

CFS Policy Recommendations On Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems
Comments from Canada

Comments from Government of Canada		
General Comments		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcome opportunity to provide comments on the zero draft of the CFS policy recommendations on youth and are pleased to have been able to solicit the views of the Canadian Agricultural Youth Council as part of this process. The Council is a group of 25 young people from across Canada, aged 18 to 30, who work in or study the agriculture and agri-food value chain. - Their comments shared below center around a number of areas, such as: promoting education, mentorship and skills development opportunities; highlighting role of non-governmental stakeholders creating youth information-sharing platforms; exploring innovative finance opportunities; ensuring appropriate remuneration; and promoting youth participation more effectively. - Priorities outlined in the zero draft align fairly well to Canada’s feminist international assistance priorities, especially given the focus in the text on inclusive governance, human dignity, and growth that works for everyone. We would encourage CFS to further capture gender equality and environment/climate action elements in the text as they relate to youth issues. - We recommend that the challenge of poor remuneration in the agri-food sector be expanded upon, in particular the lack of formal wage structure and risk associated with income loss due to fluctuations in climate and markets. - Furthermore, recommendations on enhancing knowledge, education and skills could be more specific in including gender equality considerations. 		
Section	Comments	Alternate suggested text (if applicable)
2	A major factor deterring youth from engaging in the agri-food sector is that it operates largely with an informal wage structure that is unpredictable, irregular and offers low remuneration. Given the lifestyle, social and economic aspirations of youth in a consumer culture that emphasises near-term purchases, youth are generally driven to formal wage structures that reward effort in the short term rather than the long term (services, industrial sectors, etc.).	Insert 2i: "Develop and implement a formal wage structure that provides regular and predictable remuneration in alignment with youth consumer habits to address the widening gap between the lifestyle, social and economic aspirations of youths and career opportunities available in the agri-food sector."
4 and 4c	The recommendations on enhancing knowledge, education and skills could be more specific in including the promotion of equitable access to trainings and vocational programs.	"Enhance [add: equitable access to] knowledge, education and skills" Insert ‘equitable access’ in 4c: Promote equitable access to training and vocational programmes for professions and creation of jobs in food systems such as nutritionists, food educators, extension and advisory service providers.

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Comments from Canadian Agricultural Youth Council		
General Comments		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The zero draft is well-written, comprehensive, and well-thought out. Supportive of policy recommendations outlined, especially those in section 1. - Pleased to see language reinforcing human rights. - Poor access to land is a huge issue that keeps youth from entering the fields of agriculture. - The document should further evoke that creating and developing ownership within the agricultural systems of the future will further accentuate the points found within the document. - Welcome information on what the hashtagged “#” phrases are supposed to represent. 		
Section	Comments	Alternate suggested text (if applicable)
Rationale	Missing word?	“...and poor remuneration for agricultural and food workers turn youth away from agriculture and from remaining [add: in] rural areas.”
1 (d)	This statement could be strengthened by providing examples of how participation and leadership of youth could be encouraged using concrete examples (e.g. by providing grants for youth programs, by sponsoring youth travel from rural to urban areas to participate in meetings, by compensating youth for their time when participating in organizations).	Support and encourage equal, non-discriminatory and active youth participation and leadership in relevant organizations, including through civil society and private sector organizations, [add: by reducing financial barriers to participation (e.g. providing a stipend or other financial mechanism to compensate youth for their time)]; in governance mechanisms and decision-making fora at all levels, such as CFS, parliaments and other national and local policy-making spaces [add:(e.g. by providing travel stipends/reimbursement of costs when traveling between their home and locations of meetings)]; and promote youth-led organizations and initiatives [add:(e.g. by providing grants and accessible spaces for youth programs).]
2 (b)	The closest mention of mentorship here is “entrepreneurship coaching”. Mentorship is a globally applicable topic in the context of youth employability in agri-food systems and may not necessarily include entrepreneurship.	“...job matching, [add: mentorship programming], and entrepreneurship coaching and incubators...”
2 (d)	Appreciate that this section is separate from references to employment services and job matching in section 2 (b). Although	

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	those items overlap, not everyone who needs employment services and job matching are immediately transitioning out of school.	
2 (e)	Agree that a living wage should be paid to all workers. In many countries however, piece work and wages/labour laws for agricultural works (especially migrant workers) exist below the national minimum wage and are exempt from national labour laws. As a start, it is important to ensure that youth in agriculture receive at least a minimum wage, which should be the standard, with an ambition to move towards a living wage within a specified time period.	... to guarantee [add: a wage for agricultural workers consistent with the national minimum wage with a strategy to increase to a living wage within 5 years] and enhance...
2 (h)	Change "decent jobs" to something more open and inviting, that focuses on the creation of opportunities, this creates open-ended systems that individuals with drive and ambition can take advantage of.	h) Promote, in line with existing CFS policy recommendations, agroecological and other innovative practices for sustainable agriculture and food systems to generate [del: decent; add: opportunities] for youth, by supporting the capacity of youth as well as by providing support and market opportunities for sustainable products; (#Incentives and social finance)
3 (d)	Enhanced record-keeping / expense tracking is essential to decision-making at farm level and linked to making changes in management that promote agroecological practices and other innovative approaches (e.g. with increasing inorganic input costs impacting profitability, farmers have made decisions to use n-fixing cover crops to supply some nitrogen to soil)	
3 (e)	Disagree that "crowdfunding" should be part of a policy measure or recommendation at the government level (unless it is reducing policy restrictions that prevent crown funding in the country)	"... including through savings mobilization, [del: crowdfunding];- alternative forms..." <u>or</u> "... including through savings mobilization, [add: removing policies that prevent] crowdfunding, alternative forms..."

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3 (e)	Recommend adding reference to bringing forward venture capital organizations that are interested in impact investing or allowing new organizations to enter the market where they can work with young farmers quickly to approve the loan at low interest rates (e.g: Farmers Business Network Finance in USA).	
3 (g)	Recommend creating a knowledge-sharing platform at the global level for young farmers/entrepreneurs to discuss lessons learned and successful practices that can be adopted elsewhere, based on adaptability to local conditions (e.g: Global Farmers Network).	
4 (a)	Suggest specifying the level of education in this section, as universal access to free education for youth could include up to graduate school, depending on the location's definition of "youth". Note that primary and secondary schooling are specifically referenced in section 4 (b).	
4 (b)	Agricultural Education should not be developed to only benefit those wishing to enter the field; by increasing agri-literacy and knowledge within society as a whole, we increase resiliency within communities at a holistic level.	"Support educational curriculum development in primary and secondary schools by including subjects related to sustainable agriculture and food systems to equip young people that wish to pursue agricultural and rural livelihoods [Add: as well as increasing overall general knowledge and positive perception of agriculture;]"
4 (b)	In addition to supporting educational curriculum development, there should be a mandate in the primary and secondary schools to have some form of education around food and food systems.	"[Del: Support; Add: Mandate] educational curriculum development in primary and secondary schools by including subjects related to sustainable agriculture and food systems to equip young people that wish to pursue agricultural and rural livelihoods;"
4 (d)	Is the wording supposed to be "climate change mitigation"?	Engage youth in research related to sustainable agriculture and food systems, resource conservation, [add: climate] change mitigation and environmental management, and strengthen opportunities for youth to participate in community-based research partnerships;

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4 (e)	Noticed that mentorship is referenced in this section. This section's overarching theme is <i>Enhancing Knowledge, Educations and Skills</i> . However, section 2 (b) included mention of skills development. There may be an opportunity here to merge certain sections. Duplication may be unavoidable due to the overlapping nature of the themes; often one needs enhanced knowledge, education, and skills to secure gainful employment and livelihood.	
4 (e)	Suggest expanding on this sentence to include the wording "networking" as it will further enhance the promotion of information and knowledge exchange.	"Promote inter-generational and intra-generational exchange of information, knowledge and practices through mentorship, [add: networking,] and peer-to-peer engagement."
4 (e)	Establishing networks of demonstration farms and "lead" farmers (e.g. outstanding farmers in their communities who are innovative in their practices and motivated to share / teach) can be an effective mechanism to enhance knowledge, education and skills especially for youth who may not have been exposed to this type of farming system.	Promote inter-generational and intra-generational exchange of information, knowledge and practices through mentorship [and] peer-to-peer engagement, [add: and the development of a network of demonstration farms to serve as teaching and training locations.]
5 (a)	Suggest adding impacts to the section for an additional perspective.	...taking into account inter-generational and indigenous knowledge and [add: impacts] related to...
5 (d)	Bringing in partners like UNDP (digital innovation) and private sector like Dessault systems, who foster open innovation, can open the door for youth to enter and explore the digital innovation of agriculture sector.	
5 (e)	Suggest adding a new point in supporting youth engagement opportunities.	[Add: Support youth in connecting to and engaging in inter-regional and international programs and opportunities to develop skills to implement innovative and industry leading agriculture practices, technologies, and obtain value-added certifications.]