



PROMOTING DECENT RURAL YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN BENIN, CAMEROON, MALAWI AND NIGER

Africa may not reach its transformation goals, as defined in Agenda 2063, without fully harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth. While youth currently constitutes approximately 40 percent of the working age population, over 60 percent are unemployed. Although Africa has policies and programmes to tackle unemployment among rural youth, the different policies at both continental and national levels do not adequately address the challenges in a holistic and coherent manner. Rural youth need customized training models and curricula, given that most of them have not had the opportunity to obtain quality education and training. Policy interventions are also required to create opportunities for them. Against this background, the project aimed to create job opportunities for rural youth in agricultural value chains, and to support and facilitate preferential entry and participation for young women and men in gainful and attractive agribusiness opportunities. The project focused on four countries: Benin, Cameroon, Malawi and Niger.



WHAT DID THE PROJECT DO?

One of the key project interventions was the preparation of National Action Plans (NAPs) to promote decent jobs and entrepreneurship in agriculture, through participatory and multistakeholder consultation processes. The NAPs covered vital rural youth issues in relation to entrepreneurship, including, among other things, challenges and opportunities in agriculture and entrepreneurship for rural youth, as well as strategies for improved financial services. The project also enhanced various partnerships in the four participating countries, by establishing a framework for dialogue among the different actors involved in rural youth interventions, in order to better coordinate and promote decent jobs and entrepreneurship for young people. Capacity development was another core component of the project. A large number of beneficiary youths took part in youth-oriented policy dialogues, workshops and conferences related to agricultural value chains and entrepreneurship, considerably enhancing their skills, knowledge and capacities, and enabling them to engage in different types of agricultural value chains. The project also financed a significant number of viable businesses of rural youths in the four project countries, inspiring more stakeholders to provide funding to create more decent rural youth employment.

KEY FACTS

Contribution

USD 4 000 000

Duration

April 2015 – October 2020

Resource Partner

Africa Solidarity Trust Fund (ASTF)

Partners

African Union Development Agency (AUDA)-New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)

Beneficiaries

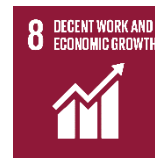
Rural young women and men in the age cohorts 15-35 years

IMPACT

The project played a crucial role in reducing unemployment, enhancing youth empowerment, and improving agriculture and entrepreneur development in rural areas in the four target countries. In particular, many of the youths who were trained and supported by the project are now running their own businesses. In addition, the project has motivated governments in the participating countries to roll out youth-centred projects to support the agriculture, fisheries and livestock sectors.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

- Four NAPs developed and adopted in the four target countries.
- Two stakeholder meetings held in each of the four countries.
- Numerous partnerships and platforms established in the four countries.
- 1 009 youths (595 males and 414 females) engaged in agricultural value chains, including internships.
- Several awareness and sensitization campaigns conducted.
- About 95 participants in Training of Trainer courses capacitated to teach and mentor rural youths on youth employment and entrepreneurship along agriculture and agribusiness value chains in all four countries.
- 28 curricula developed and utilized.
- 137 Small and Medium Enterprises directly funded, with an additional 250 set up through public and private-sector funds.
- Two regional dialogues conducted at the margins of Youth in Agriculture Conference held in Kigali, Rwanda in 2018, and at the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme Partnership Platform in November 2020.
- Several resource partner meetings conducted with International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Labour Organization (ILO), African Development Bank, etc.
- Six capacity-building and South-South Cooperation exchanges facilitated.
- Four Centres of Excellence conceptualized.



Project Code

FAO: GCP/RAF/494/MUL

Project Title

Enhancing employment opportunities for rural youth in Africa

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