

Promoting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems

A report by the
High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition,
science-policy interface of the CFS

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HLPE 16
REPORT



**PROMOTING YOUTH
ENGAGEMENT AND
EMPLOYMENT IN
AGRICULTURE AND
FOOD SYSTEMS**

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Project Team



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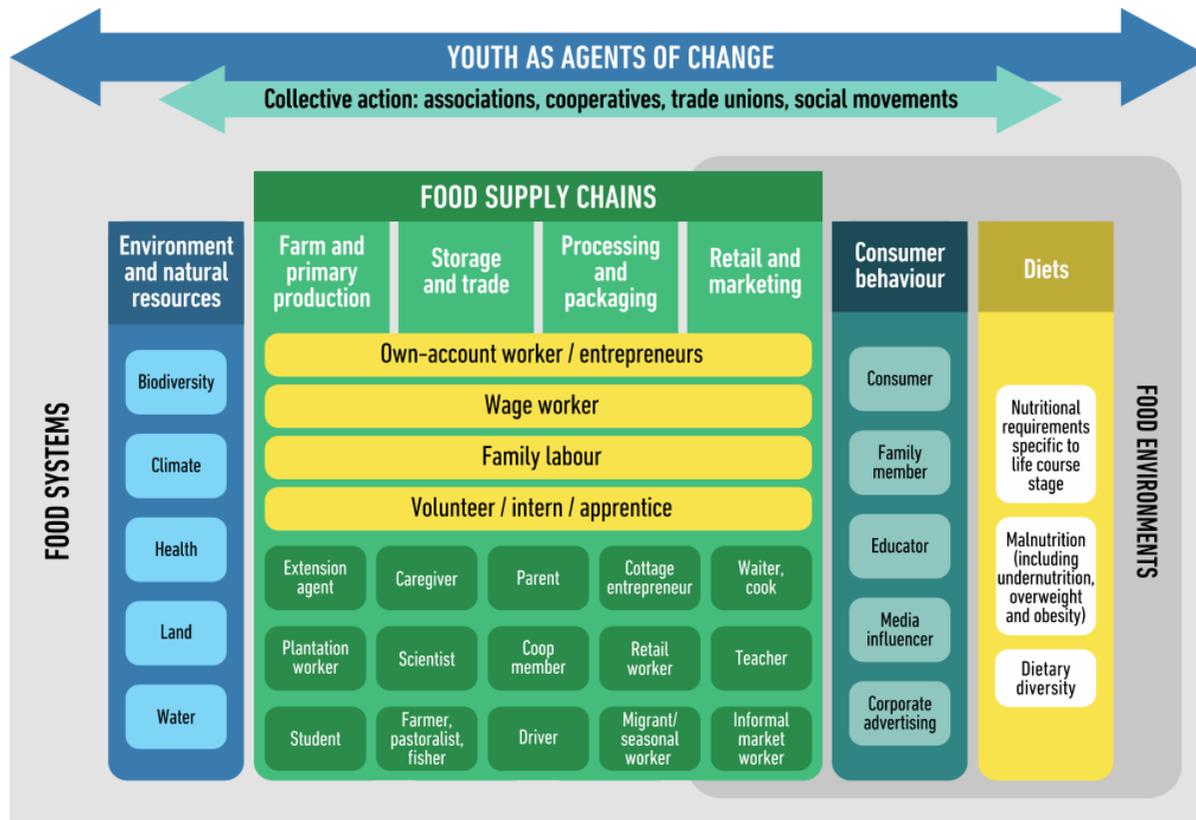
Introduction and context

Confluence of economic, socio-ecological & public health crises:

- Youth unemployment three times higher than adults'
- Food systems jobs among the most vulnerable
- 1/3 of the global population affected by at least one form of malnutrition
- Food and agricultural systems are a significant driver of climate change
- Significant inequities in access to resources and sustainable livelihoods across regions, gender, ethnicity, and class

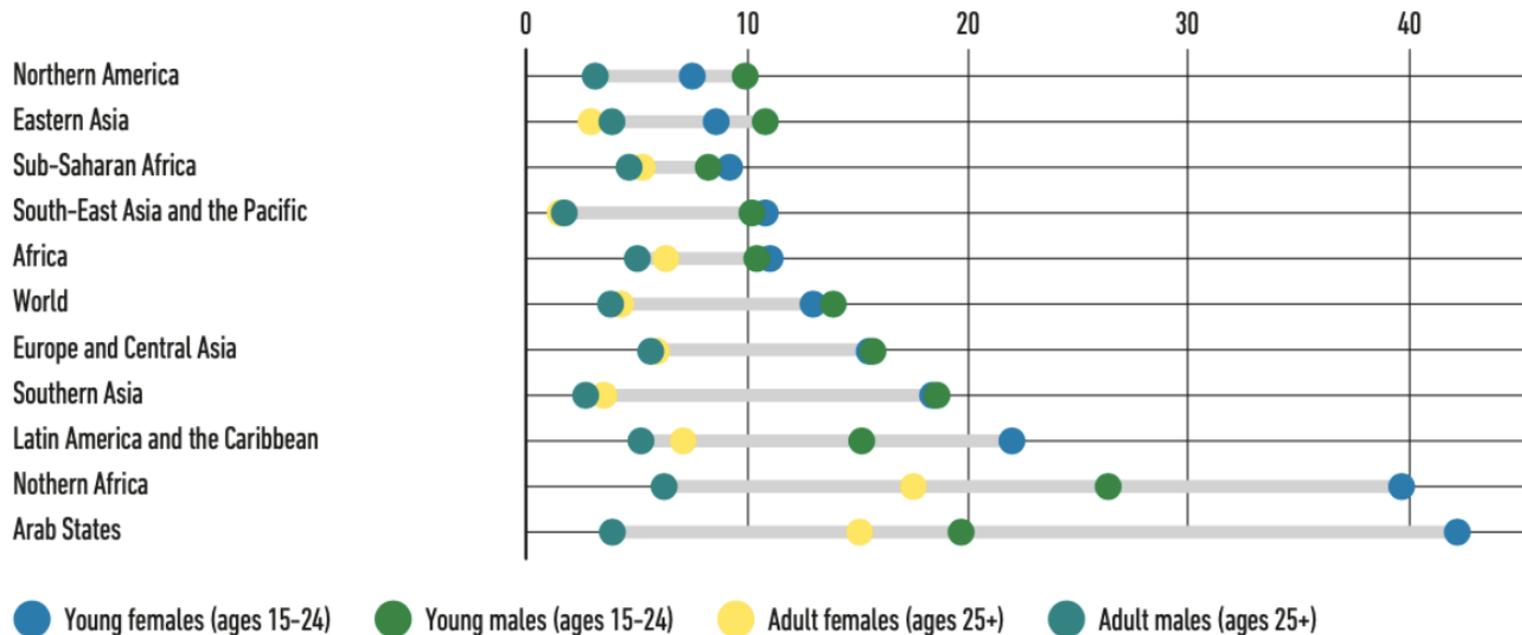
Our collective challenge is to envision **new pathways for sustainable food systems** with youth leading as **agents of change**

Youth as agents of change

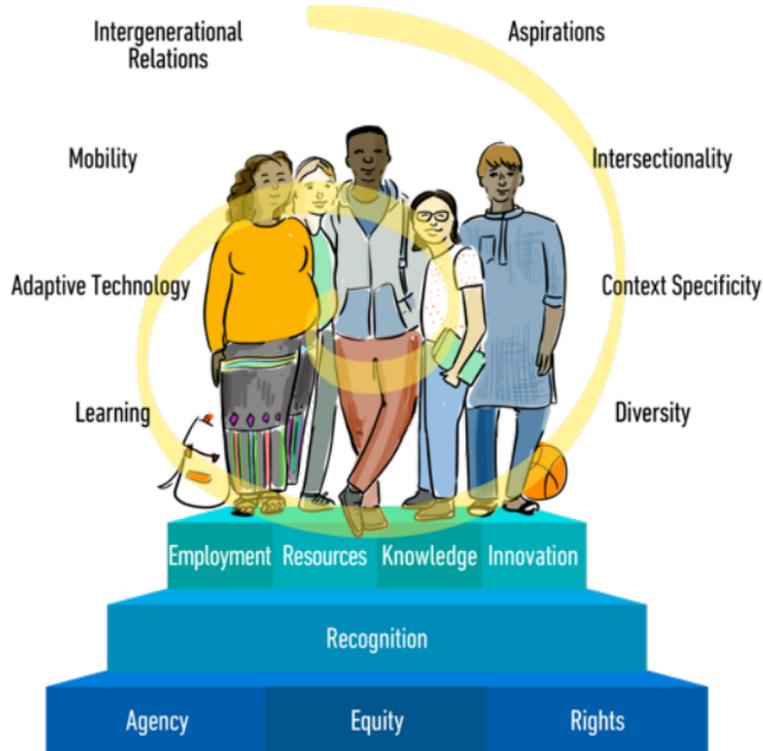


Source: Elaborated by authors based on HLPE 2017, 2020a

Youth unemployment rates in 2019, by age, gender and region



SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS



OUTCOMES

DYNAMIC
STRUCTURES
AND PROCESSES

KEY POLICY THEMES

FOUNDATIONS

Source: Elaborated by
authors with illustration by
Sam Bradd

Enhancing demand for youth labour in food systems

- Food systems jobs are **vulnerable jobs**
- Increasing youth employment in food systems requires **policy interventions** to boost demand and create "good" jobs
- Investment in **food systems infrastructure, public employment** programmes and **wage subsidies** in **sustainable food supply chains** are opportunities to improve access to jobs and better working conditions for youth.

Policy recommendations

1. PROVIDING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR "YOUTH AS AGENTS OF CHANGE"
2. SECURING DIGNIFIED AND REWARDING LIVELIHOODS
3. INCREASING EQUITY AND RIGHTS TO RESOURCES
4. ENHANCING KNOWLEDGE, EDUCATION AND SKILLS
5. FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION

1. PROVIDE AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR YOUTH AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

RIGHTS

- Ensure **the realization of the human right to food and the right to work in safe and healthy working conditions**, implement existing global policy instruments and ensure accountability

PARTICIPATION AND GOVERNANCE

- **Guarantee and encourage youth participation and leadership** in organizations that govern food systems, **recognize the diverse voices of young people** and guarantee their equal participation in formal governance mechanisms

POLICY INSTRUMENTS AND REGULATIONS

- **Ensure an intersectional approach** to youth-oriented policies, more accurate reporting of youth participation and the regular renewal of youth-targeted policies

INFRASTRUCTURE AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

- **Enhance standards of living and reduce vulnerability** of young people including through social protection and safety nets, basic infrastructure and services and adequate food security and nutrition

2. SECURING DIGNIFIED AND REWARDING LIVELIHOODS

LABOUR MARKET POLICIES

- Employment and labour market policies and interventions that **explicitly target young people, enhance employability and employment outcomes** and facilitate **more equitable labour market entry**

EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION AND GOVERNANCE

- Employment legislation for explicit **protection of living wages and working conditions**, youth friendly labour governance, and compensation for **young people's unpaid contributions**

INCENTIVES AND SOCIAL FINANCE

- Support for **youth's pluri-activity** in food systems and **youth entrepreneurship in both individual and collective enterprises**
- Incentives **for sustainable practices in food systems** that generate **decent jobs** for young people

3. INCREASING EQUITY AND RIGHTS TO RESOURCES

ACCESS TO NATURAL AND PRODUCTIVE RESOURCES

- Support the **individual and collective the rights of youth** to access and conserve land, water and natural resources, legal measures that facilitate **intergenerational transfers** and the establishment of cooperatives and other **organisations to facilitate access**

ACCESS TO FINANCE

- Promote the **affordable, and inclusive financial and advisory services** tailored to the needs of youth and **support for youth-led enterprises**

ACCESS TO MARKETS

- Improve **shared public infrastructure** for local and alternative markets, support for youth engagement with sustainable food supply chains and for public procurement and other forms of **mediated markets for sustainable, youth-led enterprises**

4. ENHANCING KNOWLEDGE, EDUCATION AND SKILLS

TRAINING AND VOCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

- **Update curricula** to include professions requiring a **wide range of skills** in **areas of interest to youth** (agroecological production, nutrition and dietetics, value chains, marketing, and food systems education)

SUSTAINABLE FOODS SYSTEMS EDUCATION

- Begin **training for food systems thinking in primary and secondary education** (incl. through experiential education, intergeneration mentorship and peer-to-peer engagement)

RESEARCH

- Involve youth in **community-based research partnerships** that integrate diverse ways of knowing and communicating

PRACTICE

- Encourage youth to **practice agroecology** and other **context-specific** sustainable innovations for **resilience to environmental and social shocks**

5. FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION

SOCIAL INNOVATION

- Provide opportunities for **social innovation that recognizes and shares intergenerational and indigenous knowledge** and stimulates **research**

EXTENSION & ADVISORY SERVICES

- Support the provision of youth-sensitive and youth-specific **rural and urban advisory and extension services** through new information platforms
- Develop the **skills and capacities of young workers** in sustainable and innovative approaches for urban, peri-urban and rural agriculture, including to help **transition from school to work**

INFRASTRUCTURE

- Invest in **digital infrastructure and complementary nondigital infrastructure** in rural and remote areas to ensure rural connectivity, digitize the activities of public agricultural bodies, and build the digital skills of public sector workers to support change.

Thank you!



CFS

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For more information:

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