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YOUTH ENGAGEMENT
FOR GLOBAL ACTION

Youth Championing Climate Action in Agriculture

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Prepared by: Lufingo Witson Mwamakamba, GACSA Regional CSA Alliance Leader

Contact: GACSA Facilitation Unit hosted by FAO
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla
00153, Rome Italy
GACSA-Facilitation-Unit@fao.org

More information about the Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture at
<http://www.fao.org/gacsa/en/>

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The webinar was facilitated by Lufingo Witson Mwamakamba, GACSA Regional CSA Alliance Leader, logistical and communications support was provided by Jana Stankova, Communications Specialist. Overall strategic guidance for the webinar was provided by Simon Leiva, GACSA Coordinator.

ABBREVIATIONS

CSA – Climate Smart Agriculture

NDC – Nationally Determined Contributions

COVID – Corona Virus Disease

GACSA – Global alliance for Climate Smart Agriculture

FAO – Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

YPARD - Young Professionals for Agricultural Development

CSAYN - Climate Smart Agriculture Youth Network

IPCC - The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

CFS - The Committee on World Food Security

IFAD - The International Fund for Agricultural Development

WFP – World Food Programme

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INTRODUCTION

Background

The global population is projected to reach [9.7 billion](#) in 2050 and could peak at nearly [11 billion](#) around 2100. At the same time, the world's youth population is expected to reach [1.4 billion by 2065](#). This dynamic is projected to increase by [62 percent by 2050](#) in sub-Saharan Africa, Oceania, and Northern Africa and Western Asia, accounting for more than half of the projected global growth.

Compounded by the challenges we are currently facing, such as the COVID-19 outbreak and climate change, concerted global action, and the meaningful engagement and participation of young people is required. The involvement of young people will unlock the next generation of innovators, entrepreneurs, change agents, and leaders. Hence, to realize this dividend, investments are needed to build institutional capacity, strengthen human capital, pursue economic models that improve employment prospects, promote inclusive governance, and draw lessons on how youth representation and engagement can be significantly enhanced.

Initiatives related to youth in agriculture and rural development, highlight the ample potential to provide income-generating opportunities. Despite the opportunities in agriculture and agribusiness, there are also challenges explicitly related to youth participation in this sector and options for overcoming them. With climate change and increased climate variability, farmers need to adopt climate-smart technologies that will improve yields, create more drought-resilient crops and livestock, resulting in higher incomes, and improved food security. With increased technological advancement in the agriculture sector, there is a need to identify and create opportunities for the youth by bringing them into the formal agribusiness economy.

In celebration of the World Youth Day 2020, which was on 12 August 2020, the Global Alliance for Climate-Smart Agriculture (GACSA), in partnership with the Government of the Netherlands, Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD) and the Climate Smart Agriculture Youth Network (CSAYN) jointly held an online webinar entitled – *Youth Engagement for Global Action in a Changing Climate*. Over 200 participants registered from 39 countries.

The webinar archive is available [HERE](#)



The Speakers



Marcel van Nijnatten is head of food security unit at the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality. The unit is among other things responsible for the climate change in relation to agriculture and food security.

The Dutch focus at UNFCCC and for the Global Alliance for Climate Smart Agriculture is on linking UN processes to concrete implementation on the ground. Bringing private sector, science, governments and civil society together to ensure that solutions can be found to make Climate Smart Agriculture a reality.

Marcel has worked on both environmental and agricultural dossiers throughout his career with a focus on UN work.

He was seconded to the CITES Secretariat in Geneva and has worked on agricultural commodity trade. He holds a degree in International Economics and English Literature.



Dellah is the Zimbabwe Smart Agriculture Youth Network Country Coordinator Southern Africa Hub Coordinator. She is very passionate about engaging the youth and women in Climate Smart Agriculture, to help the youth to earn a living through Climate Smart Agriculture. I have held workshops for the youth on Climate Smart Agriculture and many have started making a living through Agriculture. As Zimbabwe, we have adopted a practical approach to Climate Smart Agriculture, conducting practical sessions.



Nikki has a postgraduate degree in Business Economics and Finance from University of Surrey, U.K. She has been involved in agriculture since 2011 and founded Chaudhary Agriculture Services Pvt. Ltd in 2014. She has presented her work in agriculture, agribusiness and dairy at several National and International Conferences- International Poplar Commission-2012, World Congress on Agroforestry-2014, Global Conference on Agricultural Research-2016, South Africa, Emerging Technologies for Global Food Security-2018, Canada, Food and Agriculture Organization headquarters, Italy-2018, 2019 and Global Forum for Food and Agriculture-2020, Germany. Nikki is a member of Youth Alliance for Zero Hunger.



Sebastian is a Colombian youth leader, rural youth advocate, who has important experience in rural youth issues. He graduated with an Associate Degree in ICT from SENA and is currently finishing a Associate Degree in Music Production from Latin American professional audio foundation Cetear, and Bachelor’s Degree in Political science and public management from International University of La Rioja. He currently works at the Apoyar Foundation in Colombia. He is a member of the Steering Committee of YPARD and has served as a focal point for YPARD Latin America and the Caribbean. He is also a co-founder of the National Rural Youth Network of Colombia. He is part of the RELASER Forum (Latin American network of rural advisory services), as a youth representative.

The Facilitator



Lufingo is the GACSA Regional CSA Alliance Leader responsible for promoting cross-learning and experience sharing among the CSA alliances, networks, platforms and processes. Prior to joining GACSA, Lufingo served as the Director for Corporate Affairs and Partnerships Manager at the Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN) where he was responsible for managing strategic partnerships with relevant government departments, regional economic communities, FANRPAN member countries and with regional and international partner organizations. He has proven experience in setting up and nurturing policy advocacy nodes, capacity building, communication and producing strategic knowledge products.

WEBINAR OVERVIEW

The following section presents an overview of the webinar proceedings. The hour-long webinar was divided into three parts – an opening segment which featured the webinar introduction and opening remarks; a panel discussion segment in which the panellists were asked specific questions by the facilitator and finally a question and answer segment in which panellists engaged in an open discussion with the participants. Participants’ questions were collected through the “chat” box and some were addressed during the webinar. Due to time constraints some participants’ questions were not addressed during the webinar. Questions and responses are provided within the report.

Welcome and Introductions

Lufingo Mwamakamba, the GACSA Regional CSA Alliance Leader, welcomed the participants and panellists to the webinar. He explained that the webinar was being convened as part of International Youth Day to celebrate youth led climate action in agriculture. International Youth Day is an awareness day designated by the United Nations to draw attention to a given set of cultural and legal issues surrounding youth. Specifically, GACSA a multi-sectoral platform aimed at fostering knowledge, sharing, partnership building, and providing a space for dialogue and debate was partnering with FAO, YPARD and CSAYN to put a spotlight on Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) initiatives that are being led by youth across the world. Lufingo highlighted that **the youth population is a dividend that needs to be harnessed to unlock the potential of the next generation of innovators and change agents within the agriculture space**. He then invited Marcel van Nijnatten, Head of Food Security Unit at the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality to provide opening remarks that would set the scene for the webinar.

Opening Remarks

In his opening remarks, Marcel first expressed his appreciation to GACSA for organising such an important webinar as it is important for youth to be actively involved and contribute to the discussions at hand. He reiterated the Government of Netherlands' support for GACSA because it believes that GACSA has a significant role to play in bringing people together to deliver on the ground. Turning to the discussion at hand, Marcel declared that **the time of advocacy for climate change is over** because the world is now aware of the impacts of climate change on society thanks largely to the youth that has played a vital role in raising awareness. He gave Greta Thunberg as an example of a young person who has done a lot to create momentum on climate change and has created a long-term perspective on climate change. He noted that it is tempting to build on this success but urged youth to move on from this. **It is now time for action!** Marcel highlighted that the IPCC famous 1.5-degree report has as an important conclusion that it is possible to achieve the Paris Agreement goals. He also highlighted that bilateral and multilateral partners are currently putting a lot of money in the refinement of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). He noted that this presented significant opportunities for CSA becoming a reality on the ground. What is needed are good ideas and this is where youth can play a significant role by contributing to the process. **Youth have an opportunity to come up with good bankable ideas that work on the ground and that will be working in the future**. He urged the youth to think outside the box and come up with innovative ideas and partnerships.

Panel Discussion

The facilitator began the panel discussion by asking the panellists to share examples of agriculture initiatives they are involved in. The panellists shared the following:

Climate Smart Agriculture Youth Network (CSAYN)

The Climate Smart Agriculture Youth Network (CSAYN) was formed in 2014 to actively engage youth across Africa and the globe in seeking a better and more sustained world by implementing climate-smart agriculture (CSA) practices led by the youth. CSAYN creates awareness and builds the productive capacity of young people in CSA concepts for adaptation, reducing emissions, and increasing food productivity in a sustainable manner.

CSAYN is currently constituted in 65 countries in Africa, Asia, USA and Europe. They have delivered a number of capacity building activities and they sensitize the youth on the SDGs. They are working with schools and universities to teach students CSA practices. For more information visit www.csayn.org

Chaudhary Farms

Chaudhary Farms is a Grain-Belt focused Crop Input Retail and Grain Handling business located in the agricultural heartland of Uttar Pradesh in Northern India. The company serves grain grower from seeding to sale with - Crop Inputs, Crop Advisory, Crop Input Credit, Grain Storage and Grain Sales. Their operations make grain growing more profitable and sustainable by - Increasing farm productivity, reducing the cost of cultivation and achieving higher grain price realisation - for our growers. The company operates a 30 000 Acre agriculture farm where they raise test and demonstration plots of paddy, wheat, sugarcane, field pea, gram, maize, bananas and forage crops. The company has developed its own Digital Agriculture Platform which helps bring growers' plot level data at the centre of Crop Advisory, bringing precision in crop input applications. The company also has a modern dairy farm whose operations are aimed at producing high quality milk efficiently by deep focus on forage-based nutrition and balanced breeding strategy. The dairy farm dairy has emerged as a learning source for large number of farmers in the region. For more information visit:

<http://www.chaudharyfarms.com>

Youth Alliance for Zero Hunger

The Youth Alliance for Zero Hunger was formed after the 45th session of the Committee on World Food Security in 2018. The Alliance was endorsed by FAO to continue the momentum of international youth organizations to keep working together and to increase the voice of youth involved in agriculture in policy spaces at Rome based agencies. The Alliance is comprised of a 16-member team of diverse, young people that is working with FAO, IFAD, CFS, Food Systems Summit. The aim of the Alliance is to meaningfully contribute to the work of RBAs (FAO, IFAD and WFP- encouraging their youth centric developments and programming, reviewing projects and providing inputs on relevant positions and policies. It further seeks to increasing rural youth voices in global space which will increase the effectiveness of the RBAs policies / investments in rural youth.

Young Professionals for Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD)

YPARD, is an international movement made by and for young professionals for agricultural development, allowing young professionals from all over the world to fully develop their potential and contribute to innovative agricultural development. At the heart of YPARD as a movement are its members, who are encouraged to become active in their area, spread the news about YPARD to other young professionals, encourage a stronger voice of youth in their own organizations and share their views and ideas with other young professionals in the network. This global on-line and off-line communication and discussion platform is meant to enable and empower young agricultural leaders around the world to shape sustainable food systems. YPARD has more than 20 000 members from 168 countries

Zeroing in on the webinar's focus and drawing on this year's theme "Youth Engagement for Global Action" and specifically focusing on climate action in agriculture and the challenge set by Marcel in

his opening remarks, the facilitator engaged panellists in a discussion based on the following questions

1. Why is it important to encourage young people to take part in agriculture?
2. How can we stimulate youth start-ups and support them?
3. What makes dairy farming attractive to young people?
4. How do youth benefit from youth networks and platforms?

The following are some of the key messages that emerged from the discussion.

Agriculture as a Business and Employment Creation Opportunity for Youth

Traditionally farming has been viewed as a subsistence activity whose sole purpose is food security for individual households. Youth need to take a different view, as agriculture offers great opportunities. Agriculture is not a way of life. It is not a social sector or a development activity, despite what people may claim. Agriculture is a business and the more we treat it as a business, as a way to create wealth, the more it will promote development and improve people's lives to boot. Whilst the majority of youth tend to see their future outside agriculture, but many good job opportunities on and off the farm remain in agriculture. These include processing, packaging, transportation, distribution, marketing and financial services. The challenge is to make the agricultural sector and its up and downstream activities sufficiently attractive to young people.

Dellah “The next billionaires must come from agriculture”

Attracting Youth to the Livestock and Dairy Sector

The biggest transformation that is yet to happen in agriculture is in the livestock and dairy sector compared to crop production. Dairy and livestock sectors are lagging behind a lot. The livestock and dairy sector have multiple opportunities for youth to be included and earn a living. These mainly consist of jobs in product innovation, processing, marketing and transportation. Youth's openness towards new practices can be key in development of, for example, new and environmentally responsible dairy practices, and to fully utilise the potential of new technologies such as ICT for the dairy sector.

Nikki “The biggest transformation that is yet to happen in agriculture is in the livestock and dairy sector and the youth can be drivers of that transformation”

Stimulating Youth Start Ups

Entrepreneurship is increasingly accepted as an important means and a valuable additional strategy to create jobs and improve livelihoods and economic independence of young people. There is need to create a culture of entrepreneurship within agriculture universities. Young people who are studying agriculture programmes such as agronomy, animal husbandry etc should also be taught business principles. Youth should be encouraged to develop business plans and investment models and small ticket investments should be given them. Furthermore, success stories of young people that are actively engaged in agriculture and doing well should be shared so that they serve as a

motivation for other young people who want to follow in the same footsteps to establish their own agriculture-based enterprises.

Nikki “There is need to create a culture of entrepreneurship within agriculture universities”

Importance of Youth Platforms and Networks

For young people to be successful in driving agriculture transformation and climate change adaptation initiatives and be part of the policy discussions, it is important that they create a community of learning. Youth networks such as YPARD serve to unite youth of varied backgrounds and structure youth engagement with different policy processes. Youth networks present dynamic platforms where youth can be supported and they can engage in structured dialogue about agriculture and climate change as partners, share experiences, and most importantly have a platform to build relationships with community leaders and policy makers. Cooperation and collaboration at different levels is important. When engaging with policy makers and community leaders it is important for young people to be organised and demonstrate that they know what they are doing and talking about.

Sebastian “Youth platforms and networks provide a community of learning and engagement”

Opportunities in Climate Smart Agriculture

To address the climate change challenge and other environmental issues, it is very important to change the perception of youth towards agriculture and provide capacity building opportunities and support for their active participation in sustainable agricultural development using CSA approaches to meet the demands of the increasing global population in manner that will ensure reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (i.e. mitigation) from this sector, as well as enhancing the sector’s resilience to climate change (i.e. adaptation). Here youth participation and involvement in agri-food systems becomes extremely important as with their skills, innovative ideas and energy- they can address multiple challenges faced by our food systems now and for the future.

There are tools and technologies that make agriculture attractive and profitable for the youth. Mobile phone and internet use is growing rapidly and people are now much more connected than ever to sources of information and with each other. These channels are being utilized to promoting agriculture and educating young people. Social Media is becoming an important tool in improving agriculture’s image – as one main challenge especially in developing countries has always been that youth perceive agriculture as an outdated and unprofitable profession. Use of digital technologies have been able to increase farm productivity, reduce transaction costs, ensuring securing of agri-inputs quickly and easily, led to improvement in inputs use efficiency and create better market linkages. Technology is playing an important role in simplifying farming making it more organized, profitable and hence attractive to youth.

Questions from Webinar Participants

1. How do we help young people access to land and ensure job security if they decide to work in agriculture?

Sebastian Pedraza Paez: As institutions we can create programs that promote the hiring of young people in activities related to agriculture and rural development, in a decent way and with decent conditions, however, I think that the only way to guarantee that young people have opportunities for access to land and fair and decent employment conditions, is through public policies. In this sense, it is important to participate in spaces where we can make ourselves heard as youth, make these problems visible and propose solutions appropriate to our contexts, and advocate for the formulation of public policies.

2. Do any of your organizations advocate something similar to a universal basic income, but specifically targeted at (youth) agriculture to attract young people and others to engage in agriculture beyond the start-up and with a longer-term vision?

Sebastian Pedraza Paez: YPARD is convinced that rural development demands multi-sectoral efforts, for that reason our members are professionals from different areas and disciplines, we seek to generate knowledge, and innovative ways of doing agriculture from technology, research, and the ideas of our members. In many parts of the world, youth are developing digital solutions, apps, and using social networks to connect small producers with consumers, to facilitate marketing. In this way, the way we do agriculture will be more productive and more gentle.

3. Are any of your organizations advocating for something like a universal basic income, but targeting specifically (youth in) agriculture to attract youth and others to engage in farming beyond startups and with a longer-term view?

Nikki Chaudhary: No, we are not advocating anything like this now nor targeting specifically youth in agriculture to attract youth in agriculture. But we have employed young people in our agribusiness and dairy and as our operations expand we will employ more of the young people.

Dellah Rukato: Yes we at CSAYN are really out to ensure development partners as well as governments improve on the incentives in the agricultural sector for young people on the continent and beyond. ICT4Ag has always been a tool to improve on engaging youth in the agricultural sector, because it's ensure the sector is attractive by the use of drones and remote sensors to educate smallholder farmers on the weather focus.

4. How can youth leverage technology help fund Agricultural?

Nikki Chaudhary: Technology is playing an important role in improving agricultural productivity by allowing growers to take better decisions on sowing of crops, optimal use of inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides etc., measuring harvest yields. Technology plays key role in providing weather

advisories, linking farmers to markets and hence improving the profitability of farmers as well as bringing sustainability in agriculture.

Youth engagement in linking agriculture to technology can bring transformation in agriculture by improving its efficiency, profitability and sustainability. The presence of technology improves scalability of agriculture / agribusiness and hence improves chances of getting funding for expansion from investors.

Dellah Rukato: There is need for mindset change of policy makers because most of them still look at youth as beneficiaries instead of development partners.

5. Albeit FAO is not a funding agency, it entails, for example, the Technical Cooperation Programme as a source to help member countries to unleash the potential of youth employment in agriculture, whether with ICTs and Entrepreneurship, what are in your opinion the bottlenecks to a better mobilization of resources, both in developed and developing countries?

Nikki Chaudhary: There are two aspects – first is its true that many young people are not working on to build domain knowledge/ expertise in agriculture. In order to create that interest, it is vital that – agriculture becomes part of school curriculum and equally important is to evolve, strengthen and upgrade higher education so that people enter the sector as entrepreneurs to bring innovation and development into it. Lack of know – how and knowledge becomes first barrier even before the challenge of resource mobilization. The start-ups that come into this sector and successfully raise funds too are not able to succeed because of lack of ground knowledge/ expertise.

Usually people with strong domain knowledge of agriculture and good teams are usually both able to mobilize resources and scale their enterprises profitably.

Dellah Rukato: The biggest factor affecting the youth is lack of land, they do not have title deeds to land. Most of the youth in Africa might have grown up practising subsistence farming in the rural areas. As they grow up they need to also fend for their families a difficult task if they have to share the small land that they grew up in.

The lack of land ownership leaves them with no collateral to get bank loans and no expansion of their agricultural activities.

Agriculture is seen as a past time to be involved in at retirement. There is need to change this mindset, it is better to pursue a passion whilst one is still in their prime and has the strength and stamina to pursue and achieve.

6. Please can you advise on the GIS data collection, recommend a good app working in your country in India.

Nikki Chaudhary: GIS data collection can be accessed only by Indian Government. It is not open source data. Indian Space Research Organization in collaboration with Department of Agriculture made BHUVAN, that captures data.

Here more focus is on Weather Advisory because of subtropical climate. Private Players use Drone Imagery but not on large scale. It is flown in geo fenced way but quite costly now.

Earth to Orbit is the first Indian Company and has tied up with Indian Space Research for doing agricultural surveys recently.

We are looking for players whom we can collaborate with and launch one satellite for agricultural surveying purpose.

7. Could Nikki please share an example of a dairy business at the youth/SME level? Do smallholder dairy farmers retail their milk? Is it allowed to consume raw milk directly, or do smallholders have access to equipment for milk pasteurization? To what extent do large processors dominate the dairy industry versus dairy smallholders/distributors?

Nikki Chaudhary: Few Dairy Start-ups in India have emerged which are founded by young team such as Country Delight, Binsar Creamery, Moo Farms etc. Though these are very few given the huge demand for high quality milk and milk products that is emerging in the country.

Yes smallholders mostly retail their milk. Yes, it is allowed to consume raw milk directly- no prohibition as such in India. No, the smallholders don't have access to milk pasteurization.

Organized Dairy is only 15 percent of the entire dairy sector of which 50 percent share is under top 5 milk companies such as – Amul, Mother Dairy, Nestle, Nandini and Hatsun. 80 % of the milk in India is coming from farmers owning 4 to 10 cattle.

There is a huge opportunity for the growth of efficient raw milk production and shift to mid-size to large dairy farms having cows 50 to 200.

Conclusion and Wrap-up

In bringing the discussions to a close, the facilitator highlighted that a number of questions and important comments had been raised. He noted that the “new normal” posed by the global COVID-19 pandemic has significantly brought a number of challenges and is raising questions about the future of global food systems that are still being severely impacted by climate change. These challenges and questions also present an opportunity for youth to demonstrate that they are ready and able to come up with creative solutions to transform agriculture.

The key takeaway messages from the discussion are listed below:

- The youth population is a dividend that needs to be harnessed to unlock the potential of the next generation of innovators and change agents within the agriculture space
- The time for advocacy on climate change is over, it is now time for action and youth can be drivers of climate smart agriculture by getting involved in the NDC process at country level.
- Youth have an opportunity to come up with good bankable ideas that work on the ground and that will be working in the future
- Young people should be at the centre of discussions about transforming agriculture and addressing the impacts of climate change.
- Agriculture is a business and the more we treat it as a business, as a way to create wealth, the more it will promote development and improve people's lives to boot
- The biggest transformation that is yet to happen in agriculture is in the livestock and dairy sector and the youth can be drivers of that transformation
- There is need to create a culture of entrepreneurship within agriculture universities
- When engaging with policy makers and community leaders it is important for young people to be organised and demonstrate that they know what they are doing and talking about
- Youth platforms and networks provide a community of learning and engagement

- Awareness raising shouldn't just happen at conferences, we need to take these discussions out of the conference rooms.
- Nothing for the youth without the youth!
- We must acknowledge the diversity of different youth segments and their interactions in the agri-food system. We must avoid a one-size-fits-all solution and examine youth-inclusive interventions and approaches so as to better understand the benefits of a youth-inclusive approach.
- We need to think about future generations and involving youth in climate change work is paramount.
- We need to build capacity and mentorship programmes, putting agriculture in school curriculum, strengthening, upgrading, and continually evolving higher education in agriculture linking it to advances in technology, facilitating innovation and encouraging agri- business and entrepreneurship.

Lastly, the facilitator thanked the webinar hosts, GACSA, FAO, YPARD, CSAYN, and the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, the panelists, and the participants. As a global multi-stakeholder platform for climate-smart agriculture, GACSA rallies action to accelerate the scaling up of CSA through members and partners' initiatives. GACSA provides platforms for stakeholders to benefit from the broader dissemination of their initiatives to a global community. The facilitator called upon participants to stay tuned and subscribe to GACSA for further upcoming opportunities and open dialogue platform engagements.