

Chapter 2. Approaches for youth inclusion along the agricultural value chain

Growth in demand for value-added food and processed agricultural products in developing countries is an opportunity to develop the agro-industries for youth employment creation. However, challenges remain in enabling small-scale farmers and low-skilled rural youth to integrate into local and global agricultural value chains and move up the ladder to meet the quantity and quality standards required for both national and export markets. Examples in this chapter describe different interventions at the local level that can help integrate rural youth into the agricultural value chain and provide them with employment opportunities. It draws success factors for integrating youth into agricultural value chains using a youth employment lens.

Faced with the daunting youth employment challenge, governments are increasingly promoting youth entrepreneurship as a way to expand employment and earning opportunities. Success stories of young agripreneurs and entrepreneurs in agribusinesses are numerous and become a source of inspiration for other young people (see Box 2.1). Few young people will become successful entrepreneurs, however. Recent work by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) on youth entrepreneurship in Côte d'Ivoire, Madagascar, Peru and Viet Nam finds that successful entrepreneurs represent only a tiny proportion of youth entrepreneurs and usually have specific educational profiles, personal characteristics and endowments that the majority of youth in developing countries do not have (OECD, 2017). The vast majority are confined to subsistence and informal activities, and for many in rural areas, to low-paid jobs in agriculture. These findings cast doubts on how much hope policy makers can place on youth entrepreneurship as a solution to the growing youth employment challenge, especially in rural areas where physical operating conditions are poor and where the vast majority of youth are low skilled.

The potential for creating quality jobs for rural youth exists, however. Investing and building capabilities in agri-food industries (production, processing, preservation and other handling processes, as well as packaging and marketing) indeed remain largely underexploited. Domestic demand for diversified foods is rising in many developing countries and agricultural value chain development presents a real opportunity to support local enterprises and improve market structures and business environments that can result in more entrepreneurs as well as wage jobs. In West Africa, a study estimates that the food economy, which includes producing food and retailing food to consumers, already accounts for 66% of total employment (64% of working youth aged 20-29), 82 million jobs and 35% of regional gross domestic product (GDP) (Allen and Heinrigs, 2016). The majority (78%) of these jobs are in the low end of the value chain, mostly in agricultural production. When using full-time equivalents, the share of agriculture in total food economy employment drops to 68%. Off-farm jobs downstream in the value chain, e.g. in processing and services, constitute a minor share of employment opportunities (Allen, Heinrigs and Heo, 2018). However, given the size of the food economy, these activities play an important role in overall employment, accounting for 31% of total non-farm jobs in the region.

Agriculture remains the main employment sector in rural areas and for youth. Youth Well-being Policy Reviews carried out in nine developing countries found high rates of youth employment in agriculture in Cambodia (50%), Côte d'Ivoire (44%), Malawi (58%), and Viet Nam (33%) (OECD Development Centre, 2018, 2017a, 2017b and 2017c). These shares are even higher among rural youth (Figure 1.4). In sub-Saharan Africa, the overall share of youth employment in agriculture is highest in low- and low-middle-income countries where the majority of youth are low skilled and low educated. The agricultural labour force is expected to continue to grow in Africa and decrease in developing Asia (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1. Total agricultural labour force 2016-20

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Developing Africa ('000)	246 969	252 167	257 443	262 791	268 220
Developing Asia ('000)	1 020 286	1 017 531	1 013 914	1 009 605	1 004 753

Source: UNCTAD statistics, <http://unctadstat.unctad.org/wds/TableViewer/tableView.aspx>.

This chapter analyses ten initiatives specifically intended to create youth employment along agri-food value chains, especially for disadvantaged rural youth and draws on the key success factors for integrating youth into agri-food value chains. Most of the projects target youth with primary or secondary education levels. The review also found more examples in agricultural production and much less in processing and other downstream activities. All initiatives intend to combine local market opportunities and skills development for youth.

Agricultural production provides an entry point for low-skilled rural youth to engage in the agri-food value chain

An integrated public-private partnership model for youth employment in agriculture, Tanzania

Beneficiaries' profile: 18-35 year-old women and men, out of school with primary or secondary education

Number of youth beneficiaries: 400 trained as facilitators with a spillover effect of, on average, 1:20, i.e. 7 600 in total

In Tanzania, agriculture is the mainstay of the economy, employing 80% of the working population and accounting for 64% of all exports. The service sector, which has been growing rapidly in recent years, accounts for approximately 47% of GDP. Economic growth has not been able to generate adequate employment to absorb increases in the labour force and reduce the proportion of the unemployed and underemployed (FAO, 2014).

Since 2011, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has developed an innovative public-private partnership model for youth employment in agriculture and has piloted the model in Malawi, Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar archipelago. The focus was on rural-based young farmers, who were out of school, with primary and/or secondary education. Most of the youth engaged in the project (60%) reported using their families' land, while the rest rented it.

The approach

A central component of the model is the strengthening of human capital, with knowledge and information adapted to rural contexts, labour demand and viable economic opportunities, and the level of youth understanding. The model uses Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS), which provide vocational training specifically tailored to rural settings, combined with employment promotion and access to markets. It is specifically tailored for teaching children and young people about agricultural, business and life skills and encouraging self-organisation. The specific training areas are chosen together with the youth in collaboration with the partners, and on the basis of the local needs and opportunities.

The private sector (in this case, co-operatives) plays an important role in shaping the food and agriculture systems, influencing entrepreneurs to engage in more production and service provision, and providing an enabling working environment. With this in mind, the model introduces a public-private partnership approach to facilitate youth access to assets (land, financial services, technology) and agricultural sector markets. FAO developed a set of criteria to select potential private sector partners (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2. Criteria to select potential private-sector partners

Criteria	Precondition	Added value
Conformity to FAO's mandate and work programme	X	
Ethical values in the major sustainable business model principles of honesty, openness, transparency, sustainability (economic and environmental), democracy, social responsibility, inclusiveness, equality and solidarity	X	
Mutual interests and objectives	X	
Demonstrated activeness in protecting smallholders' rights	X	
Access to land, credit and markets services	X	
Country-wide coverage		X
Long-standing presence in the country		X
Involvement on behalf of the private sector and smallholder farmers in the implementation of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP)		X

Source: FAO (2014), "FAO, private and public partnership model for youth employment in agriculture: Experiences from Malawi, Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar archipelago".

In Tanzania, the project collaborated with the Tanzania Federation of Cooperatives, a national co-operative umbrella organisation comprising 6 000 co-operative societies, including specialised savings and credit unions with approximately 700 000 members. Land has been provided in certain cases by producers' organisations (through co-operative land) or by regional authorities (through village land). Linkages with the co-operative unions (savings and credit co-operatives, SACCOs) and dedicated agricultural budgets from regional authorities facilitated youth access to finance.

Producers' organisations played an important role in guiding and supporting the youth groups in their choice of potential agricultural activities and products' placement in the market at fairly negotiated prices. The private sector included the National Smallholder Farmers' Association of Malawi, the Tanzania Federation of Cooperatives and the Cooperative Union of Zanzibar. In parallel, strong efforts have been channelled towards public partnerships in order to sustainably integrate the activities into national strategies and programmes, e.g. by supporting the development of a National Strategy for Youth Involvement in Agriculture in Tanzania.

Across Tanzania, both young women and men had a strong preference for crop production, with maize, groundnuts, soya and soya beans being the most cultivated crops. Livestock rearing represented a less commonly chosen activity, and other activities such as fishing represented a rather limited share. Youth have primarily sold their products with a small profit margin (about 20%), with a majority of them expressing a desire to start adding value in order to improve their economic opportunities.

Results

The training of youth facilitators (farmers themselves) had an important spillover effect on peer-to-peer learning in their communities. The youth facilitators are trained by master trainers from the government, who are themselves trained to train youth. Youth facilitators were able to mobilise and sensitise their peers regarding opportunities offered by the agricultural sector. On average, each facilitator retrains 20 other rural youth in his/her district. In Tanzania, one FAO-trained youth was able to mobilise and train 150 peers in his home district, create a group and secure 300 acres of government land from the Regional Commission to start up their commercial activities.

During assessments conducted after the training at regular intervals of six months, youth reported an increase in economic returns of approximately 60% by farming their 1-5 acres (0.4 to 2 hectares) of land and adopting new practices learnt during the training. The number of young people engaged in the sector increased, as did their memberships of local producers' organisations, co-operatives and unions. Trained youth have returned to their communities with renewed enthusiasm and have both created awareness and trained their peers, displaying a positive shift in the perception of agriculture by comparison with other non-trained youth. They perceive agriculture not just from a commercial perspective, but also one that is environmental friendly. Finally, the government developed a strategy to guide all stakeholders interested in youth employment, with the Ministry of Agriculture responsible for co-ordinating the design and implementation of programmes.

In the framework of the current United Nations Joint Programme on Youth Employment for Tanzania, a recent study was undertaken to identify the sectors that might have the highest potential to create opportunities for youth employment and that were more appealing to youth. Initial results show that horticulture, apiculture, oil seeds and tourism linked to agriculture seem to be the most appealing sectors to youth (UN, 2016).

Success factors

- **Partnerships:** Establishing partnerships with governments and private sector actors has been key to fostering an enabling environment for youth employment and youth inclusion in national and regional initiatives; the private sector partners selected have proven to be pivotal in the institutionalisation of the model, and thus its sustainability.
- **Capacity development:** The training component was key to attracting young people to engage in agriculture. The facilitation and training delivered were crucial. Large-scale impacts were achieved through spillover effects created by the youth themselves when returning to their villages, rather than with the selective youth trained directly by FAO. In addition, peer training is a way to empower young people by giving them the opportunity to participate in interactive experiential learning and then share this knowledge with their peers in their community.

Local youth associations and family farm advisors to support local food production, Senegal

Beneficiaries' profiles: Unemployed young people aged 18-30, from vulnerable households

Number of youth beneficiaries: 13 115 (8 170 female, 4 945 male)

In Senegal, 55% of the population lives in rural areas. A recent study by the National Statistical Agency revealed that 48.5% of the labour force was in the primary sector (agriculture, livestock and fishery) while 26.3% and 12.1% were in the service and industry sectors, respectively. Indeed, the youth labour force is largely unskilled, with the majority engaged in agricultural activities (Hathie, 2014). Migration appears to be a popular alternative for many young Senegalese faced with unemployment or underemployment. Young people are migrating internally but also to other countries, mainly to other African countries, followed by European countries. Data from the World Bank's "African migration survey 2010" show that the average age of Senegalese

migrants (rural-rural, rural-urban) was 32, with 54% being men and 45% being women (Shimeles, 2010). Poverty, climate change, deterioration of the environment, conflicts and lack of infrastructure in rural areas are some of the main reasons for migrating.

In Senegal's groundnut basin, the youth population represents over 60% of the total population. The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)-supported Agricultural Value Chains Development Project (Projet d'appui aux filières agricoles [PAFA]) aims to improve the incomes and livelihoods of poor farm families in that geographic area, with a special focus on turning farming into a thriving business for young people. One of the target groups of the programme is underemployed young people aged 18-30 years.

The project focuses on the consolidation of profitable value chains based on the local agroecological potential. The project promotes the use of local products, such as millet/sorghum, maize, bissap/hibiscus, sesame, niebe, rice, poultry, and market gardening (onions, tomatoes, carrots, cabbage). Off-farm employment was generated in agricultural extension activities (the youth counselling within each producer organisation), processing (e.g. decorticating rice) and transforming (mostly women cooking).

The approach

PAFA has been using an innovative targeting approach to create jobs for rural youth. The project encouraged local sports and cultural associations to prepare proposals. Youth were mostly self-employed and could participate through mixed groups or youth-only groups (associations sportives et culturelles [ASC]). The youth groups prepared proposals and benefited from a series of services, including equipment, training on best agricultural practices and improved inputs. Some young people already had access to land, but many had to negotiate with their families with the support of their ASC, young agricultural extension officers, and mixed-age farmer groups.

The project targeted farmers' organisations as main project holders, and youth and women as sub-project holders ("porteurs de sous-projets").¹ This meant that the farmers' organisations themselves had an interest in helping young people gain access to land. For market gardening, access to land (along with certified seeds and fertilisers) was guaranteed by the fact that the land to which the project provided irrigation was assigned from the start to youth and women. This was generally community land that was granted to youth and women's groups by the village authorities and set up for gardening by the project.

The project provided subsidies to acquire quality inputs (certified seeds, fertilisers and agricultural equipment) by setting up a system of "in-kind savings" (e.g. storage of agricultural produce). The subsidies decreased over three years (from 80% to 40%). This system ensured farmers' access to quality inputs, empowered organisations to access inputs and strengthened their capacity to mobilise savings of beneficiary households.

A number of farmers (1 096 women under 35 years old) were trained as "family farm advisors" to inform farmers on good practices in family poultry production. In addition, over 800 women and young girls were trained in processing and cooking techniques using local cereals, in order to promote the consumption of local products. Hotel and restaurant owners have been encouraged to introduce dishes prepared with local products in their menus.

Finally, the project supported the groups to access market information and to identify and sign contracts with market operators. National agents for inter-professional organisations (les cadres nationaux d'interprofession filières) provided information on prices in reference markets, including through mobile SMS messages sent to farmers. The project facilitated contracts between farmers' organisations and market operators to ensure a fair negotiation and secure prices for the producers. Farmers' organisations identified and approached a market operator (a private trader, a larger farmers' organisation grouping together multiple smaller farmers' organisations, or a processor). Market operators in the region had been informed about the project through an awareness campaign that included a series of meetings. For farmers' organisations facing difficulties in identifying a market operator, the project facilitated these linkages. Once the farmers' organisation-market operator couples were formed, the project facilitated contract signings and their implementation during the first year. PAFA places emphasis on supporting these "couples" rather than on individual farmers' organisations or market operators; the farmers' organisation itself has no contract with the farmers participating in the contract-farming scheme, but regularly buys their produce if the quality is met.

In addition, youth were engaged in value chain roundtables (millet/sorghum, cowpea, sesame and hibiscus) set up by the project to bring together key value chain actors and create a dialogue around issues such as increased seed production, dissemination of information on market prices and rainfall, commercial intermediation and dispute resolution between producers and buyers, and the establishment of an internal quality control system.

Results

In total, the project assisted 45 youth associations with financial support, capacity building and access to quality inputs and equipment. As a result, almost 5 000 young men and more than 8 000 young women are now involved in agricultural value chains and have increased their income. Products of market gardening were mainly for local markets, with some youth groups negotiating with traders from Dakar. The project supported the creation of small-scale rice mill businesses managed by youth groups, which created employment for 56 young men.

Table 2.3. IFAD-supported PAFA's beneficiaries by value chain

Value chain	No. of beneficiaries	No. of women	No. of men	Youth		Adults		% of women	% of youth
				Female	Male	Female	Male		
Millet/sorghum	13 078	6 869	6 209	2 198	2 049	4 671	4 160	53%	32%
Sesame	5 837	2 667	3 170	1 040	1 046	1 627	2 124	46%	36%
Niebe	2 896	2 347	549	845	192	1 502	357	81%	36%
Bissap	4 260	3 881	380	1 281	156	2 600	224	91%	34%
Poultry	1 966	1 809	157	977	102	832	55	92%	55%
Rice	3 500	2 135	1 365	598	478	1 537	887	61%	31%
Rice mill	56		56	0	56	0	0	0%	100%
Market gardening	1 085	674	412	235	144	437	268	62%	35%
Maize and others	5 056	2 932	2 124	997	722	1 935	1 402	58%	34%
Total	37 736	23 314	14 422	8 171	4 945	15 141	9 477	62%	35%

Source: IFAD (2016b), *Projet d'Appui aux Filières Agricoles (PAFA)*, Rapport de supervision, Département gestion des programmes.

In addition, young farmers have shown an increasing enthusiasm for farming, and rural outmigration in villages supported by the project has reduced. Beyond the direct beneficiaries, the project also attracted young graduates, who decided to return to their villages and engage in farming as a business. Beyond the group of targeted vulnerable youth, several youths studying at the university in Dakar started farming activities in their villages in the value chains promoted by the project (e.g. sesame production). As members of the producer organisations, they benefited from agricultural extension services supported by the project.

Success factors

- **Building on existing institutions:** Some young people indicated they preferred being in youth sport and cultural associations rather than in a mixed age group where they had no voice.
- **Awareness campaigns:** Raising awareness among youth about the opportunity of agriculture as a profitable business and as an income generator comparable to wages in the city helped mobilise youth participation. This awareness campaign was initially carried out by the project, but during the course of implementation the ASC supported by the project started conducting awareness activities themselves among youth. In fact, young farmers informed other young people about the benefits of their new farming activities (e.g. sesame production), giving incentives for their friends who had left for the city to come back to rural areas.
- **Peer-to-peer learning:** Agricultural extension services carried out by youth (“family farm advisers”) seem particularly helpful for spreading best agricultural practices among young farmers, while perhaps less effective when reaching out to older farmers.

Individual mentorship through local volunteers, youth associations and professionals, Mali

Beneficiaries’ profiles: Uneducated or undereducated rural out-of-school youth, aged 14-25

Number of youth beneficiaries: 10 489

Mali continues to have a predominantly young population, with an average age of 14 years. The effects of conflicts and food crises have aggravated the country’s high rate of youth unemployment and underemployment. The Mali Out-of-School Youth project (USAID, 2015), supported by the US Agency for International Development (USAID), was implemented in the region of Timbuktu in Mali between 2011 and 2015. The project targeted youth within the 14-25 years age group. Prior to launching the first cohort in the south, a market opportunity study was conducted for the southern regions to identify promising livelihood possibilities and local value chains for rural youth. Based on this study, youth were trained in a diverse range of agricultural activities: market gardening, grain cultivation, livestock fattening, poultry raising and the transformation of agricultural products. Other technical training included the production and repair of agricultural equipment and material, soap making, establishing a small restaurant or bakery, carpentry, masonry, sewing, hairdressing, photography, and mobile phone repair.

The approach

The project's model focused primarily on the promotion of self-employment of uneducated youth, and included basic education and entrepreneurship skills development. Youth volunteers and unemployed university or professional school graduates were in charge of dispensing the basic education and entrepreneurship courses. Each participant received a mobile phone with a preloaded learning application, including the curricular content in support of the literacy, numeracy, functional French and entrepreneurship courses. This provided youth with the opportunity to review course work outside of class in a systematic manner. Beyond these courses, youth volunteers took on mentorship roles to accompany the youth in starting their economic activities. This was done in collaboration with the youth associations.

For each activity, the project identified local professionals living in reasonable proximity to the youth to serve as trainers, so that training could be provided at the village level and to facilitate post-training follow-up visits by the trainers to each youth individually. Trainers worked with a maximum of 20 youth per site, and training focused on practical application of the content. Each trainer was given a stipend to purchase the basic supplies needed for practical demonstrations during training.

Under the project model, youth associations were selected in each village to support the volunteers and overall project implementation. Youth association members played a key role in monitoring youth participation in basic education classes, technical training and other activities. When attendance problems arose, representatives from the youth association immediately visited the family to understand the reasons for the absence and encourage parents and the youth to continue the training.

Once they completed their training, the participants received a starter kit with the minimum set of equipment and material needed to launch their microenterprise. In addition, a total of 9 534 youth (including 5 802 women) participated in the savings and internal lending community groups that the project helped support. Members committed to saving a specific sum each month and learned the principles of saving and lending, charging small amounts of interest on loans, and delivering penalties for late payments. Each community group established two funds: a general fund that provided loans for microenterprise development and a social fund that provided loans for personal needs such as illnesses, marriages and baptisms. The average loan value of loans for productive activities was USD 14, a relatively small sum that often made the difference in a youth's ability to develop his or her microenterprise (for example, to buy needed ingredients/raw materials or to transport his or her goods to a nearby market). Women took out over 65% of the loans. When appropriate, youth were introduced to microfinance institutions within their region.

Results

Seventy-three percent (8 077) of the youth who completed the training started their microenterprise, either individually or in groups. As of November 2015, 70% of youth who launched microenterprises between 2011 and 2013 were still operating their businesses. Of those youth still operating a microenterprise, 64% were self-employed, while the rest were managing their microenterprises with their families. Women tended to run their businesses as self-employed individuals, whereas men were more likely to run their businesses with their families. In addition, about 85% of the youth had experienced an increase in profits since they had launched their microenterprises. Women, in particular, were more likely than men to have maintained their income-generating activities.

Success factors

- **Mentorship:** Local volunteer leaders and youth associations facilitated youth participation in the project, raising awareness among families and engaging youth in community services.
- **Proximity of training:** Providing skills training directly to youth in their villages through local trainers, rather than sending youth to training centres in larger towns or cities far from the villages, helped trainees maintain regular attendance.
- **Starter kits:** The distribution of income-generating activity starter kits and the project's savings and internal lending communities positively contributed to helping youth launch their microenterprises after the training.

Limitations

- **Absence of childcare facilities:** The majority of women were already married with 2-3 young children. The competing priorities of participating in courses and providing for their families were stressful and often contributed to irregular attendance among young women. Arrangements should be made to provide childcare for those with small children so that they are better able to concentrate in class and benefit from the courses.
- **Need to differentiate age groups:** The age range of the project participants was 14-25; however, younger adolescents (14-17) differ in significant ways from older youth and typically would need a differentiated curriculum, which the project was unable to provide. The project recommended raising the recruitment age to a minimum of 17 years rather than 14 years. In the case of a project intending to maintain the broader age range, the youth should be divided into younger and older groups and a new curriculum developed for the younger group, designed to better respond to their needs.

Pathways to sustainable rural livelihoods, Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Malawi and Uganda

Beneficiaries' profiles: Rural, out-of-school youth aged 12-18

Number of youth beneficiaries: 3 849

Launched in 2012, Youth in Action is a six-year learning and livelihoods programme implemented by Save the Children in partnership with the MasterCard Foundation. The programme seeks to improve the socio economic status of rural, out-of-school young people – girls and boys aged 12-18 – in Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Malawi and Uganda.

The approach

Youth in Action is structured in a way that encourages youth to make their own decisions. It provides a three-pronged approach to its programming: learning for life, taking action, and mentorship and aftercare.

The approach supports youth to identify and explore agriculture-related livelihood opportunities through a combination of informal educational and practice-oriented learning experiences. The youth cohort go through a minimum of six months' training, where the first three months are centred on acquiring knowledge around literacy,

numeracy, financial literacy, employability and life skills. The curriculum builds on young people's own knowledge, perspectives and experiences while encouraging them to explore their environments and learn about themselves, their families, their communities and their livelihood opportunities.

The last three months are entitled the “action phase”, where youth translate their learning into sustainable livelihoods through pathways of their choice. During this phase, youth are provided with four pathway choices: education, enterprise, vocational training and apprenticeship.

- The education pathway provides youth, especially those aged between 12 and 14 years, with an opportunity to go back to formal school.
- The enterprise pathway allows youth to start up small businesses within their communities, supported by local experts.
- The vocational training pathway involves youth joining vocational training institutions, where they are formally trained in different trades around agriculture.
- The apprenticeship pathway links youth to local artisans within their communities to acquire specific skills in different trades.

Each country has adapted the approach to select the pathways relevant to its context. Each youth chooses one pathway and selects one business within that pathway. The programme then supports participants towards the pathway they selected by providing technical assistance, financial aid (small grants) assistance, networking and links to the local market, peer to peer guidance, and support before they graduate and celebrate their achievements. The programme creates partnerships with families and communities, local trade and business associations, local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and governments to facilitate youth engagement and advocate for systematic changes.

Results

In the five countries where the project is implemented, most youth have chosen the enterprise pathway since it provides an immediate opportunity to start their own businesses. Youth usually started a business that one of their family members was engaged in.

As of March 2016, 3 849 youth have benefited from the programme, including 1 670 girls and 2 179 boys. Some 1 821 have chosen their pathway, and many youth have received apprenticeship training and toolkits related to their chosen field of training.

Success factors

- **Comprehensive second-chance education:** A pathway approach with opportunities to gain key foundational skills, such as literacy and numeracy, combined with livelihood training and life-skills-building activities.
- **Parental and community support:** Awareness-building activities with families and community leaders have proven to help younger adolescents engage in rural livelihood activities and be better supported by their families. Younger adolescents are more closely tied to their family dynamic, and often their role within the family unit defines their participation in a type of agriculture livelihood opportunity.

- **Participatory approach:** Including younger cohorts in programme design and evaluation are effective methods of proactive engagement. This could include activities such as youth mapping of livelihood opportunities with rural communities, as well as peer-to-peer mentoring of younger adolescents by older peers.

New job opportunities are emerging in agribusiness services

Changes in food consumption patterns and growth in demand for value-added food and agricultural products are creating new job opportunities in developing countries. These might include self-employment or wage jobs in agribusiness processing and packaging (dairy, fruit and vegetable processing plants, storage, etc.) or services (e.g. around mechanisation, extension services, information and communications technologies [ICTs], etc.).

This section of the report presents initiatives that created youth employment both downstream and in the broader spectrum of services that support the agri-food sector. The initiatives show different opportunity spaces around the mechanisation and modernisation of agriculture, the delivery of extension services, the role of ICTs in providing service support across the value chain, and the creation of small industries in rural areas.

Youth in co-operatives for shared mechanisation, Benin

Beneficiaries' profiles: Farmers and youth farmers

Number of youth beneficiaries: 850 farmers, with over half of them youth

The level of agriculture mechanisation is very different in Asia and Africa, and also varies between and within countries and among different crops. Progress has been more significant in Asia, especially in China and India, while countries such as Cambodia doubled their usage of tractors (UNESCAP, 2016). In sub-Saharan Africa, less than 5% of farms own a tractor, and in many countries this figure drops to less than 1%. Mechanisation diminishes the burden of work and can potentially improve the attractiveness of the farming sector for youth. While greater use of machinery will undeniably replace a certain amount of manual methods for certain crops, it can also have a positive impact on employment in certain cases by solving the lack of available labour at certain times of the year and by supporting the development of other jobs around the local production (e.g. tillers, seeders, threshers and millers), operation, repair and maintenance of machinery. Beyond its impact on productivity, mechanisation contributes to reducing the work burden and changing the image of agriculture for youth. This is the case for the tractor, which is perceived by farmers, especially young ones, as a factor of modernity that can improve their social and economic situation (Balse et al., 2015).

The approach

The co-operatives for shared mechanisation (les coopératives d'utilisation de matériel agricole [CUMAs]) in Benin are based on a model developed in France with the main objective of helping farmers access machinery in order to increase farm productivity. The idea is that farmers make a collective investment and jointly use the necessary machinery to improve agricultural production. Farmers are organised in small autonomous groups of around ten farmers per CUMA. The farmers are in charge of the co-operative's management, whereas the employees are tractor drivers or mechanics. The co-operative's small size does not require hiring a director or a manager.

In 2015, there were 102 CUMAs in Benin, bringing together 850 farmers, over half of whom were youth farmers. CUMAs are created among farmers from the same village, who are sometimes already organised as groups. Each farmer must purchase a certain number of investment shares to join a CUMA, which contributes to the equity capital needed to purchase the machines. In most cases, the membership subscription amount is calculated according to the amount of cultivated land owned by each member of the co-operative. This rule allows poor farmers with the smallest areas to have access to a tractor by participating with a lower share in the co-operative. The youngest family members are often the ones who learn how to drive a tractor and join a CUMA. Some CUMAs were formed by youth groups who sell their services to farmers to finance social activities in the village.

CUMAs provide services to their members, and to non-members for a fee. The first CUMAs were engaged in ploughing and transport. Currently, some CUMAs are also developing primary transformation activities, investing in cassava graters or palm nut oil pulping machines running on thermal energy. The increased number of local co-operatives has led to the creation of a network comprising regional and district CUMAs and eventually a national federation of CUMAs. Co-ordinators of the federation offer a range of services to promote shared machinery, including training in co-operative management, tractor driving lessons, and mechanics, as well as facilitating access to spare parts. The network also partners with agricultural schools to raise awareness among students.

Results

The introduction of mechanisation has resulted in a significant increase in cultivated crop areas on each farm. Farmers interviewed in a 2014 survey indicated that they have multiplied their cropped areas by 3.5 times since they began ploughing with CUMA tractors. This increase in production areas is especially visible in cotton and maize production. In the case of the Borgou district, the increase in maize production led the members to create a co-operative for corn; the objective was to guarantee input supply to their members, to store the production and to market quality corn. In South Benin, women organised in CUMAs are performing cassava and palm oil primary transformation activities. Members of the CUMAs also indicated an increase in their income, with impacts on children's education, health and family nutrition.

An important impact of the CUMAs on youth is their change in how youth perceive farming as a profession, which they usually consider to be tough and unprofitable. First, the tractor changes the image of farming, with less drudgery and more productivity. Being a member of a CUMA is a source of pride; it conveys a certain social prestige and improves the youth's social status. In addition, farm mechanisation has removed children from the task of driving oxen, and CUMA members are able to send their children to school. In certain cases, the tractor is also used to collect fuelwood, a task traditionally performed by rural women and girls. Some CUMAs also invest in social community projects. The mechanisation co-operatives have also induced the creation of other attractive jobs for youth in rural areas, such as tractor drivers or mechanics for agricultural machinery.

CUMAs have been recognised as successful structures to access equipment. However, expansion of the model will require support in the form of public policies and funds.

Success factors

- **Social capital:** A key success factor is that the farmers joined the co-operative for a common interest and were able to build trust and solidarity. The differentiated payment scheme according to land size also gave a strong sense of ownership and fairness.
- **Partnerships:** The French CUMA network provided technical assistance and mobilised funds to support the network. The creation of a France/Benin import-export company of machinery and spare parts, Tracto Agro Africa, with a branch in France and a branch in Benin, makes it easier for CUMAs in Benin to gain access to material.

Promoting self-employment for young women close to home, India

Beneficiaries' profiles: Young women and girls

Number of youth beneficiaries: 25 000 young women and girls

The Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) is a trade union and member-based organisation in Gujarat, India, which runs integrated development programmes that support women and girls towards self-reliance and full employment. SEWA is active in 50 districts of 12 states in India and has over 1.75 million members. It engages with 25 000 young women and girls in rural and urban areas to build their self-confidence, leadership and capacity to become thriving, self-employed entrepreneurs. SEWA is mainly financed through membership fees. Other sources of funding come from fee-based services that SEWA offers and services provided by government and non-government projects. This case study is based on information provided directly by SEWA.

The approach

SEWA uses an integrated and demand-based approach that combines addressing households' social and economic issues with developing interventions led by women based on local needs and opportunities in order to build resilience and support the "village economy". It relates to the "100 mile" concept, which suggests that if the six basic needs of daily life – food, clothing, housing, health, education and banking – can be met locally within a 100-mile area, people will find diverse and innovative solutions to problems of poverty, exploitation and environment degradation.

With regard to agriculture and food production, SEWA applied the same principle, creating small industries and providing a range of decent employment and self-employment opportunities, e.g. in processing, marketing and extension services. One example is the establishment of RUDI, a rural distribution network, in rural areas. A district association procures agricultural products that are in demand in local markets, such as spices, pulses and cereals (e.g. chili, sesame, wheat, gram dal), and transports them to a district processing centre to be cleaned, processed and packaged by local women. RUDI saleswomen ("RUDIBEN") buy the products from the processing centre and sell them directly to households in villages. There are 5 000 young women and girls engaged in RUDI activities. They get opportunities to earn an income not only as saleswomen in villages, but also by giving training in ICT and other technology and modern equipment to local farmers.

A central component of engaging with youth is skills development, particularly in technical and leadership skills. SEWA established a youth development programme,

which includes the creation of education centres in rural districts and villages. These education centres offer both basic and advanced courses in subjects that are in demand among girls in the local area as well as within the market. These courses take a small fee to promote sustainability of the programme. The courses have placement units, entitled Rozgar Kendras, that focus on connecting SEWA girls and youth residing in the local community with real-life internships or employment opportunities. The Rozgar Kendras organise in-house talks and interviews for internships, and aim to achieve 100% placement in meaningful employment for young people.

Results

SEWA in Rajasthan began a youth development programme in order to help girls become local leaders. The adolescent poor in Rajasthan come from extremely conservative societies that often impose barriers to girls' development and education. SEWA grassroots leaders carried out awareness campaigns across slum areas and held in-depth family and community meetings in order to convince parents and students that girls should engage in the programme, noting the skills and personal development and potential job opportunities for girls.

Currently, 2 000 girls are working as master trainers to give training to grassroots members. In addition, 150 young women were recruited by the Rajasthan headquarter office as training and administration staff for the association. The trained girls are working in all sectors in SEWA enterprises, and are also getting jobs outside the organisation. In addition, girls are prepared for employment through SEWA-organised exposure visits that bring adolescents into contact with successful professionals and businesses.

Success factors

- **Localised actions:** Setting up schools and training centres locally within a reasonable distance to support a cluster of 5-7 villages, and identifying livelihood opportunities in the nearby vicinity
- **Tackling social norms:** Creating awareness among households of the importance and added value of sending girls to educational and vocational training
- **Targeted skills training:** Building the capacity of young girls in business management and in ICT skills.

Advisory services and market linkages to farmers through ICT, Ghana

Beneficiaries' profile: Young farmers

Number of youth beneficiaries: 5 222 farmers, the majority of whom are aged 15-35; 75% are male

ICT has not only revolutionised agricultural practices but has also empowered small and marginal farmers to access information and knowledge. Youth are early adopters of new ideas and technologies, and ICTs present a unique solution to connect and attract young people to opportunities in agriculture. A publication from the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA) shows how several young graduates – most of them from rural farming communities – are using ICTs to provide smallholder farmers with a range of services across Africa, including training and market information (CTA, 2016).

The approach

In Ghana, the company SavaNet, owned by a young graduate with previous experience in agricultural development, aims to support young farmers. It creates platforms that connect farmers with both agricultural experts and fellow farmers, obtaining up-to-date information about farming. In order to improve agricultural extension services, SavaNet provides an audio conferencing platform where farmers can call in to get the latest information about their agricultural production. In addition, SavaNet has a podcast series focused on topics that directly benefit farmers, and an agricultural GPS data service for farmers who want to better understand the geography and topography of their farms. In collaboration with the Ministry of Food and Agriculture, SavaNet aggregates early morning prices from local markets and then sends them to interested farmers via SMS, so the farmers can be sure to get the best prices.

Results

In 2014, 5 222 farmers worked with SavaNet. The majority of the SavaNet farmers are aged between 15 and 35, and about 75% are male. SavaNet's engagement with young farmers has led to the creation of primary, secondary and tertiary farmer groups at the community, district and regional levels. These farmer groups are contributing immensely in actively engaging young people in farming as a business and sustainable livelihood.

Success factors

- **Modernising farming:** Using simple ICT, SavaNet was able to provide quick and accurate information to thousands of farmers. ICT-based tools are also appealing for younger generations and make farming more modern and attractive to young people.
- **Peer role models:** SavaNet targeted young farmers who then served as role models for other hesitant rural youth. The founder of SavaNet, Moses Nganwani Tia, describes the initiative well: *“I think if other young people see their peers re-engaging in farming, they’ll join them. The best way for us to get young people involved in agriculture is to highlight the young people who are already in agriculture”* (CTA, 2016).

Box 2.1. Youth-owned inclusive businesses in the agricultural sector

Agro Mindset (<http://www.agromindset.com>)

Ghanaian entrepreneur David Asare Asiamah is the founder of Agro Mindset, a mission-driven firm specialising in agribusiness ventures. The focus of the group is to run highly profitable farm-based enterprises with long-term growth potential and to showcase this know-how to the youth and private sector in an industry-relevant manner. The company emphasises sustainable development, value chains, entrepreneurship and “farming as a business” which lends support services to entrepreneurs in the valuation and planning of value-added agriculture. David was named in 2016 by Forbes as one of Africa’s 30 most promising entrepreneurs under 30.

Sooretul (<https://www.sooretul.com/>)

Senegalese entrepreneur and IT engineer Awa Caba is the co-founder of Sooretul.

Sooretul, which means “it’s not far” in Awa’s native language, Wolof, is an online sales platform that sells locally produced and processed food. The platform connects small-scale producers and agro-processing enterprises with the increasingly demanding middle-class Senegalese. The website started with 150 agri-food products and within a few years of launching was offering over 300 selections. Sooretul won the 2015 Rebranding Africa Award and the 2016 Pitch AgriHack.

Stawi Foods and Fruits (<http://stawiindustries.com/>)

Kenyan entrepreneur Eric Muthomi founded Stawi Foods and Fruits, an innovative start-up which procures bananas from smallholder farmers in rural Kenya and processes them into banana flour. The company diversified its products and now engages in several value chains, including maize, millet, sorghum, sweet potato, amaranth, wheat and soybeans. Stawi’s agro-processing business creates employment for youth and enables smallholder farmers to market their produce.

Integrating rural youth into agri-food processing activities will require skills training and youth ownership

Community-driven agribusiness enterprise development, Nigeria

Beneficiaries’ profile: Poorest of the poor in the rural areas of the Niger Delta, in particular, youth aged 18-35

Number of youth beneficiaries: 35 365

The Community-Based Natural Resource Management Programme (CBNRMP) is an IFAD-supported project which aims to improve the livelihoods and living conditions of rural families in the nine states of the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. While the overall target group was the poorest in rural areas, the project developed a specific targeting strategy to support youth (aged 18-35) and women in agribusiness. The value chains were selected based on the abundance and diversity of natural resources in the project area. They included crop production, artisanal fisheries, and aquaculture/cage fisheries.

The approach

The project adapted the initial community-driven development (CDD) approach to suit the objective of agribusiness development and design a pathway for youth to create their enterprises. This modification generated a huge youth response. The CDD agribusiness model combines different levels of institutions: youth individual enterprises, commodity groups and Commodity Apex Development Associations (CADAs). In parallel, the project facilitated the creation of incubation centres and a youth forum, which they named the Youth Agriculture Foundation.

The starting point of this pathway for youth was the elaboration of agro-enterprise protocols, which include the following:

- mapping/targeting high-value, low-risk, market-led, high-return enterprises; identifying youth-based commodity groups and selecting interested youth based on endorsement of the community leadership and agreement to belong to a commodity group of his/her interest

- providing two weeks' hands-on training to acquire the requisite skills for enterprise management; identifying agribusiness of candidate's choice based on self-analysis, preparation of bankable business plan and candidate's choice of ownership type
- establishing a formal agreement (e.g. a memorandum of understanding) between the youth and commodity groups on terms of engagement, including responsibility to commodity groups, repayment of revolving microcredit (matching grant) to the group, etc.
- providing starter packs (interest-free revolving loans) through the commodity groups or apex groups (which also provide a mini platform for knowledge sharing and allow common access to inputs at a moderate cost).
- linking with service providers and implementation support (monitoring, supervision, technical backstopping).

Successful enterprises become incubation hubs, clustering unemployed youth as apprentices around them and providing the youth with hands-on practical training in enterprise identification, planning, budgeting, establishment and management. At the time of the project's completion (2015), it had created over 100 successful champions/mentors in the programme area. Each of them has weaned an average of five young people who are successfully operating their enterprises and clustering/mentoring other young agripreneurs. All the parent enterprises also serve as training and excursion sites for primary and secondary school students and other new entrepreneurs.

In each community, a CADA is created as an umbrella organisation of different commodity groups. A minimum of two and a maximum of three representatives from each group within a benefiting community come together to form the community-level CADA. The functions of the CADA include the co-ordination and supervision of agripreneurs and commodity groups, facilitation of access to agro-inputs and loans, and facilitation of market access. They also provide a social guarantee to young entrepreneurs who intend to access financial credit through commodity groups or village savings and credit groups.

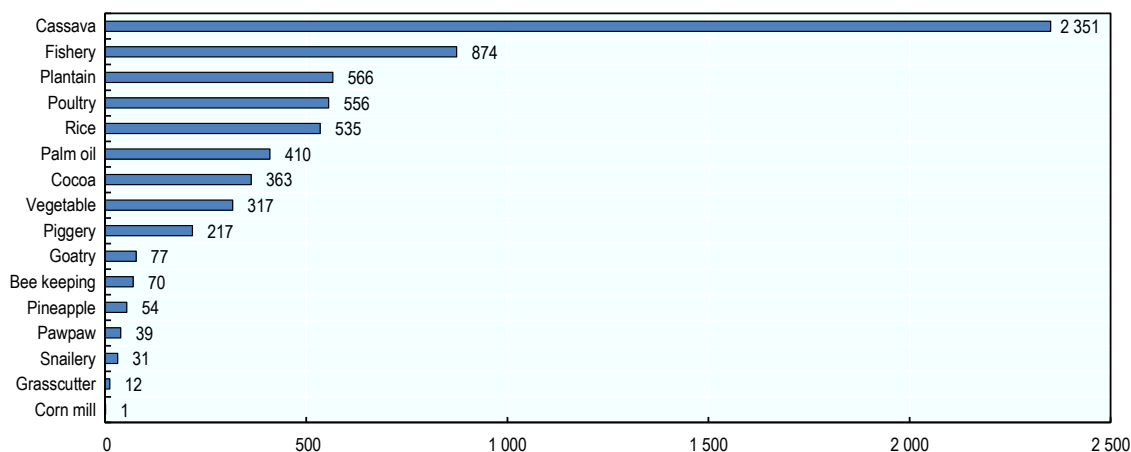
Results

A total of 63 858 jobs were created in on-farm and off-farm activities, employing 20 462 young men and 14 903 young women. Off-farm activities included agro-processing, marketing activities and fabricating agricultural equipment. The project classified the enterprises as strong (those with annual net profit of >NGN 500 000), moderate (NGN 100 000 to NGN 500 000) or weak (<NGN 100 000). The strong enterprises constitute 21.6% out of the total 1 000 enterprises in the sample, moderate enterprises constitute 67%, and weak enterprises constitute 13%. The best-performing enterprises were those in rice, yam and cassava processing and fisheries and poultry.

Table 2.4. Enterprise performance, by revenue

Strong	Medium	Weak
Rice, cassava, fish, yams, palm oil, poultry	All value chains with a high portion of cassava and rice	Piggery, vegetable and honey production

Source: IFAD (2016a), Community-Based Natural Resources Management Programme in the Niger Delta Region: Project Completion Report.

Figure 2.1. Number of agro-enterprises promoted, by value chain

Source: IFAD (2016a), Community-Based Natural Resources Management Programme in the Niger Delta Region: Project Completion Report.

The project emphasised production-level enterprises until the last two years of the project, when it shifted activities to processing. The pipeline and follow up project, the Rural Agribusiness Sector Enhancement Programme, will build on the lessons of CBNRMP and focus on value addition through processing.

Success factors

- **The CDD approach to business development:** Building on the social capital already formed at the community level, the programme created awareness of different segments of the community, helping them to view agriculture as a business, strengthened farmer groups, and institutionalised the CADA as an umbrella association to support the enterprise groups in each community.
- **Attitude and behaviour change:** The programme's combination of intensive sensitisation, capacity building, training, mentorship and counselling built understanding and trust, transformed the mindset of the farmers from subsistence farming to agribusiness, and enabled youth to see agro-enterprises as a profitable source of livelihood.
- **Fast returns on investment:** Youth are ready to engage in agriculture if the activities will generate a high return on investment, have a short gestation period, confer business ownership to them and lead to social linkage opportunities. The gestation period is 3 months for bee keeping and rice production, 5 months for fish at 1 kg market weight, and 3.5 months for broiler at 1.2 kg market weight.
- **Mentorship and role models:** Champions and mentors in the programme were key to attracting unemployed youth and motivating them to engage in agro-businesses. Successful enterprises became incubation hubs, taking on youth as apprentices and providing them with hands-on practical training in enterprise identification, planning, budgeting, establishment and management.
- **Economies of scale:** A minimum economic scale for those enterprises was also established for smallholder farmers to come out of poverty within two years, as well as to create an inducement for youth to engage in agriculture. For example, the

minimum economic size was 250 birds for poultry, 2 ha for cassava, 1 000 fingerlings for fishery and 0.25 ha for vegetables (double cropping each year).

- **In-class and field training:** The huge involvement of youth in agri-business enterprises recorded by the programme was also attributed to the linkage it developed with the Songhai Agricultural Centre and through field-based classroom teaching for the development of crop, livestock and fishery enterprises. A total of 2 984 women and youth were trained on income generation, life skills and vocational activities.

Integrating commodity value chains, Moldova

Beneficiaries' profiles: 1 815 rural poor, micro-entrepreneurs of whom 37% were women

Number of youth beneficiaries: 445

Rural Financial Services and Agricultural Development is an IFAD project which aims to sustainably contribute to the alleviation of poverty through increased income and improved livelihoods. Activities include the creation of production assets through access to investment loans and market-derived rural infrastructure; sustainable integration into commodity value chains through access to advanced production technologies and reliable post-harvest services; and the generation of employment opportunities for the rural poor.

The approach

The project simultaneously developed the upstream (increased production) and downstream (post-harvest and market access services) segments of the value chain, and adopted a demand-based approach for loans. Given the long gestation periods of fruit tree plantations, there was a higher share of investment in the upstream segment of the value chain (81%) compared with the downstream segment (19%). Contract farming was promoted to build synergies with active partners in the downstream segment of the value chain who are in need of reliable supplies (in quantity and quality) of primary commodities.

Results

The project resulted in significant agriculture productivity and income increases compared with traditional production systems. The per capita production of fruits and berries increased by 29% from 106 kg in 2011 to 137 kg in 2015. The estimated average increases in net income for nine financial models across category of beneficiary and economic activity were 7-9-fold for bee keeping, 2.5-6-fold for table grape production, 4-fold for conservation agriculture, 3-fold for a 20 ha medium-size farmer investing in a set of farm machinery, 1.8-fold for a 5 ha small farmer investing in a small tractor, and 1.8-fold for a livestock producer investing in three dairy cows. In terms of employment, permanent and seasonal job creation was considerable. The cumulative full-time equivalent jobs generated by the project directly and indirectly amounted to 5 324 households, or three times the number of direct beneficiaries.

Success factors

- **Investing upstream in the value chain:** The significant incremental production contributed to increased yields and expansion of the area for fruit trees and vegetable production, and enhanced the availability of food per capita for urban consumers. The exported products contributed to improving the import/export food trade balance.

- **Linking value chain actors:** The promotion of contract farming allowed 15 producer groups to link up to partners in post-harvest value chains.
- **Strengthening institutions:** The project built the capacities of participating financial institutions, savings and credit associations, contract farming producer groups, and users' associations in charge of the operation and maintenance of shared facilities and services developed by the project.

Increasing youth engagement in agriculture, Northern Uganda

Beneficiaries' profiles: Vulnerable youth living in the Lango, Acholi and West Nile sub-regions

Number of youth beneficiaries:

The UK's Department for International Development (DFID)-funded Transforming the Economy through Climate Smart Agri-Business Market Development (NU-TEC MD) programme aims to integrate rural youth into agricultural value chains. NU-TEC MD's role is to broker the relationship between the private sector and youth producer groups and co-operatives. Besides strengthening the private sector supply chain, the programme intended to build a sustainable relationship between the private sector and service providers, thereby enhancing continuous business engagement (Okelai et al., 2017).

The approach

A study was done to understand youth engagement in agriculture and find better ways to link youth to the private sector. The study selected sunflower and soybean markets and the interconnected markets of seed, land preparation, storage and aggregation as entry points for youth in the agricultural economy of Northern Uganda. The study identified business models in areas where youth have incentives to actively participate and where there is a business case for firms to pursue practices that are more inclusive for youth.

Results

The study proposes the following youth engagement strategies:

1. **Youth-led mechanisation for land opening and on-farm operations.** This can build around a service-led intervention model to enable youth to invest in mechanisation services as a business.
2. **Youth engagement in local seed businesses and distribution agencies.** Youth can be engaged in specialised agricultural production ventures, such as seed production, and as commissioned agents for input delivery and distribution systems.
3. **Youth engagement in production through demand-driven approaches to harness youth energy.** Youth can be supported to engage in contract farming built on commitment-based forward contract arrangements with oilseed buyers/processors.
4. **Youth participation in storage and aggregation markets.** Youth can function as buying agents or delivery agents in cases of input trading systems. For instance, the company engages youth as buying agents and facilitates them through pre-financing and mentoring. To improve the link between production and aggregation, youth producer groups can be supported with the provision of small bulking houses, and youth groups can act as primary aggregation centres.

Success factors

- **Group approach:** Interventions to facilitate private sector engagement with youth should not target youth in isolation, but as part of a group. This is a condition to ensure the sustainability of the facilitation strategy when youth transition into adulthood.
- **Working with existing and established co-operatives and associations:** Youth who could benefit from robust inclusion are those who are fully integrated into current farming structures in the community, which are producer groups, co-operatives and savings associations. Operating within the context of the existing institutional and social structures provides youth with credibility and is more likely to attract the private sector.
- **Role models:** A strong point in the current business models is that they hinge upon using role models to offer peer learning support and apprenticeship learning for youth to engage in farming as a business and adopt good agricultural practices.
- **Training and mentoring:** In addition to providing specific life and technical skills to youth producers' groups, dedicated training and mentoring are provided to youth co-operative staff to strengthen the institutional capabilities of co-operatives and allow their transition to business entities and one-stop shops for the youth producer groups.

Conclusion

A defining characteristic of most developing countries is the relative importance of agriculture in their national economies. In light of the continued growth in demand for value-added food and agriculture products, the increased attention on developing agro-industries as a sector of growth and employment creation is well justified. Looking forward, the challenge is to enable small-scale farmers and low-skilled rural youth to integrate into local and global agricultural value chains and move up the ladder to meet the quantity and quality standards required for national and export markets.

Examples described in this chapter show different interventions at the local level that can help integrate rural youth into the agricultural value chain and provide them with decent employment opportunities. The majority of examples are in the production phase, as it has the lowest barrier to entry in the value chain. Indeed, the mechanisation of agriculture promotes the creation of attractive jobs for youth in rural areas, such as tractor drivers or mechanics for agricultural machinery. Some successful examples of jobs in service provision using ICT and agro-processing are starting to emerge. Strategies that support small- and medium-size processing enterprises can generate productive employment for youth and provide a market for smallholder farmers. This can create employment in low- and medium-skilled jobs while also attracting educated young entrepreneurs to invest in and/or manage these enterprises.

Applying a youth employment lens to agricultural value chain development means to purposefully set youth inclusion and youth employment as an objective. The success factors for integrating youth into agricultural value chains based on the above examples have been summarised as follows:

Rural youth profiling: Understanding the nature and conditions under which the different youth groups are engaged or excluded, and the generational and power dynamics along the value chains, will help identify the bottlenecks to be addressed when designing

a youth-sensitive agricultural value chain project. This means profiling the rural youth population by age group (e.g. 15-17 year-olds will have different challenges, aspirations and skill sets than 18-35 year-olds), gender, education and skills level, social capital, access to land and finance, prevailing social norms, etc.

Selection of high-potential value chain: Young people should be involved in identifying a list of potential activities in their village and region which they see themselves capable of doing, and which at the same time represent potential growth sectors.

Mentorship and role models: Young people need role models to look up to and follow. Agriculture is associated with hardship and poverty and is considered an unattractive option for young people. Local leaders and other youth farmers can help change the mentality of rural youth through mentoring and coaching. Mentoring can happen through incubator approaches, where young farmers learn how to operate a business, or through regular meetings and interactions.

Peer-to-peer learning: The most effective way to convince young people is through other young people. Peer to peer learning has proven effective when providing agricultural extension services, for example. Recently, an increasing number of young people with higher education are starting agri-food businesses. They serve as models for other young people and play an important role in creating and investing in small industries in rural areas, building networks, and generating employment.

Awareness campaigns: The potential of agriculture and value addition is largely underestimated. Young people in rural areas need to be informed about the different activities possible along the value chain if their minds are to be changed about agriculture and related jobs. Campaigns should include information about market requirements, product standards, knowledge, innovative tools and new production methods.

Skills training: The majority of rural youth are early school dropouts and have low skills. Programmes that provide apprenticeship and on-the-job training opportunities for rural youth can increase their employability. Vocational training programmes must also consider teaching soft skills in addition to basic literacy and numeracy skills. Improving entrepreneurship skills, for example, entails training not only in business management but also in negotiation, leadership and team building.

Physical proximity: Activities must take place close to young people's homes. This is especially relevant for young women who cannot travel far to attend training or take up a job.

Financial or in-kind capital: Access to land for young people is difficult and rural areas are underserved by formal financial institutions. Furthermore, financial services are not adapted to the specific needs and constraints of youth (e.g. lack of collateral and financial resources). For youth below the age of 18, it is even more difficult and often impossible to access financial support. Activities aimed at helping young people engage in agriculture will need to support their access to land, seed capital and/or materials to get started. Access to land, in particular, will be a critical decision factor for the youth, whether to engage in farm or non-farm activities and/or to migrate.

Social capital: Agriculture is foremost about know-how and linkages with actors along the value chain; young people tend to lack both. Joining farmers' organisations or co-operatives will help youth gain trust and solidarity, as well as make access to quality inputs, services, financing and markets easier. Agricultural co-operatives have proven to be an effective mechanism for engaging young people in agriculture and increasing social capital and employment opportunities through on-farm and off-farm activities

(MIJARC/IFAD/FAO, 2012). However, hierarchical structures, high membership fees, access to land, and other co-operative membership conditions which young people cannot meet exclude them from benefiting from these organised structures.

Modern agriculture and rural areas: For agriculture to become attractive to young people it has to be less labour-intensive and use modern technology. This can not only be in the form of mechanisation, such as tractors or improved post-harvest management techniques, but also through the use of ICT to have better access to information, services and markets. Basic infrastructure (electricity, water, road, Internet) will need to be improved for young people if rural livelihoods are to become more attractive to them. Some ICTs allow young entrepreneurs to start new businesses in service provision along the agricultural value chains.

Identifying employment opportunities along agricultural value chains requires taking into account the potential the location offers in terms of natural resources and markets, as well as the profiles of young men and women. If the local context is not conducive to agriculture (i.e. lack of availability of land and water, difficult access to markets), the better option for youth will be to find a job outside the agricultural sector, e.g. in construction, ecotourism or small-scale manufacturing. In this case, the focus will need to be on building youth's employability skills needed by local enterprises and ensuring decent pay and working conditions. In addition, employers need to feel confident about recruiting youth (for example, through supervised internships, partnerships with placement organisations, and incentives from the government).

Investing in the development of secondary towns would also offer new markets to promising local value chains while creating job opportunities in the service and retail sector. Furthermore, it is crucial to understand consumer demands, global and local market competition and prices and trade policies when thinking of creating businesses from the ground up.

Countries must think strategically about how to position themselves with respect to market competition while ensuring that business models are inclusive of small-scale producers and local businesses operated by rural youth. In particular, promoting jobs downstream in the agricultural value chain requires higher-skilled young people on the supply side, while at the same time boosting the demand side through a mix of market-based policies and identification of specific sectors or industries with comparative advantages. The next chapter is dedicated to policy interventions to support rural youth employment demand along the agricultural value chain.

Notes

¹ The farmer's organisation sponsors a young man or woman who will receive inputs through a sliding financing system; otherwise, all members of the organisation receive training on good agricultural practices.

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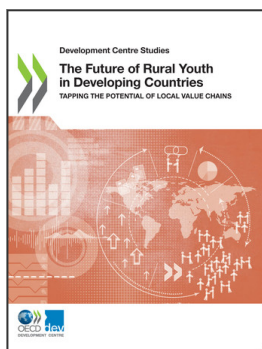
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