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Exploring opportunities and constraints for young agro entrepreneurs in Africa

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Acknowledgments

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Foreword

A modern, sustainable and productive agricultural sector¹ in Africa is the basis for national food security and improved nutrition and has the potential to offer income and employment opportunities for young people. In times of food price volatility, global economic instability and rising costs for natural resources and energy, producing food locally by supporting the entrance of a large youth cohort in the agriculture sector is challenging but an opportune investment.

In Africa, 200 million people are aged between 15 and 24 years, comprising more than 20% of the overall population. Generating productive employment for this cohort is one of the continent’s major challenges. At present, three out of every four youth live on less than US\$ 2 per day lacking the resources and skills to be competitive in the labour markets [see table 1 - Incidence of poverty among youth (15-24) in % in Sub-Saharan Africa].

Uganda	93.8
Nigeria	92.9
Zambia	86.3
Burundi	85.7
Mozambique	75.4
Ethiopia	70.7
Sierra Leone	68.0
Ghana	66.5
Malawi	66.3
Kenya	54.5
Côte d'Ivoire	46.5

Source: World Bank survey-based harmonized indicators

Youth is a time of transition: from childhood to adulthood; from dependency on others to independence through paid or self-employment. In poor rural settings, this transition seems particularly problematic, as evidenced by extensive periods of job search. Several factors can be identified for this situation, including insufficient or inadequate education and vocational training; a lack of access to productive resources; and limited support from farmers’ networks².

Although two countries may have similar economic growth rates, the type and degree of coordination between education and vocational training institutions and employers makes for markedly different transition outcomes especially in terms of how long it takes young people to make a successful transition. The macroeconomic dimension comes into play through the importance to many young people of first establishing a stable source of livelihood as a precondition for making other personal life transitions. In most cases, the achievement of a stable livelihood based on marketable skills and experience is a necessary condition that influences the chances of youth achieving the other transitions to adulthood. Institutional differences between countries in Africa are also important in determining how long the transition takes and whether it is relatively smooth or not. The wide age span used in many African countries to define youth for policy purposes³, likely reflects the difficulties that most young people in these countries have in making the economic transition from dependence to independence.

The link between education and employment also indicates an increasing bifurcation between young people with skills and those without. A new labour market dualism may be emerging where it is increasingly difficult for many young people to move out of a cycle of low skilled and uncertain employment, unemployment or informal sector participation to high skilled, relatively secure employment. Leaving school early and not acquiring recognised skills may confine a young person to a life of limited income earning prospects. In most

¹ Including agro-industry
² Dalla Valle, F., O’Higgins, N. (forthcoming). *Rural youth employment - A global analysis of opportunities and constrains for achieving decent work for rural youth*
³ UN Youth age frame: 15-24

African countries, attainment of higher levels of education may not even be sufficient to provide an entry point to a secure livelihood.

African national youth employment programmes need to address both the demand side as well as the supply side of the labour market, at both the macro and micro economic levels. This implies that as well as emphasizing the need to both improve and diversify the quality of education, vocational education, strategies and programmes while also promoting close links to the growth sectors of national economies. In most countries in Africa, agriculture is a main contributor to GDP and even in nations where the contribution of the agricultural sector to GDP is currently low, the national significance and importance given by the governments to the sector is still highly recognized. This stems from the fact that the agricultural sector has the potential to provide some solutions to the problems of unemployment, particularly if agriculture is undertaken in a commercial and sustainable fashion.

Support to rural youth and young farmers has been part of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) work for the last four decades and this has occurred in the form of strengthening and expanding young people's capacities, knowledge, and skills through education and training. FAO leads international efforts to alleviate hunger and mitigate poverty; achieving food security for all is at the heart of FAO's efforts, that is, to make sure people have sustained access to enough high-quality nutritive food to lead active, healthy lives. The organization recognizes that the multidimensional issues facing young people in rural areas are interwoven and also recognizes that young people are well suited and keen to contribute to national economic development. In order to enable rural youth to become active partners in the achievement of economic and social goals they must receive maximum support and access to resources that allow them to reach their maximum potential. Moreover, since 2005, the first Millennium Development Goal to "eradicate extreme poverty and hunger" includes target 1.B that encourages the achievement of decent and full productive work for all, including women and youth. This target acknowledges the centrality of employment promotion for the achievement of food security and poverty reduction.

The purpose of this paper is to offer an analytical review of opportunities and constraints faced by youth wishing to become agro entrepreneurs while giving some examples and suggestions as to how governments and national stakeholders might approach the development and implementation of youth employment strategies and programmes in Africa and increase their participation in the agriculture sector.

Situation analysis

Youth can play a key role in poverty reduction in rural areas, but they encounter significant constraints. They are often the most disadvantaged, with low levels of job experience and organisation, fewer chances to access or obtain capital and other assets, and little or no voice in decision-making processes. They barely gain access to agriculture extension services, affordable input supplies, or marketing opportunities. Lack of information, technical skills, and basic education further weakens their situation or circumstances. Female rural youth face additional barriers linked to persistent gender inequalities perpetuated by gender discriminatory societal / traditional norms. Health conditions have also

Table 2: *Examples of unemployment rates and youth unemployment rates in selected African countries*
(highest youth unemployment rate order)

Country	Unemployment rate (%)	Youth unemployment rate (%)
South Africa	21.9	50.4
Botswana	17.6	39.6
Tunisia	14.2	30.7
Egypt	8.7	29.8
Zimbabwe	4.2	24.9
Ethiopia	16.7	24.9
Zambia	12.9	21.4
Tanzania	4.3	8.9

Source: Data collected by the author on multiple databases (ILO, UNDP, OECD, World Bank - 2011)

a major importance; Africa is still dealing with the multiple damaging effects of the HIV and AIDS epidemic which is damaging the prospects of future generations of young farmers. The strengthening of human capital and the production of knowledge for youth is thereby crucial for developing employment opportunities in rural areas and for rural development in general. Education and vocational training are important components to improve rural livelihoods since a majority of the rural poor still derives their main livelihood from their labour in agriculture. Further, knowledge and information are powerful tools in the process of change, together with capability to get organised and access to productive assets, particularly land, financial services, appropriate technology and labour saving technology.

The United Nations (UN) states, in article 25.8 of Agenda 21⁴, that “each country should combat human rights abuses against young people, particularly young women and girls, and should consider providing all youth with legal protection, skills, opportunities and the support necessary for them to fulfil their personal, economic and social aspirations and potentials”. Moreover, the *Global Jobs Pact*, adopted by the International Labour Conference (ILO) in 2009, highlights the labour market vulnerabilities of young people and calls for action to support youth at risk. Consequently, action is required at both macro and micro levels, as low income or agricultural production within households can place vulnerable children and youth at risk of food insecurity and exploitation, therefore greater investment in agriculture is needed for rural households to increase their income, food supply and employment opportunities.

⁴ Agenda 21 is a set of proposals made at the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development for the furtherance of world-wide, sustainable development (<http://www.un.org/esa/dsd/agenda21/index.shtml>)

Several studies have highlighted the importance of agricultural and rural development for economic growth and poverty reduction⁵. In most countries in Africa, agriculture is a main contributor to GDP⁶ and even in nations where the contribution of the agricultural sector to GDP is currently low, the national significance given by the governments to the sector is still highly recognized. This stems from the fact that the agricultural sector has the potential to provide some solutions to the problems of unemployment, particularly if agriculture is undertaken in a commercial and sustainable fashion. The sector though, is largely dominated by elderly people, while the youth, including those with requisite training are unemployed or looking for jobs in other sectors. Priorities and aspirations of young producers are still rarely included in the countries' policy debates on the future of food, farming and development and the fact that the agricultural sector is dominated by elderly people undermines the future growth and development of the sector itself. Facilitating the entrance in the sector of youth and youth agricultural graduates could ensure future sustainability of the industry while increasing the employment rate and income of the majority of rural households. This will also contribute to poverty alleviation in rural Africa and will sensibly contribute to the rejuvenation of the agro sector.

Rural youth can play a central role in this process. It has been assessed that younger household heads who are engaged in farming tend to derive a higher income from their agricultural activities than older household heads. This is probably because the younger generation is more open to new crops and technologies that produce a higher yield. Possibly, they are also more involved in post-harvest value addition (storage,

Table 3: Examples of minimum wages (per month) in agriculture in selected African countries		
<i>Country</i>	<i>Minimum monthly wage in US\$</i>	<i>Minimum wage in local currency</i>
Republic of South Africa (Note: foreseen to be revised in 2012)	164.7	R1316.69
Angola (Note: not foreseen or reported forthcoming revisions)	113.3	Kz10.776,65
Malawi (Note: not foreseen or reported forthcoming revisions)	73.6	MWK12.000
Mozambique (Note: foreseen to be revised in 2012)	73.4	MT2005
Botswana (Note: the cost of feeding a worker living on the employer's premises can be deducted - not foreseen or reported forthcoming revisions)	54.8	BWP408
Tanzania (Note: not foreseen or reported forthcoming revisions)	44.4	TSHS 70,000
Zimbabwe (Note: not foreseen or reported forthcoming revisions)	Set from 35 to 50	(reported source only in \$)
Source: Author research on selected countries national employment acts and revisions (currency conversion used: 19/01/2012)		

⁵ Among others: World Bank Agriculture, Rural Development, and Pro-poor Growth http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTARD/Resources/PPG_final.pdf and <http://go.worldbank.org/BR4VX141Q0>; DFID Agriculture, growth and poverty reduction <http://dfid-agriculture-consultation.nri.org/summaries/wp1.pdf>; OECD - Agricultural Transformation, Growth and Poverty Reduction <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/25/27/46767135.pdf> FAO - SOFA 2010-2011 <http://www.fao.org/publications/sofa/en/>

⁶ OECD-FAO Agricultural Outlook 2010-2019 <http://stats.oecd.org/index.aspx?queryid=23342>

processing) or more profitable ways of marketing their produce (Davis et al 2007). These findings suggest that special agricultural extension services targeting rural youth can be highly effective in (1) improving the quality of rural youth employment; and (2) raising agricultural productivity in general. This would have an important impact on poverty reduction in rural Africa.

Despite their potential, young people face several challenges in finding employment. Those who find a job usually work in the informal sector with low pay, little job security and insufficient social protection. Underemployment⁷ and vulnerable employment are also widespread among rural youth. Many jobs in the agricultural sector, for example, have a strong seasonal component, as work might only be needed during certain times of the year. The situation is not better for those managing to find a formal job in agriculture where minimum wages are an issue. In Tanzania, for example, the *Trade Union Congress of Tanzania (Tucta)* challenged the government to increase the minimum salary as a tool to reduce income poverty among farmers. It is usually the young and inexperienced to which the minimum wage rate is applied, with most countries in Africa adopting a minimum wage which does not offer the prospect of an independent and decent life. In Malawi for example, officials from the ministry of labour say “*minimum wage is the maximum wage*” [see table 3: Examples of minimum wages (per month) in agriculture in selected African countries page 4]. Even in certain fairly regulated African labour markets, amendments to national labour relations acts have ratified that casual workers should be paid double the wage rate for permanent employees. These amendments do protect casual workers from an unstable income but on the other hand employers’ are likely to hire someone with skills and know-how therefore the opportunity to gain work experience through casual work for youth is effectively hampered⁸.

Youth wishing to become agro entrepreneurs have both opportunities and constraints along their transitional path from childhood into adulthood. The below anthology gives examples of both prospects and barriers in selected sectors concluding with practical suggestions for an effective increasing an equal and fair participation of young people in the agriculture sector.

i. Education and vocational training

Developing education and vocational training opportunities for young people is central to develop and promote employment opportunities in rural areas. Moreover, increasing educational participation means raising the long-run employment opportunities and earnings potential of young people. Some North Africa (NA) countries have already reached the Millennium Development Goal 2 (MDG2) of universal primary education, most notably, Algeria and Tunisia, and therefore have an opportunity to focus on improving the quality of schooling and expanding higher education. The largest number of illiterate youth in NA are in Egypt, which has alarming school dropout rates in pockets of its population. Young girls lag behind; girls who are illiterate or have little schooling generally come from poor rural communities and tend to marry and begin childbearing at a young age de facto cutting girls’ formal education and often trapping them in a vicious cycle of low education, high fertility, and poverty.

⁷ I.e. working below ones capacities in terms of time and skills or ability to generate a living wage

⁸ Chitambara, P. 2007. The role of trade unions on rural youth unemployment initiatives in Africa

In general, though, overall basic educational levels have strongly increased in Africa but with certain regions remaining relatively low. In Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), for example, just over 70% of children attend primary school, leaving the region far from achieving MDG2 (United Nations, 2008). Despite some positive trends, SSA still lags far behind in terms of gender balance in education. The 2000s saw a strong increase in primary school enrolment, especially among girls.⁹ While the trend in the ratio of girls to boys in secondary education was slightly positive in the early 1990s, it has been stagnating in the last few years. Gender disparity has fallen in Africa in the new Millennium, but it is still a long way from the gender equality envisaged by MDG3. Disproportion in school attendance is high when analyzing urban and rural youth in secondary education, in Burundi, 57% of urban youth are in school, whilst only 23% of youth in rural areas. In Cameroon, the proportions are 48% and 24% and in Mozambique, 30% and 15% respectively (Garcia & Fares, 2008). Data from household surveys collated by the WDR2008 also show that not only do rural areas lag behind urban areas in terms of the average years of education of young people (18-25) but also that rural young girls lag behind more than rural young boys.

Quality is also fundamental for education, having a big impact on the future well-being of young people. Evidence from past evaluations conducted by UNESCO within their Education for all (EFA) initiative has shown that efforts to expand enrolment should always be accompanied by attempts to enhance educational quality in order for children and young people to be attracted to school, remain there and achieve learning outcomes.

Child labour is often a problem that affects both participation in education and young people's long term experience in the labour market. Indeed, it might be characterized as premature labour market entry. In general, child labour may be defined as "work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development"¹⁰. For the most part, child labour does not directly involve young people – defined as those between 15 and 24 years old. The major International Instrument regulating child labour, the ILO Minimum Age Convention (No. 138, 1973), established the minimum age for entry into employment as corresponding to the minimum age for finishing compulsory schooling – generally 15 years old¹¹. However, for hazardous work, that is, "Any work which is likely to jeopardize children's physical, mental or moral health, safety or morals," (ibid.) the minimum age is established as 18¹², so that a significant portion of young people (using the standard international definition) are actually included. Child labour is associated with premature school leaving, or indeed with never going to school. The long-term detrimental consequences of child labour are largely attributable to this, as well as to the informal and often hazardous nature of such employment (Bhalotra & Tzannatos, 2003). Lack of schooling will limit the opportunities available to former child labourers and often the nature of the work done by children does not result in a natural progression to some form of productive – and freely chosen - decent work. Indeed, 60% of child labour is to be found in Agriculture (ILO, 2010). Although the incidence of child labour is slightly lower for girls than for boys (46% against 54%) overall, female child labourers outnumber their male counterparts in the youngest 5-11 age-group. Hazardous work - one of the categories of the worst forms of child labour - is equally predominant amongst boys and

⁹ Source: World Development Indicators

¹⁰ ILO-IPEC, <http://www.ilo.org/ipec/facts/lang--en>

¹¹ In developing countries, this may be reduced to 14.

¹² The distinction between normal and hazardous work and the definition of particularly damaging forms of child labour is further regulated by the ILO Convention no. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999. For the purposes of the Convention, children are defined as all those up to 18 years old.

girls at this age. Moreover, other 'worst forms' such as commercial sexual exploitation, forced labour, trafficking of children, predominantly involve young girls - and are also not easily captured by statistical surveys. A key factor in determining child labour – and as a consequence also contributing to low educational attendance - is that child labour is part of the survival strategy in many rural areas. In most cases parents would prefer to send their children to school, but two-thirds of the world's poor people live in rural areas, and many rural parents are too poor to pay school fees. Parents value education. They see it as an avenue for social advancement. They want their children to learn to read and write. When school fees are waived, there is a tremendous increase in the demand for education. It is therefore important that governments make efforts to provide free education, or education at a nominal cost that parents can afford, and to give encouragement for children to attend school. The frequent shortage of schools in rural areas is an additional disincentive to pulling children out of work and into school. Before steps are taken to move children out of work, it is necessary to make sure they have somewhere to go. If declines in child labour further impoverish poor families or do not go hand-in-hand with high-quality schooling, they could leave children even worse off.

Orphans, for example, are more likely than other children to be removed from school, although the degree of poverty of the household, the age of the orphan, the child's stage of development, and the orphan's relationship to the guardian all influence school attendance. It can also be profoundly influenced by culture and the cultural demand for children's work. For example, absenteeism of school children is very low in Botswana, and orphans in fact have better attendance records than non-orphans in primary schools. Botswana has a strong schooling culture and household demand for children's work is low. In Uganda and Malawi, on the other hand, absenteeism is higher among orphans than non-orphans¹³.

Nomadic pastoralists children for example, have very low enrolment and attendance rates, usually accompanied by a poor classroom performance, achievement and continuity in higher education with a high gender imbalance. Sifuna (2005) and Krätli (2001) are among the authors who analysed the effect of cultural and religious issues connected with the behaviours of pastoralist communities towards formal education. The culture of nomadic groups is largely communal as opposed to formal education, which mainly focuses on the individual. The issue coupled with the general difficulty of providing formal schooling to nomadic people has raised the levels of - no attendance -. School curricula has also been biased because more tailored to urban lives thereby not contributing enough on practical knowledge in rural and pastoralist areas. Schooling has been seen by pastoralists as – deskilling – in terms of practical skills needed for their day to day lives and therefore not congruent to pastoral life. For specific Northern districts of Kenya like Wajir, Garissa, Isiolo, Marsabit, and Mandera that are largely Muslim, formal education was generally shunned, not because the concept was alien to those communities, but more so due to its association with Christianity. The relative success of alternative provisions of education like the *Dugsi* and *Madrassa* in Northern Kenya led to the argument that formal education provision can succeed if enshrined within the religious and cultural conceptions of pastoralists, on the other hand it can raise further inequalities. Access to education has remained minimal in Northern Kenya while some cultural practices continue to be propagated. A local proverb among the Gabra community states “*God first, then man, then camel and lastly the girl*”. This can partially explain the reluctance of pastoralists to sell livestock (ranked higher than a girl) to be

¹³ ILO, 2006. *HIV/AIDS and work: global estimates, impact on children and youth, and response 2006*

sold to support a girl's education. Early / forced marriages and female circumcision (FGM) have been identified as additional issues hampering girls' education in pastoralist communities. A study commissioned by Action Aid Kenya in 2006 showed that the age for undertaking FGM was declining, with the majority of girls facing it between ages 5-7. FGM among the Samburu and Maasai was strongly connected to education. After FGM, the resultant pattern, highlighted in the report, is pregnancy, school dropout and eventually early marriage, hampering de facto girls' education and possibility to enjoy a healthy childhood – adulthood transition.

The transition from school to work is therefore more often than not, unsuccessful, leaving young Africans either unemployed or underemployed in the rural and urban informal sectors and the underestimated - although frequently stressed as pivotal - relationship between education and labour market outcomes is especially striking in African countries. Africa's youth face many challenges in gaining an appropriate education that delivers them the right set of skills and knowledge demanded by the labour market.

In Tanzania, for example, over 70% of people live in rural areas and rely on agriculture for their income. Growing crops and keeping livestock are central to the Tanzanian economy. However, traditional teaching methods do not give any opportunity at school to learn practical agricultural skills and the situation does not improve much going into vocational education. From research undertaken in Tanzania in 2011¹⁴, out of 23 vocational training centres in rural areas directly managed and financed by the Vocational Education and Training Authority, only 3 were offering training connected with the agro sector, in the specific, agro mechanics. There are 2 main issues arising from the analysis, one is the fact that no basic skills in agriculture were offered, in a country where the majority of farmers are smallholders and do not own and therefore use mechanics in agriculture. The second issue is on the underestimation of the potential of the agricultural sector and on the need to adequately prepare future farmers' skills. The analysis also showed that most of the centres in rural areas were offering courses in sign writing. In a country where the agriculture contribution to GDP in 2011 was estimated at 28.4%, providing 80% of the labour force, and contributions to national GDP from sign writing were not reported (even if hypothetically that industry-sector could be included in the collective contribution denominated "other services", that would sum up to a total of 3.7%¹⁵). Another striking example is Malawi, where 90% of the population live in rural areas and agriculture represents 36% of GDP, accounting for over 80% of the labor force, and representing about 80% of all exports. Among all the courses offered by the Technical, Entrepreneurship and Vocational Education and Training Authority, agriculture is not contemplated at all¹⁶.

This shows a clear lack of connection between the demand of the labour market and the preparation of the national governments of the new generations. MDG2 has stressed governments to focus on primary education in order to developing a literate society but there hasn't been a strong focus on preparing an employable society. The emphasis in Africa is on academics not on practical applications to respond to the demands of a changing world which has global linkages.

¹⁴ Author research (2011).

¹⁵ World Bank Development Indicators, 2011 (December update)

¹⁶ TEVET, Technical, Entrepreneurship and Vocational Education and Training Authority, occupational and fundamental standards <http://www.tevetamw.com/pdf/Occupational%20and%20fundamental%20stds%20Booklets/standards%20booklet.pdf>



In the case that youth are nonetheless unable to make the transition to the labour market after finishing school, African governments also need to consider the use of active labour market policies, which target young people with training and other measures to assist them in getting a job. Ignoring these issues will only result in lower economic growth in addition to indirectly related outcomes such as poor health and violence/conflict. Developing the education and employment opportunities for Africa's youth must therefore be a priority for all governments and donor partners.

Recommendations include

- *Foster an equal environment in terms of gender, age, religion, ethnicity*
- *Abolition of primary school tuition fees and support (incentives, protection schemes, safety nets programmes) for poor rural households for keeping children at school*
- *Strengthening the focus on universal literacy along with a good quality level of education including subjects like health, hygiene, nutrition, protection*
- *Revision of the curricula of both formal education and vocational education especially in rural areas to reflect the dynamism of the agricultural sector and include courses and modules that will equip students with the appropriate set of skills needed*
- *Foster partnerships with the private sector and national rural institutions in order to provide young people with a period of practical experience in the sector when finishing their education*

ii. Access to land

A major constraint that youth encounter while exploring employment opportunities in the agro sector is land. The 2006 African Youth Charter (AYC)¹⁷ calls for providing grants of land to youth and youth organizations for socioeconomic development purposes (Article 14:2). This was followed up in 2009 by the African Union¹⁸, through the adoption of the Framework and Guidelines on Land Policy in Africa, which commits to ensure that land laws provide for equitable access to land especially by landless, women, youth, displaced persons and other vulnerable groups. Inter-generational aspects of land rights, including inheritance and guardianship as well as gender dimensions, still hamper the appropriate implementation of the AYC¹⁹. Moreover, access to land of rural youth is more widely discussed from a livelihood perspective under the right to food²⁰ as opposed to as an economic right.

Difficulty in accessing land is not the primary constraint but rather the prejudices and social attitudes towards youth. Land is still considered an adult issue, particularly under traditional systems where holders of customary land rights hold the right to manage all the lands to the exclusion of young people. In many cultures, land is considered a family or communal

¹⁷ Adopted on 2 July 2006 by the seventh ordinary session of the assembly held in Banjul, the Gambia. The 2006 charter is the AU's basic and legal instrument for youth empowerment and provides a framework for youth development programming across the member states. Following the deposit of the fifteenth instrument of ratification, the African Youth Charter entered into force on August 2009.

¹⁸ African Union Heads of States and Government of the African Union, in their 13th Ordinary Session in Sirte Libya, from 01 to 03 July 2009.

¹⁹ Besteman C (1995) "Polygyny, Women's Land Tenure, and the "Mother-Son Partnership" in Southern Somalia" 51:3 Journal of Anthropological Research 193-213

²⁰ Towards Earth Summit II: Recommendations for Actions and Commitments at Earth Summit II Special Session of the General Assembly, 23 June 1997, ES2/1997/CSDNGO/1 (See Chapter 14 of Agenda 21)

property with a fear of fragmentation and un-viability of land. As a result, youth are often treated as farm hands or unpaid family workers without tenure security, instead of young farmers in their own right. In addition to age there are other bases of discrimination such as sex, religion, race, class, ethnicity or nationality toward youth. For example young migrants and displaced face routine marginalisation and are mostly confined to informal markets and settlements. Several categories, such as orphans, young widows and single mothers, physically and mentally challenged youths struggle to acquire land. Among indigenous communities local practice often prohibits youth land access.

Land reforms mostly do not benefit the poor youth as land is invariably distributed among adult investors. Poor young people fail to buy land or lobby for getting a lease from any public or private authority because they do not know how to. Obtaining a land title even through youth targeted government programmes is a difficult task. Informal land rights or inherited lands with no appropriate titles are easily grabbed with little prospect of compensation. Youth poverty and unemployment are core issues to be tabled in tackling youth homelessness and landlessness. The responses to strengthen youth land rights cover socio-cultural, legal, political and administrative changes and measures should be taken at several levels. At a societal level, most youth seem not to comprehend the significance of land until it is too late. Therefore, awareness is sought to be built around rights, savings culture, building credit histories and facilitating networks and capacities. Calls for legal and policy changes should be accompanied by practical suggestions. For example in the case of young women these could be co-titling, offering incentives for retaining/transferring land in the name of women family members, simplifying and standardizing procedures for land title transfers, evaluating gender and age equality responsiveness of policies and their implementers.

Since 2010, FAO has been implementing a Sida funded programme in Malawi and Tanzania in order to promote and better integrate decent rural employment into national ARD strategies, policies and programmes, including mappings of national policy frameworks. Within its youth employment component in Tanzania, FAO, has worked in order to strengthen institutions' capacities to address decent employment opportunities in the agro-sector for rural youth as a means to increase food security and youth access in specific value chains training cooperatives members and federation and union executives from the Tanzania Federation of Cooperatives (TFC) and the Cooperative Union of Zanzibar (CUZA) using the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS) methodology. The capacity development activity utilized a multiplier effect aiming to build the overall initial capacity of selected members who trained their peers in the cooperatives while training also disadvantaged and unemployed youth within their communities. The activity was envisioned to enable the trainees to administer agro skills-based trainings in an interactive manner, using local examples, case-studies and adult learning techniques in a youth sensitive way. Results from evaluations undertaken in 2011 showed not only that the mechanism itself contributed to create a sense of ownership and respect among members peer educating other members and communities but also proved to be an effective tool for inclusiveness of landless youth in the agro sector. The board members of the cooperatives trained have majorly sensitized the communities and union leaders in their districts managing in most cases to have negotiated plots of lands for the young farmers. In the TFC affiliated cooperative UKOMBOZI Mapando in Singida for example, 120 youth (43 girls and 77 boys), after sensitization and training sessions, received support from the regional mother union,

SIFACU, and were granted access to 10 acres of land each and successfully formed their own youth union affiliated to TFC.



This leads to the conclusion that in order to strengthen youth land rights, youth responsive land laws and policies are needed along with youth and communities leaders and unions awareness and empowerment, through economic incentives and capacity building.

Recommendations include

- *Foster youth and women representatives' participation in land tenure policy debates*
- *Promote and implement an equal environment in access to land in terms of gender, age, religion, ethnicity*
- *Empower and sensitize community leaders, elderly, communities, producers' federations and unions etc, in the positives of having young people in rural areas to whom to transfer knowledge and skills for a future sustainable production for all, if one has no land is less likely to remain in rural areas or to invest in improved farm production*

iii. Access to finance

Access to finance is important for growth and economic development. Having an efficient financial system that can deliver essential services can make a huge contribution to a country's economic development. Greater financial development increases growth, reduces economic volatility, creates job opportunities and improves income distribution, as has been established by a large empirical literature. A well functioning financial market plays a critical role in channeling funds to their most productive uses, and allocates risks to those who can best bear them. Where macroeconomic environment is sound, the efficient and prudent allocations of resources by the financial system makes it crucial for increasing productivity, boosting economic development, enhancing equality of opportunity, and reducing poverty.

State-owned banks lend mainly to large corporations, while private, joint venture, microfinance and rural finance institutions are usually more active in lending to SMEs. A large number of NGOs use grants and donations, and act as financial intermediaries for micro and small enterprises. Credit programs, which started as an activity of NGOs in the late 1980s, have increased considerably and have become an important activity of community-based organizations in the 1990s in both rural and urban-poor communities. In addition to extending credit, programs provide technical training related to loan activity, upgrading existing businesses, starting new businesses, or improving the living environment, with the objective of alleviating poverty. Although many NGOs have successfully addressed some of the credit needs of microenterprises and poor households, they often lack the institutional capacity to expand beyond their local communities. There is also a lack of skills among credit officers and NGOs in extending loans to microenterprises. Furthermore, most micro-lending activities are largely donor dependent, as they extend credit at subsidized interest rates and are not always based on cost-recovery.

Looking more closely at the most basic financial services - saving and borrowing – there is a distinction to do between formal banking (commercial banks, cooperatives, and savings and credit co-operatives, known as “SACCOS”) and informal banking services such as savings clubs, money lenders, and informal joint saving and investment groups. Word of mouth in rural areas between family and friends is usually the leading means, even before radio, of getting information about informal banking services.

Access to finance is a critical factor in developing self-employment opportunities for youth. Despite the development by commercial banks and credit institutions of sophisticated decision-making and financial modelling approaches, supported by increased market intelligence and developments in relationship banking that may help to overcome these informational and reputational effects, theoretical arguments suggest that there are, nevertheless, a number of categories of SME owners that could be affected by informational issues or reputational effects. These include younger SMEs and youth entrepreneurs with limited trading records and security and female and ethnic minority entrepreneurs.

Research conducted on this topic in various countries²¹, has generally shown that while the majority of MFIs do serve young people, they are not recognized as a specific client niche and specific products are not typically developed to meet their needs. Based on information from several leading MFI, young people tend to make up a smaller proportion of overall MFI clientele than their overall population demographics should dictate.

In many African countries and globally, MFIs require loan guarantee options such as formal land titles, steady employment, to solidarity group guarantees, personal guarantors and more informal guarantees (motorcycles, furniture, etc.). This factor is one of the reasons why the microfinance sector still has low poverty outreach to young people.

Most MFI managers prefer to see an experienced adult mentoring youth business owners to help them deal with highly changeable trade markets. Some MFI managers, though, do see specific risk attached to youth borrowers because of a perceived lack of experience, character, discipline and formal guarantees.

Appraisals in Africa assessed that MFIs with strong outreach to youth had well-trained loan officers who were capable of loan analysis of business prospects. Credit repayment rates for youth were in fact better than for the overall portfolio because of tighter risk control associated with their loans. MFI managers and loan officers noted that personal references and referrals make a difference to them when they are considering a loan to a youth. Many MFI managers report that they would be inclined to lend to youth who have been involved in an entrepreneurship program, particularly one with ongoing support and mentoring following the end of formal training.

²¹ Shrader, L., Kamal, N., Darmono, W. A., Johnston, D. 2006. Youth access to microfinance.



Policy makers should undertake pro-active policy initiatives which would encourage lenders to engage in youth lending. Policy initiatives throughout Africa could follow the South African models, where the national banks mandated that certain percentages of bank assets must be invested in so-called “priority sectors”, such as agriculture, microenterprises, or youth enterprises.

Recommendations include

- *Foster an equal environment in terms of gender, age, religion, ethnicity when accessing finance*
- *Unleashing the power of young African agro entrepreneurs, both in start-up and existing enterprises, by providing advisory services and access to finance in order to allow them to translate their good ideas into practical plans.*
- *Develop specific youth friendly financial products combining credit with training and capacity development*
- *Promote young farmers trade fairs to increase the exposure of young farmers to the market as well as to the major players in the finance sector*
- *Promote the inclusion of financial management in education and vocational education*

iv. Information and telecommunication technology (ICT) in the rural sector

The digital revolution has already matured in developed countries, however, developing countries, are yet to realize the full potential of the benefits of technology. The adoption and diffusion of ICT in Africa has seen considerable growth as evidenced by the increase in mobile markets and emerging innovative application in e-banking, e-business, e-learning, e-agriculture, e-trade and more (see table 4). People living in rural areas could benefit a lot from ICT services

Table 4: Selected African countries ICT Global Development Rank	
1 st African country: Mauritius	69
2 nd African country: Seychelles	71
3 rd African country: South Africa	97
4 th African country: Cape Verde	104
5 th African country: Botswana	109
Source: ITU World Telecommunication country database (2011)	

listed above that otherwise might be less available. In many African countries hardly any rural inhabitants were using the internet in the biennium 2007/2008 with Burkina Faso, Rwanda, Mozambique and Ethiopia ranking at less than 1% of rural people were using the internet. It is also worth noting that in Africa, internet cafes deserve special attention because only 8% of African internet users access the internet from home.

The world is home to 7 billion people, one third of which are using the Internet. 45% of the world’s internet users are below the age of 25. The point that future socio-economic development will need to embrace the use of ICT appears to be widely recognized by governments throughout Africa and is evidenced by the number of countries that have a national policy for ICT in place or under development. The rural nature of Africa poses challenges for bringing the internet outside of urban areas. We thought it would be interesting to compare estimated internet penetration rates with how urbanized a given country is. In

recent years many African countries have years, developed ICT policies and the Governments have been active in the promotion of information and communication technology in every socio-economic sphere. In general, urban-heavy African countries have a higher share of internet users than rural ones though there are plenty of urban-inclined countries which have a lower share of internet users than mostly-rural countries. Many non-geographical factors contribute to whether internet adoption runs high in a particular nation. An urban nation lacking ICT policies and strategies can have the same level of internet usage as a rural nation committed to infrastructure development. For example, Gabon is more than 85% urban, only has the Internet user rate of a national that is 30% urban. Burundi has the smallest share of urban inhabitants at 11% but very few internet users. Uganda is the second least urban nation (13%), but with 12.5% Internet penetration ranks at the level of an African nation that is 60% urban²².

ICT has led to new opportunities to improve food and agricultural production, processing, distribution, and marketing functions in SSA. In the past, some technologies failed in Africa because of inadequate attention to context specific and prohibitive costs. The use of ICT to promote agricultural development in SSA offers tremendous socio-economic benefits and new opportunities to transform the livelihoods of poor agricultural communities and society in general. Some of the expected benefits from ICT are food security arising from productivity gains in crop and livestock enterprises, better access to national and global agricultural markets, improvements in rural financial service delivery, reduction in transaction costs, faster communication methods, etc.

In Kenya, the Kenya Agricultural Commodities Exchange (KACE), a private firm, in partnership with African mobile service provider Safaricom Limited, is running a project called SMS Sokoni. KACE information centers are located near agricultural commodity markets to ensure low cost access to farmers.

KACE workers collect information on prices from these centers and then send the information to the farmers, buyers and exporters through SMS for free. M-Farm is also a farmers text messages service from M-Farm Ltd. Kenyan farmers simply SMS the service number to get information concerning the retail price of their products, buy farm inputs directly from manufacturers at favorable prices, and find buyers for their produce.

Table 5: Youth using mobile phones financial services in Kenya		
Demographic grouping	15-19	20-24
Youth holding a bank account	75.5%	52%
Youth not holding a bank account	24.5%	48%
Urban	57%	51.5%
Rural	43%	48.5%
Girls	53%	54.5%
Boys	47%	45.5%
High income	4%	3%
Upper middle income	24%	19%
Lower middle income	53%	63%
Low income	16%	15%
Source: AudienceScapes Kenya 2009		

²² Urban data from UNDESA <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/indicators/45106.html> , Internet data from ITU World Telecommunication country database (2011).

Research undertaken by *AudienceScapes* in Kenya in 2009 gave a good insight on whom among youth uses mobile for financial services (see table 5). Rural youth are still using mobile financial services less than their urban peers with rates among young women higher than those for young men. High income youth (both rural and urban) are less likely to use these services due to the fact that they hold a bank account and therefore receive financial and business information through their bank advisers while low income youth are still lagging behind in access to these services and information.



Currently, SMS-text messages are not being used on a mass scale to inform rural youth population about commodities prices, markets and financial information and are probably not viable as a tool for explaining in-depth information however due to their growing use by young people, they may prove useful in informing the target group when new financial services have been introduced in their area or about the price of agro commodities.

Recommendations include

- *Foster an equal environment in terms of gender, age, religion, ethnicity when accessing ICTs*
- *Strengthen youth capacities on ICTs in schools and training centres*
- *Raise youth awareness and improve their capacity on agricultural and rural development issues through ICTs*
- *Promote the simplification of money access in rural areas where finance institutions are less present while also improving internet and mobile lines access*

v. *Youth and climate- smart agriculture*

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, even if global emissions of greenhouse gases were to be drastically reduced in the coming years, by 2050 the global annual average temperature is expected to increase by two degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels²³. Such a world will experience more frequent and intense droughts, floods, storms and cyclones, heat waves and other extreme weather events²⁴. Signatory states to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) are now not only negotiating how to mitigate climate change, but also debating how best to support and finance the development of climate change adaptation policies which will result in action. This will require an extensive and participatory process for determining appropriate programming which will need to be incorporated into countries' overall development plans²⁵.

Africa is endowed with a wide diversity of agro-ecological zones. These range from the rain-forest vegetation with bi-annual rainfall to relatively sparse, dry and arid vegetation with low uni-modal rainfall. This diversity is a tremendous asset, but it also poses a substantial challenge for Africa's agricultural development. Climate change is a major concern for agriculture with farmers heavily dependent on good climatic conditions for the production of food. Unfortunately, agriculture also adds to the problem by emitting greenhouse gases

²³ IPCC 4th Assessment Report 2007, Forthcoming IPCC SREX Special Report on Extreme Events (2011)

²⁴ Ibid

²⁵ Institute of Development Studies (2010) 'Strengthening Climate Resilience, A Climate Smart Disaster Risk Management Approach'

(GHG). The sector produces methane (CH₄), nitrous oxide (N₂O) and carbon dioxide (CO₂). Calculation of the exact emissions is complicated compared to other sectors as agricultural activities involve emissions from biological processes but also sequestration as a result of these complicated processes. However, agriculture can play a major role in the fight against climate change: emissions can be reduced and carbon can be 'stored' in agricultural soils. This is a major challenge for agriculture as farmers are also called upon to increase food production to feed an increasing world population. Research has come up with a variety of techniques that help reduce GHG emissions. In everyday farm practice some of these techniques prove to be expensive, difficult to implement in farm management or not suitable for a specific environment. The knowledge and experience from farmers therefore plays a major part in defining the most suitable practices. The *Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA)* for example, is strengthening smallholders' capacities using integrated capacity development programmes in seeds, soils, water management and market access to trigger comprehensive changes across the agricultural systems using local knowledge while striving to involve and train youth.

Another practical example on how to address issues of climate change adaptability and mitigation comes from a group of farmers in Lesotho. The group, have been able to boost agricultural yields and increase food production by adopting conservation agriculture. The practice, locally known as likoti, also contributes to combating soil erosion and to enhancing fertility. The socioeconomic and environmental benefits help poor households to rehabilitate and strengthen their livelihood capital base and ultimately help rural communities to build system resilience in the face of widespread poverty and increasing vulnerability that affect the country. Results show that attending appropriate training is a crucial prerequisite for the correct adoption of likoti. However, training is more effective when trainers pursue true participation and when social capital among farmers is stronger. Further important determinants of adoption are the level of education and the economic incentives provided to vulnerable households (Silici 2010).

Green jobs also have the potential to contribute substantially to preserving or restoring environmental quality, including jobs that help to protect ecosystems and biodiversity, reduce energy, material and water consumption through high-efficiency strategies, de-carbonize the economy and minimize or altogether avoid the generation of all forms of waste and pollution²⁶. Youth are already playing a major role in the green Africa revolution, the *Africa Youth Initiative on Climate Change (AYICC)* is a network of African youth organizations and individuals working on climate change & sustainable development. Founded in 2006 at the COP 12 – UNFCCC in Nairobi, the movement's goal is to ensure participation of African Youth in Climate Change debates, identify and seek support for youth driven climate change solutions and increase the youth awareness on Climate Change. The initiative was conceived in 2006 in Nairobi Kenya, during the second International Conference of Youth preceding the UNFCCC, COP 12. The main reason for its founding was to ensure the inclusion, and active participation of youth voices from the south, and specifically Africa, in the international climate change negotiations. Since 2006, this initiative has continued to connect, share knowledge, ideas, experiences, skills, and strategies on youth action around the continent on climate change mitigation and adaptation. It has been acknowledged by African (as well as international) youth as providing an effective platform to allow young

²⁶ For more information on the terms and definitions underpinning green and decent work and sustainable enterprises refer to ILO-UNEP 2007 Green Jobs report.

people from Africa to address regional challenges at international gatherings, such as the UNFCCC, CBD, UNCSD, AU forums, ADF among others. Now the initiative has national chapters in over 20 African countries and focal points in 35 countries. The members of the AYICC address the bigger picture of climate change issues linking them with key development challenges, like poverty alleviation, agriculture, health, education, economic growth, urbanization and migrations, governance among others.

To this end, FAO, has been appointed the secretariat of the *Youth and United Nations Global Alliance (YUNGA)* which aims at facilitating the collaboration between UN agencies and other organizations working with children and young people (such as schools, youth and civil society groups, NGOs and government institutions). The objective is to create a gateway to facilitate the engagement of young people in activities of key environmental and social concern at the local and international level. Another activity that FAO, jointly with the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS), is also supporting in Africa and worldwide, is - *Our World, Our Climate, Our Food* – aiming at raising awareness among children and young people of the issues of climate change and food security and to encourage them to take action against a changing climate environment and hunger in the world. Designed as an educational project, it entails the development of an illustrated publication for young people, an activity guide for teachers and youth leaders, a set of resources and action packs, international competitions and an activity challenge badge to get youth involved in their local communities. Activities and resources are then distributed to the 10 million WAGGGS members in 145 countries.



Agriculture will need to undergo a significant transformation in order to meet the related challenges of achieving food security and responding to climate change. Although there is consensus on the need for climate smart adoption there are still knowledge and methodological gaps in terms of practices, policy and finance hampering the ability of stakeholders to be able to successfully implement climate smart actions.

Recommendations include

- *Promote active labor market policies and broad social protection schemes to ensure a fair and just transition for producers, young producers and their communities to step into a green rural transformation*
- *Start or enhance adequate retraining and educational opportunities for both producers and extension services and, if necessary, complement with resources*
- *Provide incentives for producers adopting conservation or organic value chains while adequately monitoring the progress*
- *Enhance information and data production and dissemination on CSA practices*

vi. Youth associations and rural development

Youth associations have greatly contributed to agricultural and rural development in various African countries. The major areas of their contributions are agricultural production, promotion of people's cultural heritage, effective mobilizations of the people on national issues as well as infrastructural development. Despite their significant and laudable efforts in

community development, major factors constrain the effective performance of these associations. According to preliminary appraisals, these include: inadequate fund, non-recognition of youth as partners in rural development by power brokers, inability of the youth associations to establish link with donor agency, and lack of good leadership and power struggles within the associations (Dalla Valle 2012).

The benefits of supporting rural youth associations can be seen in Mozambique, where FAO has been actively supporting youth producers' associations in the Sofala province along the Beira Corridor (the main transport access link between the port of Beira and the interior of the country as well as to the neighbouring landlocked Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi) since 2008. A thorough evaluation on the activities carried out at the end of 2011 has shown that most youth managed to enlarge their businesses and invest in further activities while increasing the size of their land and have managed to access local and district markets and in some cases reached the provincial level. A significant number of them also became pivotal in generating opportunities for seasonal employment in those districts. Overall, the revenues generated went both to re-invest in their businesses and to further enhance the livelihood opportunities of their families. In most cases this allowed younger siblings to remain in school, thanks to the improved household revenue. Findings from the evaluation have confirmed that the associations' collective power has been key to their success. This allowed them to enhance their access to markets while improving their food security, ability to cope with food price volatility and presence in local food systems and economic corridors development approaches in comparison to their peers working on singular parcels individually²⁷.

The involvement of local youth organizations in the design and monitoring and evaluation of local programmes is clearly important – it can help make better programmes but also likely raise the commitment of local young people in programmes success. The involvement of the local community in initiatives promoting the employment of rural young people is now seen to be crucial. More generally, the development of production-centred youth associations may play a useful role in supporting rural economic development. In the first place, as noted by the WDR2007 amongst others, given their characteristics, young people are likely to be instrumental in developing rural non-farm activities and in particular in the creation and development of value chains. The involvement of youth associations centred on production may also help to counteract the tendency in many areas for decision-making to be concentrated amongst older people and particularly older males in the community.

Equally important is the youth presence in “mixed” organizations²⁸. Many “mixed” producers' organizations in Africa have a youth group or branch or section although it has been ascertained that in many organizations, youth membership results from quotas or other binding internal regulations which are rarely respected. In reality, rural youth have to fight for recognition within mixed organizations to be given appropriate channels and mechanisms to voice their concern. Culture and traditions also affect ‘real’ youth participation in producers'

²⁷ FAO's promotion of decent employment opportunities for rural youth producers' associations in Mozambique http://www.fao-ilo.org/news-ilo/detail/en/news/122763/icode/?no_cache=1

²⁸ Formed by adult producers

organizations as in most societies in Africa there are hierarchical relationships where youth are expected to obey and respect the older generations²⁹.

A successful example of young producers' participation in rural development is the network of young producers and agricultural professionals of Togo (REJEPPAT), established in 2010 after a long and difficult process. In 2009, the first National Farmers Forum took place. A young participant at the forum, Mr. Eloi Tegba Toi, noticed that almost all other participants were more than 40 years old. He consequentially decided to contact the National Youth Council (CNJ) to request their support for improving rural youth representation at national level. CNJ helped Eloi to unite young farmers from all over Togo for a meeting. One of the recommendations of this meeting was to set up a national young farmers network. When the second National Farmers Forum was held in 2010, Eloi, together with CNJ, lobbied for better youth representation. During the forum, the youth seized the opportunity to present their idea on creating a national young farmers network. The President of Togo supported the young farmers' idea and instructed the Ministries of Agriculture and Youth to help the youth to create this network. A few months later, REJEPPAT was successfully created as a youth branch within the Togolese Coordination Committee of Farmers Organizations and Agricultural Producers (CTOP). Currently, REJEPPAT is making efforts in securing rural youth representation at the regional level and collaborating with the European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA) in order to create a regional youth structure within the West African Network of Farmers- and Producers Organizations (ROPFA)³⁰.



National government and stakeholders should involve youth associations and youth presence in rural development planning processes as well as assist them in their activities through funding and donor development agencies should recognize the primacy and potentials of youth organizations and youth presence in socioeconomic empowerment of rural communities.

Recommendations include

- *Enhance and support the creation of rural youth and young farmers' councils / platforms to address and facilitate rural youth participation in agricultural and rural development policies, programmes and projects*
- *Mainstream rural youth into development programmes and projects*
- *Youth committees / sections are formed in producers' / farmers' organizations to address and enhance youth participation in the sector*
- *Support and enhance networking and sharing of experiences at national, regional and global levels while organizing regular workshops, consultation meetings and exchange visits among rural youth organizations representatives*

²⁹ Summary of the findings of the project implemented by MIJARC in collaboration with IFAD and FAO: 'Facilitating access of rural youth to agricultural activities'

³⁰ *Adapted from an interview with Mr. Eloi Tegba Toi for the MIJARC-IFAD-FAO research: Facilitating Access of Rural Youth to Agricultural Activities*

Conclusions

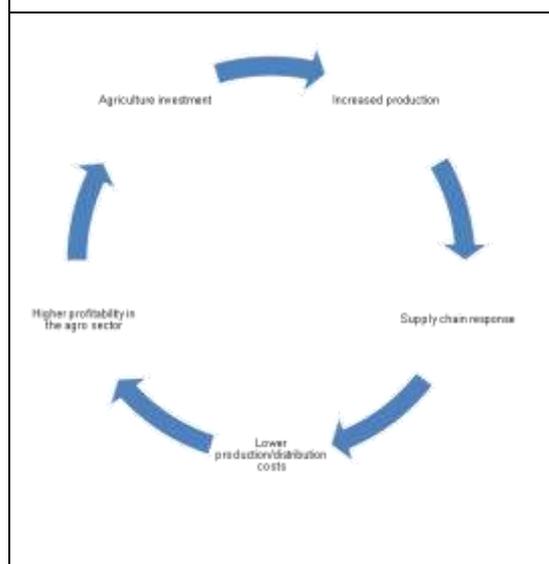
Since 2005, the first Millennium Development Goal to “eradicate extreme poverty and hunger” includes target 1.B which encourages the achievement of full and productive employment and decent work³¹ for all including women and young people³². This target acknowledges the centrality of employment promotion for the achievement of food security, nutritional wellbeing and poverty reduction. Moreover, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU) declared, during its last Executive Council held in January 2009 in Addis Ababa, the years 2009-2019 as the *Decade of Youth Development in Africa*. The decade is an opportunity to advance the agenda of youth development in all member states across the AU, to ensure effective and more ambitious investment in youth development programmes and increased support to the development and implementation of national youth policies and programmes and facilitate the implementation of the *African Youth Charter (AYC)*.

Despite tangible economic progress over the past 20 years and youth employment policies and strategies in place, Africa still needs to lift over 400 million people out of poverty while employing the additional 215 million young men and women expected to join the labour force in sub-Saharan Africa only, over the next decade - 130 million of them in rural areas. With 70% of Africans continuing to rely on the rural sector for their livelihoods³³, rural development as a viable tool for youth employment opportunities must be recognized as a critical component of the international development agenda.

Potential initiatives that could improve the opportunities for young people to take part in decent agricultural and non-agricultural work providing large benefits for social harmony, as well as for poverty reduction and food security are presently ongoing in the continent. Indeed with the right policies the influx of young job seekers can become a key asset in the development process as rising labour supply provides an opportunity for enhanced long-term growth.

Different African regional opportunities to enable rural youth to become active partners in the achievement of economic and social goals in their countries are presently ongoing. One practical opportunity arises from the *Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)*, the strategic agricultural framework of the *African Union (AU)* and the

Table 6. *Agriculture growth corridors cycle*



³¹ The ILO Decent Work Agenda is the balanced and integrated programmatic approach to pursue the objectives of full and productive employment and decent work for all at global, regional, national, sectoral and local levels. It has four pillars: standards and rights at work, employment creation and enterprise development, social protection and social dialogue. (<http://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/decent-work-agenda/lang-en/index.htm>)

³² <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/poverty.shtml>

³³ Humans inherently develop and implement strategies to ensure their survival. A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (including both material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks and maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets both now and in the future, while not undermining the natural resource base. (Chambers & Conway, 1991)

New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). CAADP is an African-owned programme that strives to increase economic growth in Africa through agriculture-led development and agricultural reform. With the objective of increasing public investment in agriculture to a minimum of 10 percent of national budgets, CAADP aims at achieving an annual agricultural growth rate of 6 percent by 2015. A key principle of the CAADP framework is the emphasis on African ownership, which calls for national capacity building. The national CAADP implementation processes and the Agriculture Investment Plans (AIPs) supported by FAO, present an important instrument and opportunity to practically and concretely integrate objective and evidence-based mechanisms and programmes to address youth and decent employment in a gender sensitive manner. Innovative pilot initiatives using approaches and mechanisms that aim at leveraging the forces of globalization for the benefit of rural youth populations should be systematically included in the portfolio of activities of the CAADP implementation in various African countries.

Youth should also be an integral part of Africa's public-private sector development activities which are also an integral part of the agricultural growth corridors efforts. The concept of agricultural growth corridors was launched at the UN General Assembly meeting in New York in 2008. In early 2009, stakeholders with an interest in African agriculture met at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, to initiate a process that would see Tanzania and Mozambique taking a pilot leading role in developing agricultural growth corridors. Various countries are benefiting for example from the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor of Tanzania (SAGCOT) linking the port of Dar es Salaam to Malawi, Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo establishing a trade route with reasonably good backbone infrastructure (roads, rail, and electricity) passing through some of the richest agricultural lands in Africa. The Beira Agricultural Growth Corridor (BAGC) is linking the port of Beira in Mozambique to Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, the BAGC is increasing commercial investment in agribusiness along the entire value chain in agriculture supporting infrastructure, farming and processing, input supply chains (fertiliser, seeds etc) and access to markets (storage, wholesale markets etc). 'Clustering' of agribusinesses within the corridor aims at reducing costs, improving access to inputs and markets and therefore creating a competitive, profitable and rapidly growing agricultural sector in the concerned countries. Commercial farms³⁴ - be they large, medium or small - operate as financially sustainable businesses with the primary objective of selling crops and livestock products into the market. Commercial opportunities for small holders with limited land holdings can be created by their working together to grow a specific crop for the market and by associating with large-scale farm operations that can provide efficient access to markets and economies of scale in the purchase of inputs. Up to now the steering committee involved in these initiatives has not specifically target youth, although FAO has been working with various youth producers' associations along the BAGC to enhance and strengthen their presence in the initiative, while in Tanzania is presently planning along with UNIDO and ILO a market analysis along the SAGCOT corridor to strategize an appropriate framework for inclusiveness of young people to be presented to the steering committee.

Successfully addressing the youth employment challenge requires a coherent and integrated response that recognizes the particularities of Africa, especially the very large share of rural

³⁴ The term 'commercial agriculture' when referred to the agricultural growth corridors includes farming, processing and agribusiness activities and investments that use modern planning, production, processing and marketing techniques.

youth population. In many countries interventions have focused on programmes that are at times narrow in scope, limited in time, and tailored more to urban areas. There is also a deep recognition of the need to work in partnership, in a transparent multi-stakeholder mechanism ensuring coherence, coordination and cooperation across different national government institutions and agencies, at central and local levels, private sector organisations and between UN agencies.

Initiatives/programmes to be included in the aforementioned rural development initiatives of national governments, should be youth friendly and gender sensitive, tested and implemented in the Africa context either jointly or individually by UN agencies and civil society and should be selected for their adaptability to multi-stakeholding as well as for their integrated and holistic approach in order to tackle the multidimension needs of youth while entering in the labour market. FAO, for example, has initiated the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS) approach in 2004 which to date has been expanded to 16 countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. The JFFLS combines support to vocational educational training opportunities with employment promotion and access to markets through the facilitation of the youth inclusion in farmers' organizations, federations and unions. The JFFLS are a concrete manifestation of the important linkages that exist between rural employment, poverty reduction, food security and nutrition. High adaptability of the learning approach to different countries' needs enables the modular methodology to address different contexts (conflict, post-conflict, in transition, high incidence of unemployment, food insecurity and malnutrition, poverty or HIV) and populations. Impact assessments have shown that the approach has supported the development of entrepreneurial and agricultural skills of the youth as well as their self-esteem, helping them become healthy and positive young adults. Further, it has strengthened national institutions' capacities to address rural youth employment at both operational/programme and policy levels. To date, approximately 25,000 young women and men have been trained in Africa using the JFFLS methodology and facilitated the youth access to markets and supported them to become agro entrepreneurs.

Another approach tested and with a high adaptability to multi-stakeholding has been developed by UNIDO and it's the Enterprise Development and Investment Promotion (EDIP) programme, the prime function of EDIP is to stimulate the emergence of new and growth of existing enterprises that produce goods and services for trade, provide employment and income for people and thereby contribute to poverty alleviation and overall economic growth. The EDIP programme is presently implemented in approximately 30 countries and has been institutionalized in 16.

ILO has developed the Start Your Business (SYB) programme which is a system of inter-related training packages and supporting materials for small-scale entrepreneurs in developing countries and economies in transition. SYB was developed by the ILO in response to requests from member States for a relevant, low-cost and effective business creation and management training package that is suitable in the context of developing countries. It assists in meeting the employment challenge by contributing to the creation of quality jobs in the small-scale enterprise sector through improved business performance. SYB is essentially a training instrument, with integrated components for counseling, networking, promotion of service institutions and policy dialogue.

On the civil society forefront, the Songhai model (and centre) was founded in 1985 in Porto Novo, the Republic of Benin, by Dr Godfrey N'Zamujo. Songhai's main objective is to train

young agricultural entrepreneurs. Beside its training activities, Songhai aims to develop sustainable agricultural production systems based on agrobiology. The main achievements of the last two decades can be summarized as: i) More than 200 students at any time attending 18-month training programmes in the sites of Porto-Novo, Savalou, Parakou and Kinwédji, ii) More than 500 farms established and managed by young people trained in Songhai centers, iii) More than 300 participants from various backgrounds and countries taking part in different training courses each year, iv) More than 40 partners from public and private institutions, NGOs and international institutions (FAO and ILO, with support from UNIDO, are presently partnering with the Songhai Newton Centre in Sierra Leone). The Songhai model has developed new approaches and farming systems that rely heavily on inputs from local experiences, and are informed by a both indigenous knowledge and business communities and research institutions. Today, the result is a robust, zero waste, integrated agro allied model promoting rural growth through training, technology adoption and strong business and commercial strategy.

In recent years, the political priority linked to youth employment has brought policy-makers to recognize that achieving productive employment and decent work for young people entails long-term action covering a range of economic and social policies focusing on labor demand and supply while addressing both quantitative and qualitative elements of youth employment. Governments, social partners, civil society, the international community, as well as the youth themselves, all have an important contribution to make in addressing youth employment challenges. Although stressed in various national policies in Africa and globally and by policy makers, youth are still not adequately invited in participating in policy debates discussing their wishes and wellbeing. Governments need to consider the long term processes of including youth in all stages and levels as equal partners and youth specific policies need to be issued or revised to align them with other national policies and priorities taking into account the national socio-economic contexts and thorough implemented.



Youth participation should be seen more to work with youth, not merely work for them. Youth are neither problems to be solved nor passive beneficiaries. Instead, are likely to be a valuable resource. Consultations should involve more than just listening to young people; but more acting upon their advice. Young people can be successfully involved in policies' decisions, programmes' design and management, that go far beyond simple consultations. Youth participation will therefore need to be the - active, informed and voluntary involvement of people in decision-making and the socio-economic development of their countries and communities.

Recommendations include

- *Foster an equal and enabling environment in terms of gender, age, religion and ethnicity*
- *Enhance and support the inclusiveness of youth in local economic development efforts*
- *Develop or revise national youth employment plan of actions taking into account the specific needs of rural youth*
- *Improve the quality of jobs in the informal sector*
- *Promote, institutionalize and invest in holistic approaches that strengthen both youth' skills and increase their participation in the agro sector*

- *Establish partnerships among governments, farmers' federations and unions and youth organization*
- *Foster youth participation in policy debates*

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