toward the end of the program.

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43 Haddock 2017.
Future LIPW programs would need to appropriately align the individual community grievance redress system to this service in order to receive optimal gains on tracking, referring and resolving cases.

**Leveraging Technology to Empower Women.** As indicated previously, the LIPW program introduced many innovations to improve service delivery, including leveraging technology. The program transformed its systems from manual to electronic and introduced the use of SMART cards and biometric verification. The daily attendance tracking was also reformed to use tablets that provided real-time tracking of beneficiary attendance. Given that access and use of technology contributes toward empowering people, including women, the LIPW program could contribute towards building their female beneficiaries’ overall capacity, particularly in technology use, which would ultimately improve their livelihoods and communities over time. As stated previously, future LIPW programming needs to increase the number of female field staff on the program.

**Community-Wide Sensitization should include promotion of Gender Equality Messaging.** Community-level sensitization and dialogue on gender equality issues in implementing PWPs are useful opportunities for fostering wider positive impacts within beneficiary communities. While system-wide transformation may be beyond the remit of the LIPW program, the empowerment that started within the program can support advocacy and initiatives for more inclusive local-level development. The good practices and achievements in the PWP initiative could be shared through various knowledge sharing events with related sectors and programs at the district, regional, and national sectoral levels. The LIPW program should consider closer partnerships with civil society organizations who can help take on some of the gains made during the program implementation period, over a longer, more sustainable period.

**Increased Linkages and Human Capital Training Activities.** Under gender mainstreaming, the LIPW program operational manual guides the project to facilitate access to reproductive health support for female beneficiaries through the local health delivery system. However, this was not done consistently. Future programming should include guidelines specific to how linkages to various human capital elements (health care, nutrition, education, etc.) can be incorporated into the program, with consistency across all sites. Future programming can leverage the fact that women are assembled at project sites over a period of time to provide periodic on-site public health education by community health workers and education on other human capital development topics, such as savings and girls’ education. These activities will require collaboration (including possibly signing a memoranda of understanding) between the program implementers and other ministries, departments and agencies to ensure consistency in providing such important tools to LIPW beneficiaries. These add-on activities could also serve as an incentive for women to participate in the program and contribute towards reducing seasonal migration.
4 CONCLUSION

This study set off to review LIPW program, with a lens on social inclusion, particularly among women and youth. The study reviewed and provided recommendations for intentional operational decisions and actions to increase participation of women and youth in public works programs, and ultimately enhance their well-being and empowerment.

The LIPW program was intended to promote resilient livelihoods for selected poor beneficiaries. The opportunities and resources that the program provides contribute to addressing generational poverty and related issues and boosting human capital if intentional efforts are made to attract and enhance the lives of its beneficiaries.

The LIPW program was effective in reaching its goal of promoting income generation and enhancing employment opportunities for its beneficiaries. It also fostered some level of participation of disadvantaged groups in public decision-making and social development. The program also made appreciable efforts at responding to perceived challenges to women’s participation and introduced innovative strategies to make work sites and payment processes attractive and convenient for them.

The study found that there were also considerable efforts at program information sharing and awareness creation, community consultation in beneficiary and subproject selection, installation of grievance redress systems, and promotion of social accountability. Emphasis was placed on community engagement and local stakeholder participation in decision-making and program implementation.

While the program’s initial target of female participation was surpassed, there were still opportunities for going beyond participation and identifying ways through which women could be more empowered as a result of their participation in the program. Further, there was little evidence that efforts were tailored for participation in decision-making and engagement in the program by young people, as the program was not designed to specifically target young people, even though the LIPW program can be positioned as one of the key programs in curbing youth unemployment. Additionally, further efforts could be made operationally to address seasonal migration, particularly among youth.

The extent to which the LIPW program or future PWPs would be attractive to and transformational for younger members of communities, or particular vulnerable groups, needs further investigation. The differential impacts that the assets created could have on younger members of communities and on women as compared to men, need to be better understood.

Future impact studies’ designs should include assessing the difference that additional income acquired by young people through the LIPW program has on their livelihoods, and whether they were saving monies earned. Were there improvements seen within households of young people participating in public works? If they made investments, what was their focus? Such data would be useful to enhancing targeted sensitization to promote youth participation, and ultimately contribute towards addressing youth unemployment.
Additionally, the objectives, strategies, and implementation mechanisms of future LIPW-type programs must be more strongly aligned with the priorities and provisions in national policies for optimizing participation of, and support to, young people and women. The National Social Protection Policy, for instance, sought to promote mainstreaming gender, social inclusion and disability issues, active labor market participation, capacity development, and financial and productive inclusion for poor and vulnerable populations. The LIPW program has the potential to realize these aspirations. Future programs should aim toward including vulnerability assessments to help in analyzing and incorporating strategies for reducing vulnerabilities of beneficiaries. As reiterated throughout the study, coordination among ministries, departments, and agencies related to rural development, poverty alleviation, youth employment, and gender will be crucial to promote gender and social inclusion within PWP programming.

Consultation and engagement with women and young people and other identifiable vulnerable groups are required at the local level to identify their unique needs, to identify how the program can be positioned to contribute towards addressing them. Gender equity and age sensitivity, as well as responsiveness to other socioeconomic differentials, should be incorporated into program implementation and management. Male counterparts should also be included in sensitization around gender equality and empowerment to build champions to support women. The participating agencies will need to develop capacity in these areas, where they are lacking, to provide the requisite support. There should also be equal opportunities for males and females of different age groups and statuses to be involved in field staffing, program monitoring, periodic review, and evaluation. Conscious efforts will need to be made (quotas, single-sourcing, relocation incentives, etc.) to include women across all the different implementation areas.

Overall, the LIPW program can boost social inclusion within beneficiary communities, while providing employment and building community assets by enhancing their operational processes to tailor to specific needs of vulnerable groups. For instance, even beyond women and youth, there are opportunities to include more persons with disabilities in the program, through the same process of identifying their unique needs and creating opportunities for their participation.

While the program has been very effective, future programming could be enhanced to promote social inclusion and enhance youth employment through (1) conducting in-depth reviews of vulnerable groups within their target communities; (2) identifying activities and opportunities to increase access and participation of these vulnerable groups in their programming, e.g., inclusion in decision-making, and reviewing various job opportunities that can be completed by different ages and/or abilities; (3) identifying trends of what these vulnerable groups find attractive, e.g., youth and ICT; and (4) building capacity for program staff to understand the need for inclusion and support for various vulnerable groups in the program.
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