Community Messaging and Civic Participation Research

Understanding community-oriented prosocial behaviors

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Executive Summary

This report details the findings of a qualitative research conducted by Busara as part of the Community Messaging Civic Participation (CMCP) initiative in Uganda. This research seeks to understand civic engagement in Uganda, through the lens of community by identifying common community challenges, prosocial behaviors citizens partake in to address these challenges, levers of, and barriers to partaking in prosocial actions. To this end, we interviewed 66 participants with diverse demographic features in Kampala central through a mix of in-depth interviews and vignettes.

We highlight high level findings from this research below, and discuss these findings in detail throughout the report.
The immediate association to community by citizens is at the geographical level:

Respondents were inclined to associate their communities with where their home is located, suggesting that citizens have some attachment to where they live. This attachment could be financial, emotional, social or a combination of these.

Citizens associate their country as a community mostly because of their citizenship status and the realization of benefits gained from being a citizen:

Most participants regard Uganda as a community. This was largely due to their citizenship status and benefits gained from living in the country. For the majority, association of the country to the community results from their citizenship and their residence in Uganda. In addition, realization of the benefits (tangible or intangible) gained from the country are core reasons citizens associate their country with community.

Group association within a community is influenced by accessibility and common interests:

There are smaller communities within geographical communities citizens associate with that reflect deeper ties. Association with these communities or groups is influenced by accessibility, which could be induced through identity recognition with similar demography or proximity, and similar interests.
Citizens face different challenges at the community and country level:

Some of the core challenges citizens face in their communities are: poor sanitation, poverty, youth unemployment, poor children upbringing, inadequate health facilities, and insecurity. At the country level, poverty, poor governance and corruption were the most reported issues.

Citizens' prosocial behaviors are related to the core issues people face in their communities:

The common community-oriented prosocial behaviors citizens engage in include giving to the needy, reporting incidences of crime, sharing information on job opportunities, crowdsourcing resources and joining cooperative groups. These prosocial behaviors are undertaken to tackle the issues respondents cite. People engage in various prosocial behaviors to tackle youth unemployment, contribute to the general cleanliness of the community, give to the poor and report issues to the authorities.

Civic behaviors to address governance-related issues are scarce:

From the interviews, citizens report that they facilitate training, share information to youths to solve unemployment, a widely reported issue among citizens, in their communities. However, for frequently mentioned nation-wide challenges like corruption and poor governance, they report that they lack the ability to solve these problems. This tendency to find national issues less malleable than community issues is largely due to lack of self-efficacy. The lack of self-efficacy is associated with the perceived magnitude of the problem and other factors e.g past experience and a citizen’s assessment of his or her actions on changing outcomes.
The issue of youth unemployment sparks diverse civic actions by citizens:

The negative effects of poverty and youth unemployment is salient to citizens. Citizens reckon that youth unemployment leads to drug abuse, excessive drinking, crime increase and other social vices, as a result they undertake various prosocial behaviors to solve this problem. This ranges from sharing information, organizing training sessions to crowdsourcing for resources for this group.

There are preferences in how information should be shared:

There are preferences in how information should be shared to citizens of different age groups. These preferences are driven by the norms among different age groups. The use of social media is popular among the youths. Substitute mediums e.g radios, community meetings and in-person prints would lead to better visibility for the older population.
CSOs engagement touches some of the most pressing issues highlighted by citizens by improving learning and employment outcomes:

The Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) citizens are familiar with focus on some of the core challenges highlighted by citizens. Examples are unemployment, refugee displacement, sexual and reproductive issues.

Most of the interviewed citizens are not part of CSOs but they are aware of CSOs activities and find their approach towards solving problems effective:

Most of the respondents interviewed are not members of CSOs. Irrespective of this, most of the participants could identify at least one CSO and how they affect changes in their community. Despite being largely inactive, most of the interviewed citizens reported that CSOs were effective in their approach towards solving key community issues.
Traditional cooperative behaviors are popular among our respondents especially women in low income settings:

Joining or forming groups to help others is popular among our respondents, especially among women in low-income areas. Prosocial actors who helped others using learnings from past or current groups are quite common. Motivation to join these groups are driven by the opportunities for empowerment and the identity of being part of a group.

Citizens are averse to cooperative behaviors that signal demonstration against the government:

Citizens are more receptive to cooperative behavior focused on improving the well being of other citizens than cooperative behaviors with political motives. The benefits of doing cooperative behavior for economic motives are salient to citizens, and citizens can easily assess how their actions will turn to benefits for other people. Conversely, it’s difficult for citizens to link certain political actions to positive outcomes for others, especially when the medium is not popular and signals confrontation with the government.

The demographics of citizens are revealing of their interest, self-efficacy and engagement in civic activities:

From our interviews, we found popular opinions about certain demographics in relation to prosocial behaviors. There are existing stereotypes with respect to prosocial behavior based on these characteristics; age, income group, gender, and leadership position in the community.
Citizens' motivations for partaking in prosocial behaviors vary:

A citizen’s motivation for engaging in civic activities cut across trust, reciprocity, upbringing, role models, identity recognition, and self-efficacy.

There are social structures that act as levers for engaging in civic activities:

Some communities have existing structures that encourage prosocial actions. These levers are; presence of strong cooperative networks, supportive injunctive social norms, time spent in a community, and the presence of channels that act as information and feedback loops e.g community meetings.

There are structural and behavioral barriers that deter citizens from engaging in prosocial behaviors:

Our respondents highlight several factors that prevent them from engaging in civic activities. The structural factors tend to be financial constraints, non-cooperation from authorities, social upbringing, difference in political ideology, and time scarcity. The behavioral barriers are uncertainty in reciprocity, limited attention, fear of the consequences of an action, asociality, and lack of self-efficacy.
Introduction
Background

Citizen’s engagement in community development and participation in community problem-solving is required for nations to have successful democracies, a system that encourages active citizen involvement and participation.\(^1\) For a nation to build, its citizens need to be interested and engaged, not just in their individual welfare but that of the community around them, and the nation.

This study focused on civic engagement at the community level for three reasons. First, our previous work on civic engagement shows that citizens participate in a spectrum of civic engagement activities at the local community level that are important yet often underlooked e.g community cleaning or calling in the local radio to report a problem in the community.\(^2\) Further, in Uganda, the local government level is increasingly regarded as an important level of government for its residents, because local elected leaders are positioned to impact their community more frequently than either the state or federal government.\(^3\) Finally, a focus on civic engagement at the community level offers an opportunity for comparison with country-level activities citizens engage in.

Given that civic participation involves a host of community-centered and country-wide activities that benefit others, in addition to one self, involvement can largely be defined to mean prosocial behaviors, albeit at different scopes. Prosocial behaviors are the actions individuals take to benefit others.\(^4\) Therefore, the willingness to be civicly involved or not is inextricably tied to the motives for engaging in prosocial behaviors. From hereon, we refer to community-oriented prosocial behaviors as activities citizens engage in for the benefit of others in their community.

In past phases, we have explored how CSOs can best gain access and trust in a community, as well as how to run motivating interactions in these communities. In this phase we intend to adopt a citizen-centric lens to generate valuable knowledge on the dynamics of citizen engagement, common channels or networks for civic engagement behaviors, and factors that inhibit or encourage these behaviors. As a first step towards this objective, we qualitatively examine citizens’ definition and perception of community, the relations within community, and how that might influence community-oriented prosocial behavior. The structure of the report outlines the methodology, research findings including the thematic learning, and recommendations from this study.

\(^2\) Busara Center for Behavioral Economics. (2019). Social Accountability Research in Kenya
\(^3\) Local government in Uganda
\(^4\) Wittek, R., & Bekkers, R. (2105). Altruism and Prosocial Behavior
Research Questions

This study was conducted with the aim of developing an understanding of the main barriers and levers to community-oriented prosocial behaviors. To this end, we sought to answer the following questions:

› How is community defined by citizens of Uganda?

› What are the common community-oriented prosocial behaviors in Uganda?

› What are the common channels of community-oriented prosocial behaviors in Uganda?

› Who are the actors of community-oriented prosocial behavior in Uganda?

› What are the motivations for doing community-oriented prosocial behavior in Uganda?

› What are the barriers to doing community-oriented prosocial behaviors in Uganda?
Methodology
Research Methods

Our research methods combined the use of semi-structured interviews and vignettes to explore the questions of interest.

**IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS**

**In-Depth Interviews:** are qualitative, semi-structured interviews with a sample of the population of interest. The semi-structured interviews use an in-depth interview instrument to explore the questions of interest at an individual level. With these interviews, we aimed to understand how community is defined in Uganda, common groups citizens associate with in Uganda, popular community-oriented prosocial behaviors, and the levers of and barriers to doing prosocial behaviors.
Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): are interviews used to drive and direct interactive discussions on the topic of interest among the population of interest. The FGD was intended to help gain insights into the social networks of citizens, popular community-oriented prosocial behavior and the levers of and barriers to doing prosocial behavior. While the IDI focused on these questions at an individual level, the FGD was more specific on capturing insights on the happenings at the community level with respect to the research questions.

However, an initial plan to conduct Focus Group discussions (FGDs) became impracticable due to COVID-19. We therefore resorted to using phone-based interviews instead. To elicit the group effect FGDs provide, additional questions were included in the in-depth interviews to capture group perception around specific issues. For example, to understand the popular prosocial behaviors in communities we asked “what are some of the prosocial behaviors people in your community engage in?” Interviews were conducted by trained field officers with close supervision from Busara staff. 19 in-person interviews were conducted including one FGD, while the remaining interviews (42) were conducted remotely due to government directives induced by COVID-19.

The instruments can be found in the Appendix.
VIGNETTES

Vignettes are short descriptions of scenarios relevant to a subject matter, scripted to elicit attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, and expectations about a subject matter. In vignette methods, participants are asked to respond to a situation involving a third person. Participants are asked their opinions about the situation, what they would do in a similar situation and their expectations from the situation.

Vignette methods are used for a variety of reasons. We used vignettes as a non-intrusive way to explore sensitive topics that have the tendency to be subject to social desirability bias. Because participants are responding to a hypothetical story presented in a neutral manner, beliefs and attitudes concerning a topic is revealed. In addition, vignettes allow us to examine the perceptions of different groups to a uniform situation.

For this study, we used vignettes to elicit the beliefs, attitude and perceptions of the respondents about different community-oriented prosocial behaviors and the main protagonists of such behaviors. Specifically, we presented scenarios of hypothetical characters doing prosocial behavior; sharing information on community issues, reporting an incidence in the community, cooperating to solve a collective problem, helping the needy, signing a petition, and giving feedback on public service received. Responses to these scenarios aided the understanding of how Ugandans relate to prosocial narratives and what types of stories have the potential to spark prosocial behavior at the community level. The complete vignette instrument can be found in the Appendix.
Sampling & Research Areas

We adopted purposive sampling for recruitment of our participants. We constructed pre-defined demographic characteristics to ensure our sample cut across different locations and groups in Uganda. However, difficulty in accessing the set locations restricted the study to Kampala Central.

Given this limitation, we used proxy measures through a recruitment screener to maintain the diversity of the recruited participants. Screening data was collected on the education level, income group, citizen’s activeness, location type (rural vs peri-urban), and duration of stay in Kampala. Using this information, we were able to get a decent mix of citizens of interest.

Before the final data collection, the qualitative instruments were piloted with four citizens in Uganda in Kampala Central. This enabled us to examine the logical flow of the questions and restructure some questions. Following the pilot, we adapted the final instruments to suit the learning from the pilot.

Following the pilot, we commenced data collection with participants in six locations in Kampala Central. The locations consisted of both urban and peri-urban areas. The urban areas were Kololo, Mulago, Kamwokya I, and Kamwokya II. The peri-urban locations were Kawempe, Bwaise, Kifumbira A, and Kifumbira B. While we intended to recruit participants from rural areas beyond Kampala, community approval was declined by the respective local authority, restricting the research to Kampala. Nonetheless, questions in the recruitment screener, that served as proxies for the demography of interest, enabled us to access people of similar demography. For example, questions on the participant’s income group, number of years lived in Kampala, citizen’s volunteering status enabled us to recruit a good mix of citizens for the study. The breakdown of the respondents interviewed are shown in the table on the following page.
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<td>47 (Less than UGX410,000)</td>
<td>19 (410,000UGX and above)</td>
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Analysis

Thematic analysis was the main analysis method used for this study. Analysis was done using a qualitative software tool called NVIVO.

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis (TA) is a method for identifying, analyzing and interpreting patterns of meaning (themes) within qualitative data.\(^5\) Thematic analysis involves teasing out codes (the smallest unit of observations) from the data and using these codes to form themes concerning the study’s subject matter. More specifically, thematic analysis involves the following steps:

- **Generate Codes:** these are the smallest units of analysis that capture interesting features of the data relevant to the research questions. These codes serve as the foundational blocks for emerging themes.

- **Inter-Coder Reliability:** Two or more coders check in during the analysis to align on emerging themes. This ensures interpretation of themes (higher level of analysis from the codes) are less subjective.

Thematic analysis gives us flexibility in our approach to meaning generation, development and revision of research questions. Guided by our research questions, we used thematic analysis to identify and interpret key features of the qualitative data.

Research Findings
Theme 1: Defining Community in Uganda

We ask our study participants what they understand by community, how they would describe their community, if they associate their country with community, and what groups they associate with within their community of place.
Theme 1: Defining community in Uganda

FINDING 1.1

The immediate association to community by citizens is at the geographical level

DATA

For a majority of the research participants, they defined community at the geographical level, while some defined their communities based on common interests and accessibility.

ANALYSIS

Generally, the traditional definition of community (the community of place) resonates better with our participants. The most recurring characteristic in the definition of community is proximity to a person’s neighborhood. Beyond accessibility, communities are also defined based on common interests.
The inclination to associate community with where home is suggests that citizens have some attachment to where they live. This attachment could be financial, emotional, social or a combination of these. However, it is probable that this tendency to associate community with geographical locations culminates from a long history of community being defined in that manner.

"Community is the people around; the people you live together and share with; that is community.”  - Male, Kifumbira B, IDI
Theme 1: Defining community in Uganda

FINDING 1.2

Citizens associate their country as a community because of the benefits gained from living in the country

DATA

We asked participants if they regard their country as their community. Generally, we found that citizens associate their country as communities for two major reasons; Citizenship and benefits gained from living in the country. For the majority, association of the country to the community results from their citizenship and their residence in Uganda. In addition, realization of the benefits (tangible or intangible) gained from the country are core reasons citizens associate their country with community. Some of the benefits mentioned were peace, empowerment and provision of employment opportunities.

"Because it has given me peace and the ability to work; I do tasks which are meant for men like charging batteries; this makes me believe in myself and I cannot go on begging." - Female, Kawempe, IDI
**Theme 1: Defining community in Uganda**

**FINDING 1.3**

**Group association within a community is influenced by accessibility and common interests**

When asked what groups they associate with and what influences the decision to participate in that group, citizens mention different groups ranging from people within close proximity, similar jobs, businesses, same gender etc. We classify the reasons provided for group association into two 1) Ease of accessibility and 2) common interests. Ease of accessibility for our participants is twofold; proximity-induced and identity-induced. For some citizens, ease of access results from close proximity to their place of residence, while for others, ease of access reflects through a person’s identity. People with similar demography (age group, religion, gender, social class) are more accessible to each other.
People with common interests e.g hobbies, livelihood, causes tend to associate with each other as a group. Examples of these are Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisations (SACCO) groups, business owners relating with each other and citizens with past health concerns now relating or helping others with the same health challenges.
Groups or associations driven by identity-induced accessibility is popular amongst women and youths

For women and youths, accessibility through gender and age group identity respectively, plays an important role in group association within a community. The concept of identity is stronger among these demographics, and matching their identities eases accessibility for these groups.

Accessibility based on social class aids group association in urban areas

For some citizens in urban areas, access is driven by social class. People in the same social class (especially low income group) find it easier to associate with each other compared to other social classes. This perceived lack of access could result from differences in interests between both groups.

Common interests based on livelihood and leisure interests tends to bring citizens together in a community

Citizens with the same livelihood plans tend to associate with each other through channels like SACCOs. This is popular among women groups and business owners. Community association is also linked to similar leisure interests e.g football, and this is popular among the youths.
Our study shows that beyond the community of place, there are smaller communities people associate with that reflect deeper ties. We believe that engagement strategies with citizens should leverage these smaller communities. For example, our study finds that women’s group association is triggered by gender identity and common interests. Using women leaders or the popular SACCO groups to engage these groups has the potential to lead to better outcomes for CSOs. For youths, group association is linked to peer identity. It is essential to recognize this group as a community and align strategies towards activities that are popular among the youths.

Etzioni (1996)\textsuperscript{6} highlights the concept of communities nestled within a community, as a society where differences are respected while maintaining unity. This alludes to the idea that communities do exist within communities. We believe citizens have stronger ties (emotional or financial) to these smaller segments because the rationale for belonging to these groups are arguably more profound than belonging to a community of place. Findings from our research are consistent with this categorization.

\textsuperscript{6} ibid
Defining Community in the Literature

Traditionally, communities have been defined as a group of people living within the same geographical boundary. A nuanced view goes beyond location and defines community as a group of people who have common characteristics or interests. In other words, communities can be defined by geographical location, race, ethnicity, age, occupation, social class, a shared interest or affinity (such as faith) or even other common bonds such as health need or disadvantage.

In trying to understand community engagement and community-oriented prosocial behavior, we believe it is useful to view communities from two distinct lens; i) communities of place ii) communities of interest.

Communities of place can be thought of as the places people live in. Even when people rarely spend time in their community of place, there tends to be some attachment to home.

Communities of interest are formed as a result of shared interests and beliefs. This could be due to similar hobbies, career paths, religion, race etc. These communities have characteristics that make them distinct from each other, therefore they can be said to be communities in their own right.
Theme 1.2: The Common Community Issues Citizens Face

Citizens face a myriad of issues at their community of place. Some of the pressing issues highlighted by citizens are:

- **Poor Sanitation:** Rampant in the peri-urban areas, citizens complain about inefficient garbage collection systems and poor cleanliness of common areas in their community.

- **Health Concerns:** Citizens complained about different health concerns from lack of hospitals, lack of prescription drugs, prevalence of diseases like HIV to the fear of the incidence of COVID-19 in their communities.

- **Insecurity:** the incidence of crime was a concern for citizens too especially people in the peri-urban areas.

- **Poverty and Youth Unemployment:** Unemployment of youths in the communities, which leads to poverty and other issues like drug abuse and crime were big concerns of people in peri-urban locations.

- **Children Upbringing:** The poor upbringing of children in the community was decried by citizens especially women. There is a concern that parents do not train their children well and that has knock-on effects on the behaviors of the children in the community.
Drug Abuse: Citizens also complained about the youths involvement in illegal drugs and excessive drinking. According to our participants, this is one of the numerous effects of youth unemployment in their communities.

Urban Development: Some citizens also complained about the infrastructure deficit to meet the population spike in their communities.

Poor Governance: Citizens lament corruption to be one of the biggest issues they are facing, mostly at the national level.

Generally, there is a sense of frustration at the issues communities face especially concerning the youths; how poverty, poor upbringing and unemployment play a role in these predicaments, which culminates in adverse effects e.g drug abuse and crime incidence.

"The trenches are dirty and the general sanitation is poor. Even the children are undisciplined and they keep roaming around the community but if you dare try to discipline any child, the parents will run to police and to make matters worse, the police at Mawanda road are also tribalistic; so a child will hit you with a stone and you fail to get where to report." - Female, Kifumbira B, IDI
Theme 2: Familiar Community-Oriented Prosocial Behaviors

Broadly, prosocial behavior is defined as actions taken to benefit others. For a prosocial behavior to be completed, some authors believe there must be a cost incurred by the actor of the behavior and a resulting benefit to the receiver of the behavior. However, there is no universal agreement on the magnitude of the costs and benefits. Different behaviors are regarded as prosocial behaviors in different contexts.

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Some of the popular prosocial behaviors in the literature are; helping a stranger\(^8\), sharing money with strangers\(^9\), contributing to a public good\(^10\), reciprocating a transfer of goods, volunteering time or other resources towards a cause, showing compassion during distress.

Community-oriented prosocial behaviors are simply actions that people take to benefit others at the community level. Here, we refer to both communities of place and communities nested within communities. Our study finds diverse behaviors people do to benefit others. We also highlight civic behaviors respondents mention spontaneously that match with pre-existing stories of prosocial behaviors in the vignettes. We believe matching the pre-defined prosocial behaviors is an indication of the popularity of those behaviors among citizens.

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Theme 2: Familiar Community-Oriented Prosocial Behaviors

FINDING 2.1

Citizens in Uganda engage in a variety of prosocial behaviors targeted at the challenges they face in their communities

DATA

Our study shows that people engage in prosocial behaviors that can be categorized into giving, helping, peace keeping, reporting, sharing information, crowdsourcing for resources, and contribution to a public good.

1. **Giving** was the most popular prosocial behavior mentioned by citizens. People give food, household items to the needy, books and school fees to children whose parents can't afford it. Some citizens also give food to citizens who could not make ends meet due to the lockdown measures put in place post-COVID.
"Yes, there are these families you see not able to even raise “mele yaleero” [meaning a daily meal] you know not most people are staying with their husbands. So decide to take them a kilo of “bijanjalo” [meaning beans] today and a kilo of “kawunga” [meaning posho] or you might even be having a kilo and choose to split into two and tell children to take the share to so and so or half a kilo of posho" - Female, Kololo, IDI

2. **Helping** behaviors are also popular among our participants. Citizens help each other during times of need e.g some citizens reported helping community members with transportation to go to their village after the loss of a relative.

3. **Peace-keeping:** There are citizens that intermediate between groups of people fighting or quarrelling to ensure there’s peace within the community.
4. **Reporting** incidents of child abuse, violation or criminal activities to local leaders or police officers is also common among our participants.

"Actually it was....I addressed it when we were in the village meeting; the issue was about these parents who violate their kids especially those violating young kids...you slap a kid as if you are slapping an adult and then the child starts crying there; that one I really addressed it because parents were violating kids."  - Male, Kifumbira B, IDI
VIGNETTE 1: A CASE STUDY ON REPORTING

“On a Friday afternoon, walking back from work, Julius witnessed a group of 3 young men with knives jumping out of a compound 5 minutes away from where he lives. He hides and takes cover so they do not see him. He sees them carrying stolen items (a TV set, laptops and things that look like computer accessories) while running away.

He observes them till they are out of sight. Once he sees they are out of sight, he runs to the nearest police station at the district to report a case of burglary and possible theft, giving the policemen all the necessary information he could remember from the event. Julius does not stop there, he also alerts the residents of the house where the theft occurred and other community members within close proximity to take extra caution and be watchful.”

(Vignette on reporting behavior)
Attitude towards reporting:

The attitude towards reporting an incidence in the context of the scenario presented was mixed (positive and negative). The negative attitude was generally due to strong distrust in the police institution. Citizens fear the negative consequences of the prosocial behaviors usurp the potential benefits from reporting a crime incidence. Rather than reporting, most citizens, especially the youths were inclined to mob justice. Nonetheless, when citizens perceive the system is right, they report incidences of crime or violations to the appropriate authorities.

"What I know is if he dealt with the responsible policemen who know what they are supposed to do, they got the thieves and the owners of the things got them back."

Popularity of reporting behavior

The idea of reporting incidences of crime or other related situations is popular among our respondents. However, sometimes participants fail to report incidents due to several factors; lack of trust in the authorities, delayed justice and fear of reprisal attacks. However, citizens recognize that reporting is the ideal behavior even though the negative assessment of potential outcomes from doing this behavior limits them.
Implication

It is essential that citizen’s perceived assessment of their potential outcomes from reporting behaviors be net positive. Improving a citizen’s perceived assessment of their outcomes, will consequently lead to reporting behaviors. This lack of trust is induced by structural factors, hence there’s no short-term fix, but we believe continuous engagement with key stakeholders through existing engagement channels e.g community meetings, radio shows, can improve citizen’s perceptions of these organisations, and encourage them to partake in reporting activities.

5. **Sharing information** to improve outcomes of people in the community is also a popular act. e.g citizens mentioned sharing information on employment opportunities to the youths, opportunities for labour mobility, how to access credit, and sharing knowledge on areas of expertise to train the youths.

“There are even people who come advising and sensitizing the community on how to borrow money and develop in their households; they usually come with the ideas and the people who can lend you the money, so it is up to you to take or leave the opportunity.” - **Female, Kifumbira B, IDI**
“Born in the mountainous Mbale region of Uganda, Justus was first introduced to computers by his father, who began teaching him basic computing skills at an early age. Captivated by technology, Justus spent hours on his father’s laptop and soon decided to turn his newfound passion into a voice for his community.

Determined to become an activist in his rural community and eager to see his community develop, Justus began to share information on social media about the challenges facing his community. He used social media as a platform for reaching out to his community leaders and holding them accountable.”

(Vignette on sharing behavior)
Attitude towards sharing information online:

Sharing information to improve the outcome of a community is associated with positive expectations from most of our participants. Citizens associate sharing information on community issues with community development and leaders responsiveness. However, some citizens note that in practice, sharing information online may not be practical because of the lack of smartphones to access social media. This is relevant in rural and peri-urban areas where smartphone penetration is low. In addition, there is a perception that the sources of information matters, because leaders are not receptive of the youths suggestions concerning community issues, therefore, sharing information online may not be effective towards solving community issues. However, the youths see this as more reason to share or discuss issues online and between each other.

Popularity of sharing behavior

The acts of sharing behavior (information or resources) is popular among our respondents, but preferences differ in the medium through which citizens share information. Sharing information through social media was more relatable to the youths. While older aged people found it hard to relate with sharing information online on community issues, mainly because young people already use these social media platforms. Older people prefer using in-person mediums like posters, flyers etc. to communicate issues of concern e.g stealing in the community, state of the amenities. Further, some citizen’s preference for in-person mode of communication is influenced by the belief that community issues should be kept “in-house” and not put out in public. For this group of people, airing out their community’s challenge rather than trying to solve internally is not right due to the negative publicity that accompanies reporting these issues.
Implication

Sharing information as a civic behavior is salient among our participants. However, there are preferences in how information should be shared. Engagement with citizens on information-sharing related civic behaviors should take into account the characteristics of citizens. Leveraging social media to engage the youth could lead to active youth participation. Substitute mediums e.g radios, community meetings and in-person prints would lead to better visibility for the older population.

6. Crowdsourcing for resources: There are citizens who take it upon themselves to crowdsource for funds or resources to help someone in need. In some peri-urban or close-knitted communities this is popular when a community member loses a relative or a parent cannot afford their children’s school fees.
"You might be there and you hear people who are going around with loud speakers announcing that they request anyone with surplus food in the house to share surplus food with a neighbour so that you can prevent them from stealing or even when a family has lost a loved one and you collect food and cook from there to help the people." - Female, Kifumbira B, IDI
7. **Facilitating training for community members:**

To address the youth unemployment in their communities, some citizens facilitate training on livelihood activities for the youths. Some citizens also organize group activities to improve the livelihood potential of their community members. This is common among women.

"First of all, I gathered the male youths and I taught them how to charge batteries. Secondly, I got friends who taught the youths technical skills and also teaching women how to make paper bags and candles from home so that they don’t entirely depend on men; I teach them these things after I was also taught by a certain organisation how to make them; I then brought them to my community and many people have benefitted." - **Female, Kawempe, IDI**
8. **Contributing to a public good:** Citizens contribute to the maintenance of public goods especially the sanitation facilities by participating in cleaning of trenches, gutters and common areas in their community.

9. **Forming and encouraging cooperative behaviors:** There were people who encourage cooperative behaviors among their fellow community members. This is popular among women. These people are driven by identity recognition, and they are motivated by seeing their fellow peers doing well.
"Like now these associations, we have savings, when I went to my villages, the women were not saving let me give you an example of my village, Lugogo, I told them ladies, let us start saving. Okay they relaxed a bit because you know we have these women whose husbands work for them but me I be happy when I see a woman also toiling on her own. So I told them, do you know that they always laugh at us that we depend on “Kameeza, omusolo gwokukameeza” [Meaning the daily money a husband leaves with his housewife to run home errands] but that musolo goekukameeza if you get one hundred shillings or two hundred shillings everyday by Friday you have five hundred shillings or so, it will help us by the end of the year. When I went there, women were not doing this business of selling potatoes, tomatoes and the rest. So when I brought that issue, by the end of the year when I started that system, in January when people came back from the festive season, at least you would see a woman selling tomatoes, you could see this one frying chips, am bringing you to this issue of “Ebibiina” [Saccos], savings. We now don’t have idle women in our society.” - Female, Kawempe, IDI
**Theme 2: Familiar Community-Oriented Prosocial Behaviors**

**FINDING 2.2**

**Prosocial behaviors to address governance-related issues are scarce**

Generally, prosocial behaviors people do are closely related to the issues they face within their communities. People do various prosocial behaviors to tackle youth unemployment, contribute to the general cleanliness of the community, give to the poor and report issues to the authorities. However, prosocial behaviors to address governance-related issues e.g. corruption are scarce. This may suggest that these issues are perceived to be more difficult for citizens to change.

“In this country, there is no way you can address it because first of all the corruption which is in Uganda is mainly from big people”
Theme 2: Familiar Community-Oriented Prosocial Behaviors

FINDING 2.3

The issue of youth unemployment sparks more and diverse involvement by citizens

The negative effects of poverty and youth unemployment is salient to citizens. Citizens reckon that youth unemployment leads to drug abuse, excessive drinking, crime increase and other social vices, as a result they undertake various prosocial behaviors to solve this problem. This ranges from sharing information, organizing training sessions to crowdsourcing for resources for this group.

Implication

Community issues vary in the manner they arouse interest and engagement among citizens. To pique citizen’s involvement, it is essential that citizens are engaged on the issues that are of major concern to them. For example, in rural areas where youth unemployment is of major concern and the effects salient to citizens, citizens are more likely to engage in a cause aimed at solving such challenges.

Citizen’s prosocial behaviors are largely targeted at the issues with salient effects to them as individuals. From our study, some of the most pressing issues for citizens are youth unemployment, poverty and sanitation concerns. Citizens are able to link these issues to adverse effects on them or the larger community. For example, citizens attempt to address poverty and youth unemployment to prevent the adverse effects (crime, drug abuse, excessive drinking) of having a large number of unemployed youths in their communities.
**FINDING 2.4**

**Prosocial behaviors to solve national issues appear elusive to citizens**

**DATA**

At the national level, citizens’ prosocial behavior cuts across donating blood, participation in immunization drives and volunteering. Beyond the prosocial behaviors, citizens also get involved in national activities like elections, political campaigns and rallying. However, citizens' involvement in national issues (poverty, corruption) is low compared to community efforts. This apathy is largely due to lack of self-efficacy i.e the lack of belief in their abilities to affect the outcomes of issues of national concern. Majority of the participants interviewed share the sentiment that issues of national concern are beyond the scope of their abilities.

"I would have done something but the level I am on is a little bit low."

- Male, Kifumbira B, IDI
"My talking cannot change anything [referring to affecting the issue of corruption]; though I can talk, people have talked but whenever you talk, it just remains there.” - Male, Kifumbira B, IDI

Implication

Compared to the local community issues, citizens perceive some national issues to be beyond their capacity. These issues are mostly politically related like poor governance and corruption. For example, from the interviews, citizens report that they facilitate training, share information to youths to solve unemployment, a widely reported issue among citizens, in their communities. However, for frequently mentioned nation-wide challenges like corruption, they report that they do not have the ability to solve these problems. This tendency to find national issues less malleable than community issues is largely due to lack of self-efficacy. The lack of self-efficacy is associated with the perceived magnitude of the problem and other factors e.g past experience and a citizen’s assessment of his or her actions on changing outcomes. Given this, we believe to drive effective engagement with citizens at the national level, issues should be presented in a manner where citizens feel their actions will yield meaningful results, and better direction should be offered on how to approach these issues.
Theme 3: Channels for Prosocial Behaviors/Community Involvement
Theme 3: Channels for Prosocial Behaviors/Community Involvement

FINDING 3.1

Broadly, community-based groups focus on improved employment, empowerment and improving the behaviors of the youths

DATA

From our study, community-based groups are popular in Uganda. These groups can be broadly categorized into the following:

1) Employment groups
2) Empowerment groups
3) Advocacy groups

Employment groups consist of associations that focus on bridging the youth employment gap in their communities by providing job opportunities for the youths. This mostly consists of cab and bus associations.

Empowerment groups are mostly savings and credit groups. They provide mediums for people to save, get loans to pay their children’s school fees and start a business. These groups are popularly known as SACCO and they are popular among women that reside in rural and peri-urban areas in Uganda. These groups run a membership-based system, where members are given priority access to these benefits. Beyond members, some of these groups assist out-group community members e.g provide loan facilities. In addition, there are groups that empower unemployed youths with vocational skills.
“We save and in any case any member of the group loses a dear one, we work together to make sure we help the member out of the situation or when he or she is going to get married, we work together to make the function a success.”

Advocacy groups: These groups are not as common as the above mentioned groups. They focus on addressing the issues in their communities like stealing, excessive drinking, prostitution etc. Some of these groups use theater arts and music to pass across their messages to other community members. These groups are mostly run by women and youths concerned with the negative development in their communities.

“There are also these groups, entertainment groups because there are many youths who get engaged in acting so many times the politicians come and offer support they give in their money to make costumes for them or also to make videos.”
Theme 3: Channels for Prosocial Behaviors/Community Involvement

FINDING 3.2

CSOs engagement touches some of the most pressing issues highlighted by citizens like unemployment by improving learning and employment outcomes

We categorize Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to include any non-state, not-for-profit, voluntary entities that exist to represent the citizen’s interests. They could be faith-based organisations, NGOs, labour unions, and charitable organisations. The operations of these organisations exceed a community. On the other hand, community-based groups are informal groups that solely exist within the community and serve the interests of the specific community.

DATA

Popular Civil Society Organisation (CSO) groups identified by citizens have a diverse set of outcomes they aim to improve. They can be broadly classified into four;

1) Education groups
2) Empowerment groups
3) Reproductive health
4) Refugee living

Education groups work to improve the educational outcomes of children in the community. These groups offer children in the community scholarships aid their enrollment in schools. Education focused CSO groups seems to be the most popular CSOs to our participants.
Empowerment groups focus on improving the earning potential of community members especially women through series of organized training and activities.

Reproductive health: Some CSOs focus on improving the education on family planning, give maternal health facilities, free HIV testing and offer counselling to the sick.

Refugee focused CSOs aim to improve the general living conditions of refugees, and also empower these refugees to have better life outcomes.
Theme 3: Channels for Prosocial Behaviors/Community Involvement

**FINDING 3.3**

Most of the interviewed citizens are not part of CSOs but they are aware of CSOs activities and find their approach towards solving problems effective

**DATA**

Most of the respondents interviewed are not members of CSOs. Irrespective of this, most of the participants could identify at least one CSO and how they affect changes in their community. Despite being largely inactive, most of the interviewed citizens reported that CSOs were effective in their approach towards solving key community issues.

“Since they take those children to school, it reduces their chances of being idle and getting involved in certain behaviours like prostitution that increases on the birth rates and the risk of getting diseases such as HIV and other STDs. On top of that they give them food stuff to reduce on the hunger; they will have reduced the hunger in the community.”

- Male, Mulago, IDI
Theme 3: Channels for Prosocial Behaviors/Community Involvement

**FINDING 3.4**

Traditional cooperative behaviors are popular among our respondents especially women in low income settings

**DATA**

At the national level, citizens’ prosocial behavior cuts across donating blood, participation in immunization drives and volunteering. Beyond the prosocial behaviors, citizens also get involved in national activities like elections, political campaigns and rallying. However, citizens' involvement in national issues (poverty, corruption) is low compared to community efforts. This apathy is largely due to lack of self-efficacy i.e the lack of belief in their abilities to affect the outcomes of issues of national concern. Majority of the participants interviewed share the sentiment that issues of national concern are beyond the scope of their abilities.
“Monica is a petty trader that looks after her family alone because her husband offers her no support. One day a community member from one of the groups that help people in the region visited her and told her about the group. She invited Monica to join so that she can be able to save money to support her family. Monica agreed and after joining the group, she was trained on savings and business skills.

She got a loan from the group and started a trading business of buying and selling millet and sorghum from her house. Since she noticed this type of training would benefit the community, She has started training fellow women and the youth on savings and business skills. Her greatest desire is to eliminate poverty which is a huge community problem, by empowering women and the youth.”
Attitudes towards joining a cooperative group to help

Joining a cooperative or cooperating as a group to help others resonates with Ugandan citizens. In our study, participants associated Monica’s story with positive outcomes. Specifically, participants think cooperative groups have positive knock-on effects on other people’s behavior, which in turn leads to other citizen’s replicating such behavior. In addition, cooperative groups are associated with promoting unity and increased popularity of people who use the medium to help others.

Popularity of cooperative behaviors

Joining or forming groups to help others is popular among our respondents, especially among women in low-income areas. Prosocial actors who helped others using learnings from past or current groups are quite common. Motivation to join these groups are driven by the opportunities for empowerment and the identity of being a part of a group.
“The first is a woman who is HIV positive, she has been positive for a long period of time. She has always been trained by organisations of Whites where they train her how to survive and she also comes to teach the rest of the members in the community. Because I personally learnt from her a lot of things. She introduced saving culture among women, we save for a year and you can save any amount from 3000 – 12000. You save any amount that you have between that. That woman has also helped widows by supporting their children.” - Female, Bwaise
“Lamah is a 40 year old woman from Buvuma district in Central Uganda. In the late 80’s she and her husband fled the war in Northern Uganda and have since lived in Buvuma island, a place they call home. Lamah has been active in defending human rights and conserving the environment. Recently, she found out about a government initiative to sell 10,000 hectares of forest in Buvuma island to investors whose aim is to develop palm oil plantations. Destroying the forest could lead to destruction of the natural habitat and consequently, extinction of certain animals. Also, residents of Buvuma island worry that they too will be next in having their land collected and human rights violated.

So, Lamah and some community members decided to fight for their rights. She started an online petition to protect the threatened forest in Buvuma. She has since signed the online petition and mobilized many more members of the community to sign it. So far, 12,000 residents have signed the online petition and Lamah hopes to present the petition to the government.”
Theme 3: Channels for Prosocial Behaviors/Community Involvement

FINDING 3.5

Citizens are averse to cooperative behaviors that signal demonstration against the government

Attitude towards cooperating by signing a petition

The attitude towards cooperating to sign a petition as in Lamah’s case was mixed. For some citizens, such behavior will not lead to a positive outcome given the context narrated in Lamah’s story. Some citizen’s perceive signing a petition as confrontational and going against the government, while others think signing a petition against the government is not realistic since the government represents the constitutional authority. However, some citizens support signing a petition because it is lawful and a mature way to solve problems. Generally, citizens evaluate their potential outcomes before deciding if they would be involved in a cooperative behavior. In our study, citizens that felt the development of oil plantations will lead to job opportunities mentioned that they’ll not sign the petition. On the other hand, citizens who viewed the government’s actions could affect them negatively in the future, agreed to signing the petition.

Popularity of signing a petition

Signing a petition to avert a potential challenge is not popular among citizens. Citizens don’t think signing a petition is a salient step towards solving a challenge. Signing a petition is likened to demonstration, and in our study, participants were averse to demonstration against the government. Less confrontational channels to solve potential challenges like dialogues and raising the issues with community representatives were preferred. Citizens highly regard their community leaders as actors of prosocial behavior, and prefer going through their community leaders to solve problems with political elements.
Implication

Citizen’s involvement in cooperative behavior for good is sensitive to political and economic motives. Citizens are more receptive to cooperative behavior focused on improving the well being of other citizens than cooperative behaviors with political motives. The benefits of doing cooperative behavior for economic motives are salient to citizens, and citizens can easily assess how their actions will turn to benefits for other people. Conversely, it’s difficult for citizens to link certain political actions to positive outcomes for others, especially when the medium is not popular and signals confrontation with the government.

To spark a citizen’s interest in cooperative behaviors that have political elements, it is important that citizens' patterns of engagement are examined, and the channel used resonates with their observed patterns e.g in rural areas, community leaders are highly revered and signing online petitions are not popular due to the low penetration of smartphones. In these communities, engagements that leverage local leaders may be better positioned to spark more involvement than using online petitions. On the other hand, in urban areas with high smartphone penetration and internet connectivity, online petitions could spark more involvement from citizens.
Theme 4: Actors of Prosocial Behaviors

Findings from our interviews show that citizens tend to participate in prosocial behaviors differently based on their demographics. In other words, a citizen’s willingness, interests, self-efficacy, motivations and barriers to doing prosocial behavior is associated with their demographic characteristics. Some of these demographics factors are gender, age, and income status. From our study, we qualitatively identify these different demographics and behavioral characteristics and how they relate to citizen’s prosocial behaviors.
The medium to high income citizens: These citizens within the middle to high income socioeconomic group mostly live in urban communities. This group of citizens could be formally or informally employed, but are mostly formally employed. These people tend to be mostly engaged with work-related activities and operate in a setting of time scarcity, reducing their propensity to be involved in community-oriented prosocial behavior. From our interviews, the popular opinion is that this group is inaccessible and do not get involved in community-oriented prosocial behavior because they do not have “skin in the game.” i.e their social status protect them from being affected by typical community issues, as such, they hardly get involved. Multiple studies examining the relationship between social class and prosocial behavior indicate that higher class individuals are prone to engage in self-beneficial behaviors compared to other-beneficial behavior. Greater agency, reduced vulnerability to threats and an emphasis on individualism are some of the factors that promote internal self-oriented focus among higher class individuals. An alternative explanation is that the environments of these citizens restrict their ability to get involved. Milgrim (1970) argued that living in big cities creates cognitive costs. With increased population density and frequency of interactions with strangers, individuals develop norms where they selectively attend to certain issues, but effectively ignore strangers. In sum, this explanation predicts that people will be less helpful when surrounded by more people.

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“Yes, like the medium income earners; they are selfish in their minds and if their issue is not affecting them, they don’t see the reason as to why they should participate in it. For example if their children are not participating in prostitution, they don’t have a reason to come and talk about the dangers of prostitution.” - Male, Mulago, IDI

The youths - these are young, internet savvy citizens with strong group identification, but minimal agency. They are between the age range of 20 to 29. The youths hardly take initiative to engage in civic activities, but are willing to be involved when they get information on the opportunity to be a part of these civic activities. Group activities like sports tend to bring these people together. This group is aware and frustrated at the issues they face at the community and national level, but they lack the self-efficacy to address these issues. The youth unemployment situation is salient to this group and this motivates them to assist and help one another. Also, this group is active on social media and values the use of social media as a channel to address community issues. To ensure this group is active, constant education through popular channels (social media, sport events) on how they can be involved in community-oriented prosocial behavior is important. Further, to motivate these citizens, linking their potential actions to issues salient to them e.g youth unemployment, could trigger participation.
The elderly citizens - The elderly (aged 40 and above) in the society are deeply involved in community volunteering, show serious concern in the development of the children in the community and general state of the community. Based on our study, this group frequently participates in community meetings where they raise community issues with the local leaders. We believe the elderly’s propensity to do community-oriented prosocial behavior is associated with grit, generativity and community cohesion. Grit, defined as an individual’s perseverance in meeting an objective over the long term despite obstacles, interacts with generativity. Generativity is the need to nurture and guide or raise the younger generation. Wenner (2016) notes that while older adults tend to have a generativity goal, these goals could be hampered by adversity and challenges. In order to achieve success, grit is essential. In addition, strong community cohesion, defined as an individual’s sense of community, degree of attraction to remain in the community, and depth of interaction within the community, influences an individual’s decision to partake in prosocial behavior. The elderly people tend to possess these factors, which influences their propensity to do community-oriented prosocial behavior.

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14 Wenner, J. R., & Randall, A. B., (2016). Predictors of prosocial behavior: Differences in middle-aged and older adults
“The issues of loving one another was the first issue I think. That people in the community should be like people of the same family. They have to be brothers and sisters. In that issue, I was again making sure that the community is combined together, they have to love each other and be cooperative so that whenever there is an issue coming out, they have to work hand in hand so see that the issue is solved.” - Male, Mulago, IDI

The caring citizen - These are mostly women (40 and above) in peri-urban areas that belong to cooperative societies or other groups. From our study, while they join these groups for their benefits, they share information about the groups to their networks, in order for them to improve their livelihoods. Within the caring citizen sub-group, we have women who are concerned with women empowerment and take initiatives to improve their lives. There are women who play the roles of models to people of similar identity; people who are currently going through a terminal disease e.g HIV. They organize people like that in their communities and counsel them.
“When I went to my villages, the women were not saving let me give you an example of my village, Lugogo, I told them ladies, let us start saving. Okay they relaxed a bit because you know we have these women whose husbands work for them but me I be happy when I see a woman also toiling on her own. So I told them, do you know that they always laugh at us that we depend on “Kameeza, omusolo gwokukameeza” [Meaning the daily money a husband leaves with his housewife to run home errands].” - Female, Kololo, IDI

The actively involved - These consist of people who are very involved in communal activities. They tend to be community leaders, religious leaders, or other politically elected leaders. This group has a strong drive to see their communities better off, and take leadership positions to achieve this goal. From our interviews, the citizens believe this group of people are the most involved or enabled individuals doing prosocial behaviors in their community. Beyond the community level, citizens believe this group of people are the most capable, by virtue of their positions, to handle issues at the country level. This group of people especially the community and religious leaders are highly revered by citizens, and the citizens prefer to go through them to solve challenges of concern to them.
“Because the Chairman cannot be there and see the community is being affected like for example the poor sanitation and he just keeps quiet; that is one of his responsibilities to sensitize people to clean the environment.” - Male, Mulago, IDI
**Theme 5: Motivations for Community Involvement**

Potentially, every citizen can be involved in community-wide prosocial behaviors. Individuals face different situations that require them to be prosocial, but the decision to be prosocial or not is motivated by various factors. Ultimately, these motivations and barriers are what differentiates actors from non-actors. From our study, citizen’s motivations to be involved in community-wide prosocial behaviors can be divided into the following themes:
Motivators for Prosocial Behavior

**Reciprocation**
The feeling to reciprocate and the expectation of reciprocity is one of the most common factors that motivates community-wide prosocial behavior,

**Identity recognition**
Strong identity recognition triggered by gender or similar situations experienced in the past motivates people to do prosocial behavior

**Role models**
Social learning from observing the effects of role model's prosocial behavior motivates community-wide prosocial behavior

**Community upbringing**
Individuals raised in their communities tend to have strong ties to their communities which motivates them to do prosocial behavior

**Future consequences**
The fear of being affected by a challenge in the future drives people to do prosocial behaviors
Theme 5: Motivations for Community Involvement

Finding 5.1

The feeling to reciprocate and the expectation of reciprocity is one of the most common factors that motivates community-wide prosocial behavior, especially community-wide volunteering.

For most participants, the decisions to be involved in community-oriented prosocial behaviors is due to a need to give back for past prosocial behaviors they’ve received. In addition, the expectation of reciprocity is a strong motivator to do community-wide prosocial behaviors. Some participants get involved in prosocial behaviors with the expectation that they’ll be helped in return when they are in need of help in the future. While for others, the expectation of reciprocity is driven by their religious beliefs. They believe a supreme being will “pay them back” one day.
“In November and December 2016, Uganda experienced severe drought i.e. there was no rainfall throughout this period. The absence of rain spelled disaster for many Ugandans, as these rains usually allowed Ugandans to grow the food they eat in January and February of the following year.

In one of the rural communities in Uganda, two women Mercy and Emilia, volunteered to join a relief group. In this group they helped to distribute food to people affected by the drought, and volunteered in their own time and with no pay.”

We presented the above scenario to our participants to gauge their beliefs and perceptions about volunteering as an act of prosocial behavior. For most participants, one of the key factors they associated with Mercy and Emilia’s behavior was reciprocity. More specifically, they believed Mercy and Emilia volunteer due to expectations of reciprocity from the community in the future. To citizens, reciprocity transcends being returned a favour directly, but the expectation that the favor could be returned to a child or loved one in time of need drives them to partake in prosocial behaviors.
Theme 5: Motivations for Community Involvement

Finding 5.2

Social learning from observing the effects of role model's prosocial behavior motivates community-wide prosocial behavior

An individual’s exposure during his or her development stages, to the positive effects of people around them doing prosocial behavior, motivates them to engage in community-wide prosocial behavior. Some of our participants note that they engage in prosocial behaviors because during their formative years, they observed their guardians do this same behavior and witnessed first-hand the effect it had on people's lives in their community.

“I grew up in a family where we were four children, but I saw my mother helping very many and through helping, she was blessed. Yes, you get blessings from helping.” - Female, Kololo, IDI
Theme 5: Motivations for Community Involvement

**Finding 5.3**

The fear of being affected by a challenge in the future drives people to engage in prosocial behaviors

Some of our participants get involved in prosocial behaviors because they fear they’ll be affected in the future if they don’t take a stand to stop a current challenge the community is facing. This was mostly seen in cases of reporting crime or any other incidence that causes instability in the community.
Theme 5: Motivations for Community Involvement

Finding 5.4

Strong identity recognition triggered by gender or similar situations experienced in the past motivates people to get involved in prosocial behaviors

For some participants, the feeling to be involved in prosocial behavior is triggered by identity recognition across gender lines. This is common among women, especially those in low-income communities. Observing their fellow gender in a challenging situation motivates them to be involved in that particular situation. For other prosocial actors, identity recognition comes from empathy induced by seeing people experience challenges they’ve experienced in the past.

“Being a girl myself, it makes me feel bad to see a fellow girl suffering like having early pregnancies so I reach out when I can.” - Female, Kifumbira B, IDI
Theme 5: Motivations for Community Involvement

**FINDING 5.5**

*Individuals raised in their communities tend to have strong ties to their communities which motivates them to partake in prosocial behaviors*

For some of our participants, spending their formative years in the community has made them attached to the communities. Their longevity in a community makes them vested in improving these communities. There is a popular notion among citizens that people who are not involved in prosocial behaviors are new immigrants with no stake in the communities.
Theme 6: Levers for Community-Oriented Prosocial Behavior

Beyond the factors that motivates people, there are existing social structures that enable people to do community-wide prosocial behaviors.
Finding 6.1

Living in communities with supportive injunctive social norms for people to engage in prosocial behavior increases the chances of being civicly engaged

From our study, it is part of the culture of some communities to be prosocial in particular instances. In some communities, individuals are encouraged to help their fellow citizens during certain events e.g the loss of a loved one, sending a child to school etc. Being a member of a community where people are actively taught that they ought to do certain prosocial behaviors to support other community members, makes community-wide prosocial behavior salient to citizens and easier to do.

“Like here in the community in case we loose someone maybe a parent or a child that is obvious you are supposed to be involved.” - Male, Mulago, IDI
FINDING 6.2

Communities with strong cooperative networks enable people to engage in prosocial behaviors, especially centered around helping and sharing

Communities with networks of cooperative groups tend to get involved in prosocial behaviors. Some of these cooperative groups aim to empower individuals within a community beyond their primary members with the skills, or financial resources to navigate their economic challenges. This is popular among women-only cooperative groups in peri-urban areas. These communities tend to exist in peri-urban locations with strong networks of women SACCOs.

“Every end of year in December, every member of the group contributes money ranging from 20,000/= to 50,000/= and we buy soap, sugar and other things for the elderly in the community.”
**Theme 5: Levers for Community-Oriented Prosocial Behavior**

**FINDING 6.3**

Existence of non-formal structures that serve as a feedback loop for community issues spark citizen involvement in prosocial behaviors

For some participants, community meetings make them aware of the issues going on in their communities, present an opportunity to report developing challenges in their communities, and receive progress reports on these challenges. Having these structures enables individuals to be involved in community-wide prosocial behaviors, because individuals have a visible channel to air their concerns. In addition, citizens are encouraged to engage in prosocial behaviors during these meetings, such as helping neighbors with basic needs, coming together to protect the community, crowdsourcing for resources and cleaning the community.

**FINDING 6.4**

The level of an individual’s self-efficacy informs the decision to be involved in prosocial behaviors as well as the scope of the behavior

Some citizens believe in their abilities to solve a particular challenge, and not other challenges. The belief or lack thereof, influences their decision on what community issues to get involved in. For example, some citizens believe in their ability to solve community issues, but not issues framed as national issues. Belief in one’s own ability is assessed based on the perceived magnitude of the challenge in terms of resources (cost and time) against the possibility of getting a result.
### Summary of Levers

#### STRUCTURAL LEVERS
- Presence of information and feedback loops
- Strong cooperative networks
- Supportive social norms
- Time spent in a community

#### BEHAVIORAL LEVERS
- Self efficacy
- Strong identity recognition
- Presence of role models
- Expectation of reciprocity
- High trust & social coherence
Theme 7: Barriers to Doing Prosocial Behaviors

Citizens’ decision to be involved in prosocial behaviors is hindered by factors within their control and beyond their control. These classifications are not mutually exclusive, and sometimes one is induced by the other.
Theme 7: Barriers to Doing Prosocial Behaviors

Finding 7.1

Lack of self-efficacy, uncertainty in reciprocity, fear of the consequences of an action, asociality, limited attention are the main behavioral factors that prevent a citizen from being involved in prosocial behaviors

Self-Efficacy

The lack of belief in one’s capacity to bring about change within a particular domain influences a citizen’s decision to be involved in a community-wide challenge. Sometimes, this lack of belief stems from bad experiences with inactive public institutions. In other cases, the scope of the problem is considered too big on the citizen’s part to bring about the required change. This is relevant with country wide issues.

“I don’t have the ability because those things that are mentioned are far beyond my reach and I think I cannot impact any change”
“In this country, there is no way you can address it because first of all the corruption which is in Uganda is mainly from big people; I can give you an example like us where I am staying, police men as I told you there is a lot of corruption in police; there were some people who were contributing their money to the police thinking they were keeping it but at the end of the day, the big man ate all the money. So, like such a case, there is no way I can stand and address it”
Uncertainty in Reciprocity

For some citizens, the uncertainty in a prosocial action not being reciprocated prevents them from being involved. For this group, they are motivated by the possibility of their actions being reciprocated. For example, some citizens believe when they do good within their community, the favor will not be returned when they are in need as such they’ll rather not take actions. This is mostly relevant to helping behaviors in communities where little trust exists among members.

“Well, some they could say, when I do this like this, one day they will see me as useless like for instance when I help someone in any way, it is of course likely that one time I happen may be to do something is which is not right, they will there and then judge me wrongly.”
Fear of Consequences of an Action

The fear of the consequences of an action limits people from taking actions. For most of our participants, they fear that prosocial behavior could turn out bad in certain instances e.g reporting a crime, volunteering to help people in the community. The lack of trust in the law enforcement agencies to act on a report prevents people from getting involved. For others, the public judgement that comes with helping others in a visible manner prevent them from being involved. According to them, the perception of the public of visible prosocial behavior is negative. People evaluate some of these actions to be purely show-off. To avoid this public judgement they avoid doing prosocial behaviors.

“Sometimes people are not supposed to talk; there are people don’t like....people have fear to talk in most cases because somebody knows that if you talk, may be you will be arrested.”
Limited Attention

Limited attention associated with poverty is one of the barriers that prevents citizens in low income settings from getting involved in community-oriented prosocial behavior. For some participants, they note that one of the costs of poverty is limited attention to issues beyond the household level. This limited attention or focus on the immediate challenges an individual faces prevents poor people from being aware of the pressing issues in the community. Shafir and Mullainathan (2013) notes the association between scarcity (time, resources) and people’s cognitive ability. Scarcity caused by poverty prevents people from doing other productive activities effectively, because it limits their cognitive ability.

Asociality

There is a perception that people who aren’t social do not get involved in community issues. This intrinsic behavior limits them from relating with others in the community. This perception is widely held by a number of citizens. While some associate this attitude with pride, others think it’s natural and there’s little they can do to affect it.

“There are some people who are not social; they don’t want to associate with others, they have hardened hearts; may be in their family they grew up not associating.”
Theme 7: Barriers to Doing Prosocial Behaviors

Finding 7.2

Financial constraint, lack of cooperation from public authorities, a community’s structure, and low trust in public institutions are structural barriers

Structural factors are pain points beyond a citizen’s control. The commonly mentioned structural factors are financial constraint, lack of cooperation from public authorities, community structure, low trust in public institutions, difference in political ideologies, and competing need for time. In low income settings, citizens are limited by the availability of resources to partake in prosocial behaviors. While these citizens desire to engage in these behaviors, the lack of resources to help their neighbor prevents them from taking action.

The lack of cooperation from public authorities during past interactions discourage individuals from taking future actions when there is an opportunity to partake in prosocial behaviors. In addition, the composition of a community in terms of the duration spent in that community affects an individual’s ties to the community.

For some of our participants, their communities are composed of new people who fail to get involved in community issues due to the lack of strong ties with the community. Some citizens intend to take civic actions but note that the difference in political ideologies stop their communities from taking a consensus action. Low trust in public institutions also prevents people from taking prosocial actions. Lastly, citizens, especially in urban areas operate in settings with competing need for their time and resources, and this prevents them from being involved in prosocial behavior.
“Jane wants to start a new business of selling shoes and requires a business license to operate. She makes a few visits to the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) in order to acquire her business license. Each time she goes there, she sees at the entrance friendly volunteers who conduct research on the services the general public receive from the KCCA.

Of the many times she visited the KCCA, Jane always does her best to give them her honest opinions, based on her experience with the public officers at the KCCA. Jane always provides feedback on the quality of services that she received, including whether the officer was helpful, whether she was served on time, even whether she was asked for a bribe, and so on. She does this because she knows that her feedback will go a long way to guide the KCCA to offer improved quality services to the people who intend to register for a business license.”
Most of our participants believe that giving feedback is key and agree with Jane’s actions, even though they think it’s a rare occurrence to give feedback in the public service sector in Uganda. Some people perceive giving feedback as an indirect way of providing a voice for others to have a smooth process in the future. However, some citizens highlighted lack of belief in the system to bring about change, as such did not see the need for Jane to fill the form. In addition, time constraints due to competing needs prevents individuals from giving feedback.

“Not everyone, you see our people here there are those that are selfish and others are not, but me I would thank her so much because she is being a voice to all of us so that everyone who goes gets a licence but there are those that wouldn’t like it.”
### Summary of Barriers

#### STRUCTURAL FACTORS

- Financial constraint
- Non-cooperation from authorities
- Time scarcity
- Social class differences
- Density of immigrants within a community
- Social upbringing
- Difference in political ideology
Lack of self efficacy

Uncertainty in reciprocity

Fear of the consequences of an action

Limited attention

Lack of concern for the community

Asociality
Theme 8: Perceptions on COVID-19 Related Prosocial Behavior
“In Kampala, corona has affected John's neighborhood and he has an old and sick neighbor. John decides to help his neighbor stay home so that his neighbor does not have to go out and be exposed. John decides to go buy food for him, go buy his medicine and other essential services that his sick neighbor needs.”

(Vignette on reporting behavior)
Attitude Towards Story

Most of our participants had mixed opinions concerning John’s action. Some participants did not agree with his actions, while they recognized his actions had a good motive, the potential cost from contracting the virus outweighed the benefits of his actions. Some of the negative attitude resulted from the participants assuming the man had the virus.

While for other participants, they looked beyond the negative outcomes to focus on the positive outcomes from John’s actions. However, most of the participants mentioned that they’d have followed the guidelines set by the government to call the appropriate authorities.

Prosocial Behaviors in the Context of COVID-19

Most of our participants feel their communities will not align with John’s behavior, due to fear of contracting the virus. Rather, they’ll adhere to the government’s guideline. In the same vein, most people knew examples of people within their communities that have taken similar actions like John did, albeit in different scenarios. Some of the actions people have taken to help their community members from contracting the virus are community-wide sensitization and giving food to the people in need.

Perception of Government’s Response to COVID-19

Even though the majority of our participants note that they are feeling the effects of COVID-19 on their businesses and income, they generally agree with the government’s response to preventing the spread. The government response was generally regarded as the right solution for the country to beat the virus.
Conclusion

The phase of this research identifies some useful findings to key stakeholders in the civic space. The research sought to understand community oriented prosocial behavior in the context of Uganda, as a first step towards unpacking a unique set of citizen’s profiles and behaviors in relation to civic engagement.

There is a universal understanding of community, defined as community of place but beyond that there are smaller communities specific to different types of citizens.

Involvement in community-oriented prosocial behavior is triggered by specific causes of interest. To pique a citizen or community’s interest, it is important to engage them in the issues most important to them. From the interviews, citizens in peri-urban areas are mostly concerned with youth unemployment and take different types of prosocial actions to solve this. Prosocial behavior is largely done within the scope of the immediate geographical community, conversely, civic actions are limited in the nation-wide level, largely due to self-efficacy. Citizens within communities differ in how they relate to certain types of prosocial behaviors and the channels used to drive prosocial actions. From our interviews, older citizens especially in peri-urban areas prefer more traditional channels of communication (radios, posters or prints within the community) to drive prosocial behaviors, while younger people prefer more modern channels like social media.

Actors of prosocial behaviors differ from non-actors in their characteristics and identity and this is reflected in their motivations to do prosocial behaviors. Specifically, depending on a citizen’s location, occupation, social class, age, gender, prosocial actors are motivated by several factors that encourage them to do civic behaviors. Citizens that live in communities that are closely knit are motivated by the possibility of reciprocity and social learning. For other citizens, the fear of a situation affecting them triggers them to act, while strong identity recognition also influences people to do prosocial behavior. Beyond these individual factors, there are community wide factors that encourage prosocial behaviors like presence of cooperative networks, social norms and active community meetings that act as feedback loops for issues raised.
References


Wenner, J. R., & Randall, A. B., (2016). Predictors of prosocial behavior: Differences in middle-aged and older adults

FO Script: “To start our discussion, we will ask you about how you and others like you take action to support your community or get involved in your community affairs. There are no right or wrong answers and feel free to answer the questions in any way you like.”

1. Before we begin, in this exercise we will refer to your community a lot.
   1.1 What does the word community mean to you?
   1.2 How would you describe your community?
   1.3 Who forms these communities?
   1.4 How has your community changed over time?
   1.5 Do you consider your country as your community? Why or why not?

2. Communities face different issues. Are there issues currently affecting your community? Please describe these issues to me.

3. People may or may not get involved in issues of community interest
   3.1 What are the community issues you typically get involved in or engage in?
   3.2 Why do you get involved in these issues?
   3.3 What are the community issues other members of your community typically get involved in?
   3.4 Why do they get involved in these issues?
   3.5 What issues do you get involved in beyond the boundaries of your community? For example, issues affecting your country.
   3.6 What are the issues other members of your community typically get involved in beyond the boundaries of your community, for example issues affecting your country?

Probe: Issues such as political/electoral activities, prosocial activities, providing a political voice
FO Script: “For this section we would like to hear your thoughts on different behaviours and actions that people engage in to support or get involved in their communities.”

FO Note: Be prepared to probe for each e.g. “anything else?”

4. “Prosocial behaviors” refer to voluntary behaviour by an individual that benefits others or promotes harmonious relations with others. For example, sharing or helping others in your community.” What do you think counts as prosocial behaviors within:
   (i) your community
   (iii) your country

4.1 What are some of the ways that you have been prosocial in your community for the benefit of others?
   4.1.1 What motivates you to act in the ways you have just mentioned?

4.2 What are some of the ways that others in your community have been prosocial for the benefit of others?
   4.2.1 What do you think motivates them to act in the ways you have just mentioned?

FO Note: Only say this out loud if the respondent asks for an example
Volunteering makes you feel important, improves self esteem, is morally right, improves people’s quality of life, compassion, social responsibility, meaningful, helps you work on your own problems, hobbies etc.

5. Can you think of some popular community-based groups within your community?
   5.1 What do people do in these groups?
   5.2 What are some of the ways these groups address issues facing you or your community?

6. More specifically, can you mention some of the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) within your community? This could be NGOs, faith-based organisation, charitable organisations, foundations, labour unions or indigenous groups
   6.1 What does the CSO do for you or your community?
   6.2 What is the CSO’s approach towards solving community issues?
   6.3 Do you think the CSOs approach towards solving community issues is effective? Why/Why not?
PART 3. WHAT TYPE OF PEOPLE ARE ASSOCIATED WITH PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOR?

7. What type of people within your community are more likely to take actions at all concerning any community issue? (Probe: for income levels, gender, personality type, age group etc.)
   7.1 Is this type of person common in your community?
   7.2 Why do you think that is?

8. What type of people within your community are more likely to not take actions at all?
   8.1 Why do you think that is? (Probe: for income levels, gender, personality type, age group etc.)
   8.2 Why do you think this group of people do not take actions at all? (Probe: Lack of understanding of the situation, limited/no financial capacity, no trust in elected leaders)

PART 4: CORONA RELATED QUESTIONS

9. Is the spread of the coronavirus an issue that your community is worried about?
   9.1 If it reaches your community, would you get involved to help your community? How?
   9.2 Do you think other people will get involved to help the community? How?

10. What do you think of the response of your country to the coronavirus? (Probe: approve or disapprove of government responses)
   10.1 Do you think your country should have responded differently? How?
Vignette Instrument

LIST OF VIGNETTES:

A. Cooperative Behaviors

Key behavior: Joined a community based group / Work together informally/formally with a group to solve a collective problem in the community

“Monica is a petty trader that looks after her family alone because her husband offers her no support. One day a community member from one of the groups that help people in the region visited her and told her about the group. She invited Monica to join so that she can be able to save money to support her family. Monica agreed and after joining the group, she was trained on savings and business skills.

She got a loan from the group and started a trading business of buying and selling millet and sorghum from her house. Since she noticed this type of training would benefit the community, she has started training fellow women and the youth on savings and business skills. Her greatest desire is to eliminate poverty which is a huge community problem, by empowering women and the youth.”

B. Sharing

Key behavior: Expressed your opinions on a social, community or political issues via social media or the Internet

“Born in the mountainous Mbale region of Uganda, Justus was first introduced to computers by his father, who began teaching him basic computing skills at an early age. Captivated by technology, Justus spent hours on his father’s laptop and soon decided to turn his newfound passion into a voice for his community.

Determined to become an activist in his rural community and eager to see his community develop, Justus began to share information on social media about the challenges facing his community. He used social media as a platform for reaching out to his community leaders and holding them accountable.”
C. Cooperative Behaviors

**Key behavior:** Started or signed an online or paper petition to solve a community issue

“Lamah is a 40 year old woman from Buvuma district in Central Uganda. In the late 80's she and her husband fled the war in Northern Uganda and have since lived in Buvuma island, a place they call home. Lamah has been active in defending human rights and conserving the environment. Recently, she found out about a government initiative to sell 10,000 hectares of forest in Buvuma island to investors whose aim is to develop palm oil plantations. Destroying the forest could lead to destruction of the natural habitat and consequently, extinction of certain animals. Also, residents of Buvuma island worry that they too will be next in having their land collected and human rights violated.

So, Lamah and some community members decided to fight for their rights. She started an online petition to protect the threatened forest in Buvuma. She has since signed the online petition and mobilized many more members of the community to sign it. So far, 12,000 residents have signed the online petition and Lamah hopes to present the petition to the government.”

D. Volunteering and Community Service

**Key behavior:** Reporting an incident in the community to an authority

“On a Friday afternoon, walking back from work, Julius witnessed a group of 3 young men with knives jumping out of a compound 5 minutes away from where he lives. He hides and takes cover so they do not see him. He sees them carrying stolen items (a TV set, laptops and things that look like computer accessories) while running away.

He observes them till they are out of sight. Once he sees they are out of sight, he runs to the nearest police station at the district to report a case of burglary and possible theft, giving the policemen all the necessary information he could remember from the event. Julius does not stop there, he also alerts the residents of the house where the theft occurred and other community members within close proximity to take extra caution and be watchful.”
E. Volunteering and community service

**Key behavior:** Participated in a volunteering activity to help my community without pay

“In November and December 2016, Uganda experienced severe drought i.e there was no rainfall throughout this period. The absence of rain spelled disaster for many Ugandans, as these rains usually allowed Ugandans to grow the food they eat in January and February of the following year.

In one of the rural communities in Uganda, two women Mercy and Emilia, volunteered to join a relief group. In this group they helped to distribute food to people affected by the drought, and volunteered in their own time and with no pay.”

F. Helping Behavior

**Key behavior:** Did something for someone in need (Corona related)

“In Kampala, corona has affected John’s neighborhood and he has an old and sick neighbor. John decides to help his neighbor stay home so that his neighbor does not have to go out and be exposed. John decides to go buy food for him, go buy his medicine and other essential services that his sick neighbor needs.”

G. Contacting a Leader

**Key behavior:** Contacted or visited someone in government who represents your community to express your opinion on a issue

“In 2013, one District in Uganda was ranked poorly in the bottom-up approach. The education performance in Universal Primary Education (UPE) schools had deteriorated in the entire district. Mr. Matthius, a parent with children in one of the schools in the region, gathered some parents in the region, and together, they looked at what was causing the bad education performance in the region and ways that these problems could be addressed. Once they understood the problem well, they contacted their elected leaders and raised their concern about the issue.”
H. Reporting Feedback

**Key behavior:** Reporting feedback on public service delivery

“Jane wants to start a new business of selling shoes and requires a business license to operate. She makes a few visits to the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) in order to acquire her business license. Each time she goes there, she sees at the entrance friendly volunteers who conduct research on the services the general public receive from the KCCA.

Of the many times she visited the KCCA, Jane always does her best to give them her honest opinions, based on her experience with the public officers at the KCCA. Jane always provides feedback on the quality of services that she received, including whether the officer was helpful, whether she was served on time, even whether she was asked for a bribe, and so on. She does this because she knows that her feedback will go a long way to guide the KCCA to offer improved quality services to the people who intend to register for a business license.”
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