

## **FAO's Integrated Country Approach (ICA)** for promoting decent rural employment

Results and stories from the field



### INTRODUCTION



2/3 of world's youth live in poverty



In Sub-Saharan Africa, 10 to 12 million new jobs/year are needed till 2030 to absorb all new labour entrants



Agriculture presents a largely untapped reservoir of employment opportunities

The world population is young: **1.2 billion youth** aged 15-24 live in the world today and almost **88%** of them are **in developing countries**.

Globally, nearly two-thirds of youth are found in a state of extreme, moderate or near **poverty**, reaching over 90% in South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. They increasingly perceive **migration** as the only opportunity to make a living: one third of all international migrants are youth in the 15-34 age group.

Although the world's youth population is expected to grow, employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for young women and men remain limited – particularly for those living in economically stagnant **rural areas** of developing countries.

Hence, creating **more productive and beneficial jobs** for the rural youth is particularly urgent. Rapid population growth and urbanization, as well as rising household income, will have a dramatic effect on the **increased demand** for jobs, food, energy, clean water, infrastructure, and social services.

**Food and agriculture** can contribute substantially to solve the youth employment challenge. There is a largely **untapped reservoir** of farm and non-farm employment opportunities in the agriculture sector and within food systems. Advancing decent jobs for youth in rural areas will also contribute to effectively achieving the **Sustainable Development Goals** by 2030, considering the strong links between employment, agricultural development, food security and poverty reduction.

To be successful, an approach to promote decent rural employment at country level should aim to **build synergies** across different interventions, such as capacity development, institutional support, knowledge generation and partnership creation. For example, providing skills development for youth without facilitating their access to markets and credit may result in a failure. Each intervention should be tailored to the local needs and capacities.

This is what FAO is doing through its **Integrated Country Approach (ICA)** for promoting decent rural employment.



There is an untapped reservoir of employment opportunities in the agricultural sector.

Food and agriculture can contribute to solve the youth unemployment challenge.

# An integrated, phased and inclusive approach

The Integrated Country Approach (ICA) for decent rural employment is the FAO flagship programme for policy support and institutional capacity development on **employment issues**.

The **overall objective** of the Programme is to help youth access more and better employment opportunities in rural areas and agri-food systems.

#### At global and regional level,

ICA contributes to FAO's wider efforts to integrate employment issues in the agricultural and rural development discourse, including by supporting decent rural employment mainstreaming within the FAO Strategic Framework.

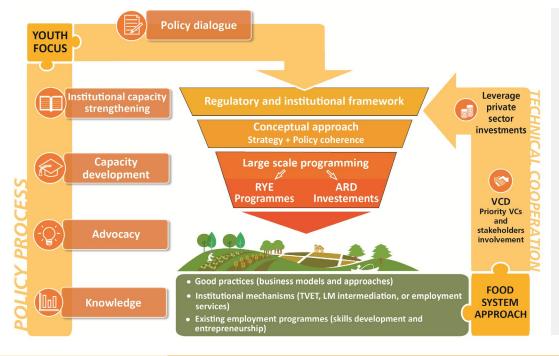
At **country level**, ICA supports governments in developing strategies, policies and programmes aimed at improving, in the medium- to long-term, the quantity and the quality of on-farm and off-farm job opportunities for rural youth. ICA also works with and for **young women and men** in rural areas, empowering them as agents of economic development within their communities.

To date, the Programme has been implemented in two phases, covering five countries in sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America. The **first phase** was carried out in Malawi and Tanzania from 2011 to 2014, while the **second phase**,

from 2015 until 2018, targeted Senegal, Uganda and Guatemala and built on the lessons learned from the previous one, allowing for a more selective and costeffective support.

The ICA Programme was largely funded by the **Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)** under the FAO Multi-Partner Support Mechanism (FMM).

ICA introduced a programmatic **innovation** in terms of FAO's policy support on decent rural employment promotion, by conceptualizing, testing and systematizing an integrated approach to the issue.



#### Figure 1

ICA core functions are oriented towards a sustainable policy change.

The normative work translates into the creation of virtuous mechanisms to create more and better employment opportunities in rural areas, also by engaging the private sector and key stakeholders along priority value chains.

The **integrated nature** of the approach refers not only to its multilevel scope (global, regional and national), but also to the different FAO core functions (namely knowledge generation, policy assistance, technical

support) and work areas mobilized (employment, sustainable agriculture and agribusiness, gender, inclusive value chain development). Each intervention is thought to reflect **national** and local circumstances and

takes due consideration of different levels of development and national capacity.

### **ICA Programme's features**

Responding to local needs. The inception phase of the ICA Programme typically starts with the application of dedicated methodologies specifically developed to conduct an in-depth analysis of the national policy framework and a robust assessment of local stakeholders' capacities and gaps in terms of decent rural employment promotion. This phase paves the way for the implementation of a territorial intervention approach, tailored to local needs and priorities. During the programme implementation, priorities and needs are regularly re-assessed through inclusive, multistakeholder Technical Working Groups, established at national level.

Dedicated support at country level. ICA's country-level activities are led by full-time National Project

**Coordinators**, who strengthen FAO decentralized capacities in terms of decent employment promotion and mainstreaming of employment issues within the FAO work programme.

> Creating partnerships.

Establishing key partnerships since the inception phase is central to enhancing impact and visibility. Within the **public sector**, ICA works with ministries of agriculture, labour and economics to mainstream decent work issues in the agricultural sector, while boosting support to rural entrepreneurship. **NGOs** and **youth and producers' organizations** are also major partners in safeguarding the Programme efficiency and inclusiveness.

youth play a central role in the Programme implementation, serving both as members of national Technical Working
Groups and as implementing
partners. A common feature of
ICA's interventions in different
target countries is the active
engagement of young women
and men into policy dialogue
on agri-food systems and rural
development. Furthermore, the
Programme strives to provide
youths in rural areas with the
knowledge and skills needed
to become successful agrientrepreneurs, while facilitating
their access to markets and credit.

Leveraging ICTs. With the aim of guaranteeing youth's participation into policy dialogue, ICA explores and establishes pilot models to foster community building and engagement at local level. This is done by adopting participatory communication principles and leveraging the potential of ICTs.

DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED

YOUTH TRAINED IN RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND AGRIBUSINESS

COMMUNITY-ENHANCING ENTREPRENEURIAL PROJECTS DIRECTLY SUPPORTED

### **GUATEMALA**



In Guatemala, young women and men hold **precarious jobs** in the informal rural economy, often earning half of the minimum national wage. Increasingly, they try to **migrate** to urban areas or abroad as a last resort for making a living. To address this challenge, the ICA Programme contributed to the implementation of the **National Decent Work Policy**, released in 2017, and piloted a **territorial intervention approach** to support vulnerable youth in rural areas affected by unemployment and out-migration.

This approach is built around three main interventions:

- Development of a rural-friendly labour intermediation and information service in order to make the national employment windows accessible also in rural areas;
- Promotion of the use of ICTs, especially social media and mobile applications, to boost exchanges among youth on agricultural practices, commercial networks and entrepreneurial opportunities;
- Promotion of **social entrepreneurship in rural areas**, by supporting youth in designing and starting up multi-sectorial productive initiatives (mini-clusters) in their communities, adopting a collaborative economy approach.

### **VUME Rural**: A model of rural-friendly employment services

The National Employment System in Guatemala works through a network of employment windows (*VUMEs*) which are distributed across the country and provide labour intermediation, orientation and information services. To make the service relevant and accessible also for users in rural areas, FAO and the Ministries of Labour, Economy and Agriculture have piloted a **rural-friendly window** model (*VUME Rural*) in the municipality of Tejutla, Department of San Marcos. The model is focused on providing employment-related services that are **tailored to the needs** of the rural youth, also facilitaing their access to agriculture support services and entrepreneurship opportunities.

An integrated outreach strategy, comprising the **web platform** and **mobile phone application** *ChispaRural.gt*, amplifies the information offer and reach of the window. During the first four months after the launch of the initiative, 500 youth benefited from the window's services. 20% of them accessed labour orientation or direct training support, 50% external training offered by partners, 5% found a dependent job and 14% are receiving technical support to start or strengthen their business. Considering the success of the model, the Ministry of Labour requested to apply it to three additional windows.

### ChispaRural: A digital platform to connect rural talents

As part of its efforts to boost youth-oriented services, ICA launched *ChispaRural.gt*, a digital service targeting the new generations of Guatemalan family farmers. *ChispaRural* works as a **virtual hub** where rural youth can access up-to-date information on opportunities and resources offered by different suppliers, as well as practical tools, training materials and inspirational stories of young agripreneurs. Several organizations have joined the initiative to guarantee the management of the platform in the long run.

The service can be accessed online, via web and mobile. Furthermore, it integrates social networks, live chats and instant messaging to **maximize the interaction** among rural youth, specialists and technical advisors. The **ultimate goal** is to leverage the widespread of mobile phones to enable youth from remote rural communities to easily demand, receive and share customized information useful to improve their productive, associative and marketing activities. Besides participating in group discussions and webinars, users can also launch **crowdfunding campaigns** and showcase their products and business ideas.

The platform has been developed through a **participatory process** centered on the user. The service responds to the needs reported by more than **1,500 young people** and **rural service providers** in the department of San Marcos and is being tested by local user groups from other departments in the country.

### La Factoría: A business laboratory for rural youth

Another activity implemented as part of the ICA programme is the *Factoria del emprendimiento*, which is thought as a business laboratory helping youth start up **community-centred small and medium enterprises**, with a territorial development approach. The initiative has provided a 3-month training on entrepreneurial skills and local development to 75 young men and women, between 20 and 30 years of age, from the migration-prone departments of Quetzaltenango, San Marcos, Huehuetenango, and Totonicapán.

The Factoria has also supported the youth in assessing local markets, defining alliances and formulating financially-viable project proposals. All projects show a strong agriculture and livestock base and explore the potential of niche markets and green entrepreneurship. Each of the youth-led enterprises engages 50 to 100 families from the respective communities. Around 50 of these proposals are directly supported by FAO, in collaboration with the Government and local partners, in order to mobilize the necessary resources to access market opportunities. Six of them have already been legalized as cooperatives.





## **María and Manuel**





Commercialization of local products





Scan this QR code and watch the video

https://bit.ly/2q6p3Fe



### "The project is generating a change in my life and in the life of my community, of which I now feel proud"

"In my community there are often tough decisions to be taken, such as sending children or even babies abroad. Everyone migrates: young boys and girls, young women and even entire families," explains María Chum Pastor, one of the youth involved in La Factoría.

María is a 26-year-old farmer from Climentoro, in the Municipality of Aguacatán. Thanks to ICA, she has designed, together with her community, a multi-sectorial business project that focuses on cattle rearing, production and commercialization of cheese. potatoes and green vegetables, and the elaboration of organic fertilizers. This will enable her to boost the

He is working on the establishment of an eco-touristic centre, called Linda Vista, which will involve the entire community by commercializing local products such as mushrooms, fruits, medicinal plants and coffee.

"Rural communities often do not have the necessary experience or technical assistance in order to start entrepreneurial initiatives. Likewise, there is no financial capital for it and employment opportunities tend to be very scarce," Manuel points out.

"Now, thanks to the training offered by La Factoría. I am able to see that there are endless resources that have never



NATIONAL RURAL YOUTH EMPLYMENT POLICY

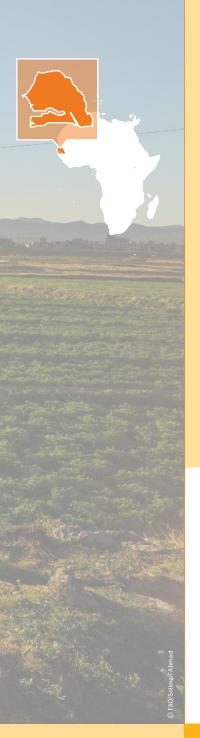
DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED

150,000

JOBS/ YEAR EXPECTED TO BE CREATED IN THE MID- 12,800

HOUSEHOLDS EXPECTED TO BE BENEFITED IN THE SHORT-TERM

## SENEGAL



Senegal is a **youthful country**, with over 60% of people below the age of 24 years. Agriculture is the most important sector of the national economy, providing employment for 70% of the working population. Yet, **employment opportunities** for rural youth remain limited and of poor quality. In this context, facilitating the participation of the youth cohort in the agricultural sector has the potential to reduce rural poverty amongst youths and adults alike. To this purpose, the ICA Programme aimed at making Senegalese agri-food systems more **youth-inclusive**, in partnership with the *Agence Nationale pour la Promotion de l'Emploi des Jeunes* (ANPEJ).

In particular, the ICA Programme contributed to the development and implementation of the **National Rural Youth Employment Policy**, by fostering an inclusive policy dialogue process and providing technical support in terms of policy formulation. As part of these efforts, in December 2017, a guide for integrating decent rural employment in local planning was disseminated among local authorities to inform the implementation of the National Policy at local level.

The Policy is expected to create **from 100,000 to 150,000 jobs** per year. FAO contributed to its implementation also by leading the design and testing of highly replicable **models for youth engagement** in the agricultural sector, which focus respectively on:

- Facilitating **youth access** to agriculture related information, through the launch of the online National Observatory of Rural Employment (*ONER*) and the organization of awareness raising and knowledge sharing events;
- Provision of **support for youth in agribusiness**, through the Young Agripreneurs Integration Model (*MIJA*) platforms.

### MIJA Platforms: Cultivating young agripreneurs

The MIJA platforms are small **rural hubs** for proximity agribusiness support, where rural youth learn about agricultural production, aggregation, transformation and service provision. The MIJA concept expands the scope of the existing ANPEJ's youth integrated farms by providing young women and men with **trainings** not only in agricultural production, but also on market and business aspects, while supporting them in strengthening **group cooperation** and ensuring the economic viability of their business activities. The platforms have been piloted in the areas of Ndiawdoun (Saint Louis), Silane (Diourbel), Mbilor (Saint Louis), Léona (Louga), Soutouré (Kolda) and Fongolembi (Kolda). A dedicated training package on rural entrepreneurship has been developed and used in the 6 platforms. The

package includes tools for the development of business plans and guidance on rural entrepreneurship. It has been designed in collaboration with several local stakeholders and institutions, which have contributed towards a **multidisciplinary** centralized training and incubation hub. As a result, 60 young agripreneurs have learned how to enhance their businesses, while other 90 youths have been trained, using the **Farmer Field Schools (FFS) approach**, in agricultural production.

The MIJA initiative has ensured guidance and support not only to the young women and men participating in the platforms, but also to other youths in neighbouring areas. Overall, the 6 MIJA pilots are expected to generate 1,500 direct and indirect on-farm and off-farm jobs and to positively impact the livelihoods of 12,800 households. The FAO MIJA model has generated growing interest in Senegal as an effective approach to support the engagement of rural youth in agribusiness. ANPEJ has already committed more than 500,000 USD for the infrastructure work needed to maintain and strengthen the platforms, guaranteeing the long-term sustainability of the initiative.

### **ONER:** An online platform for rural youth

In Senegal, mobile subscriptions have steadily increased in the past 6 years. To harness the potential of ICTs in the country, ICA and ANPEJ launched in December 2017 an online web- and mobile-based **National Observatory of Rural Employment** (*ONER*). The ONER is thought as a dynamic **online hub** that leverages mobile technology and serves as a platform for rural youth, producers and development partners to monitor the national labour market, get information regarding agricultural products, and collect data on the agricultural sector.

The Observatory benefits from a portfolio of mobile applications that FAO is developing to offer information and advisory services to farmers in the field. The apps will be **tailored** to the local contexts, with a particular emphasis on the needs of young, self-employed entrepreneurs, taking into account the distribution of languages in the country (Wolof 38.7%, Pular 26.5%, Serer 15%, Mandinka 4.2%) and the national illiteracy rate - which is still at 40% and higher in poor rural communities.

In order to develop the Observatory, a partnership was established with the local youth-led organization *Yeesal AgriHub*, which developed the online platform and keeps it updated with information and agricultural data. *Yeesal AgriHub* is also in charge of promoting the platform within online networks and media channels, in order to reach out to the final audience and make the Observatory effective and useful for youth.



**RELATED PUBLICATIONS** 

Politique national de l'emploi pour les jeunes

Contact: FAO-SN@fao.org

Guide pour l'intégration des questions d'emploi rural décent pour les jeunes dans les stratégies de développement local

Contact: FAO-SN@fao.org

Approche Pays Intégrée (API) pour la promotion de l'emploi décent des jeunes en milieu rural au Sénégal

fao.org/rural-employment/resources

FAO digital services in Africa

www.fao.org/in-action/africa-digitalservices-portfolio



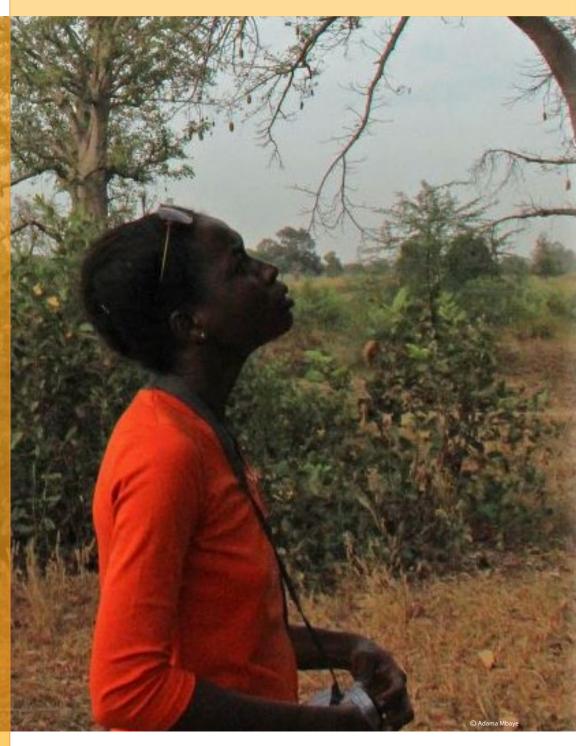
# **Adama Mbaye**





WHAT

Generation of employment opportunities through the commercialization of local products



"We train women and men at work, offering them a safe job every year"



Adama Mbaye is a 25-year-old agripreneur and youth leader from Senegal. Benefitting from the work that FAO has carried out in the country to promote decent employment opportunities, Adama launched her own company, Baonane SA.R.L., which provides agricultural products originating from Africa for the international food and cosmetics industry.

As part of the ICA Programme, Adama was trained to improve her marketing and communication skills and received support to develop contacts along the supply value chains. Furthermore, thanks to her participation in the Forum sur l'Emploi Décent (FORED), organized by ANPEJ and FAO, Adama learned about new opportunities to market agricultural products and was able to connect with a number of fellow young agripreneurs and extension services.

Overall, thanks to the coaching and the operational support she received, she

felt confident to start her own business with the aim of generating employment opportunities for her own community.

Today, Adama's main customers are importers from Europe and the United States and she is currently employing 106 women and men, offering them the opportunity to combine ancestral know-how with technology and modern standards. Her entrepreneurial spirit has not only guaranteed her a steady income and higher quality of life: by employing a large number of local workers, she is actively benefitting her community as a whole.

As her business model fully relies on local resources - both in terms of labor and inputs - it is sustainable and could be easily replicated in other contexts.

"Our initiative is thought to last in time," Adama says. "We train women and men at work, we teach them the basics of modern technology and quality control, offering them a safe job every year".



NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN AGRICULTURE

DEVELOPED AND IMPLEMENTED

200,000 YOUTH TRAINED IN AGRI-ENTREPRENEURSHIP

ICTs CENTRES ESTABLISHED TO PROVIDE RURAL YOUTH WITH MARKET INFORMATION

### UGANDA



In Uganda, youth employment remains one of the most pressing challenges, especially in rural areas. **400,000 young people** enter the job market each year; however, the unemployment rate among youth is extremely high, reaching 60%. Moreover, employment in agriculture is decreasing as a result of the low productivity, high risk and low competitiveness of the sector. Consequently, rural young people **migrate** to urban areas to find a job and make a living, even though migration does not often translate into decent and remunerative job opportunities.

In order to address the rural youth unemployment challenge in Uganda, ICA supported the design and implementation of the **National Strategy for Youth Employment in Agriculture**. As part of these efforts, ICA prioritized **policy dialogue** with relevant stakeholders to identify the best strategies aimed at generating rural youth employment, building on existing approaches. The Programme also focused on **knowledge and evidence** generation to support informed policy decisions and a sustainable policy change. It also provided **technical support** and **capacity development** to key institutions, in order to mainstream youth and employment considerations in national policies for agriculture and rural development. As part of these efforts, national agricultural data collection tools were strengthened by integrating gender, youth and employment dimensions.

Overall, the ICA Programme in Uganda focused on three main interventions:

- **Generation of knowledge** on the existing national regulatory frameworks and legal barriers for rural youth employment in agriculture, as well as on rural youth's education levels, employment status and existing approaches towards youth employment creation;
- Piloting of **models for youth engagement** in the agricultural sector through awareness-raising, youth peer-to-peer support and networking;
- **Training youth** in farming as a business and facilitating their access to credit and markets.

### The National Strategy for Youth Employment in Agriculture

The 5-year **Strategy for Youth in Agriculture**, developed by ICA with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries (MAAIF), aims to re-engage youth in agriculture and create more and better jobs along agricultural value chains, from production to agro-processing and marketing of agricultural inputs and products. Specific activities include trainings of youth in **farming as a business** and the identification of rural **youth champions** who can act as role models for their peers.

Overall, the Strategy aims at strengthening the **legal and institutional framework** for youth employment in agriculture, ensuring provision of youth-sensitive agricultural extension services and creating national information centers that will serve as innovation hubs. It also promotes **safety and health standards** at work and the utilization of **funds** targeting youth for enterprise development.

### Youth inspiring youth

In collaboration with MAAIF and in line with the National Strategy for Youth in Employment in Agriculture, the ICA Programme launched the *Youth inspiring youth in agriculture* initiative. The initiative aimed at identifying youth who developed cutting-edge innovations in agricultural value chains and at supporting them to act as roles models in their communities in order to inspire other rural young people. A nationwide contest was organized, which attracted over 500 applicants and enabled the selection of 25 Youth Champions. The champions were awarded with prizes in the form of equipment and other materials and were trained in productive employment, decent work, and strategic planning. They also learned how to undertake a feasibility study and design a business plan. Most champions used the funds received to boost their enterprises, which created more employment opportunities for fellow youth.

### **Towards youth employment and education**

As part of the ICA knowldge generation activities, a study focusing on **rural youth aged 14-17** was carried out in order to shed light on the education level and employment status of an age group which is neglected in many policy interventions. The study revealed that the majority of youth in this age cohort dropped out of school at an early age, most of them before having finished primary school. Moreover, the majority of them is unemployed or employed in low paid jobs in the informal sector. 96% of them are contributing family farmers and are involved in agricultural activities, having, however, limited or no access to decent jobs opportunities.

In addition, ICA undertook an analysis of the main **ongoing initiatives** aimed at boosting **youth employment in agriculture** in the country, assessing their strengths and weaknesses, as well as innovation and replication potential. Both studies resulted in a series of **recommendations** towards the replication and upscaling of successful interventions, which informed and will inform national strategic discussions on youth engagement in agriculture and food systems.



**RELATED PUBLICATIONS** 

National strategy for youth employment in agriculture

https://bit.ly/2AkMW3D

FAO's Integrated
Country Approach (ICA)
for promoting decent
rural employment in
Uganda

fao.org/rural-employment/resources

Analysis of existing approaches for rural youth employment in Uganda

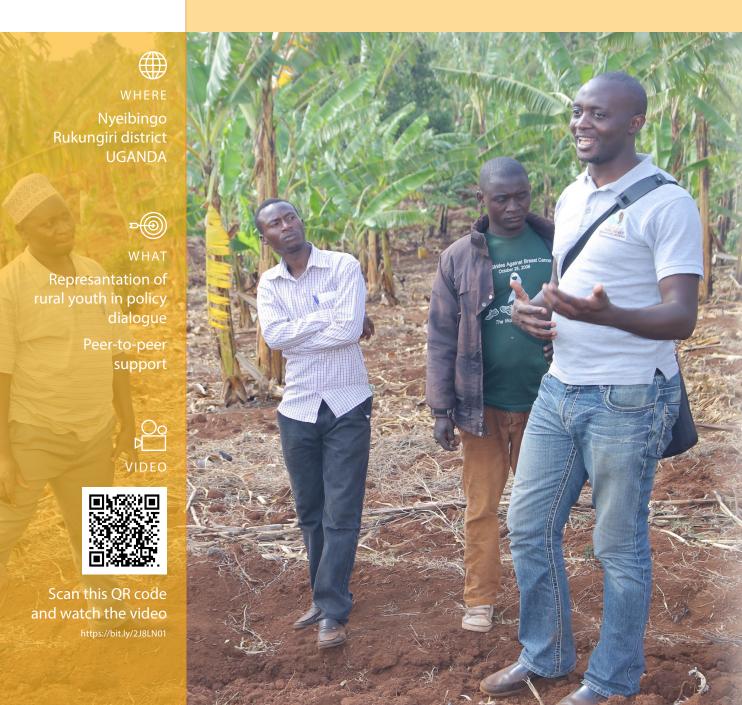
fao.org/rural-employment/resources

Education attainment and employment situation of out-ofschool persons in the 14-17 years age cohort in Uganda

fao.org/rural-employment/resources



# **Khamutima**



### "We try to provide concrete support to young farmers"

Tumwebaze Khamutima is a 28-year-old coffee farmer from Uganda. As a member of the ICA National Technical Working Group, Khamutima has benefitted from both local and international capacity building trainings focusing on different topics, such as: prevention and eradication of child labour in agriculture, gender mainstreaming, use of fertilizers for small holder farmers, and project monitoring and evaluation. He has also been involved in the development of data collection tools for mainstreaming labour aspects.

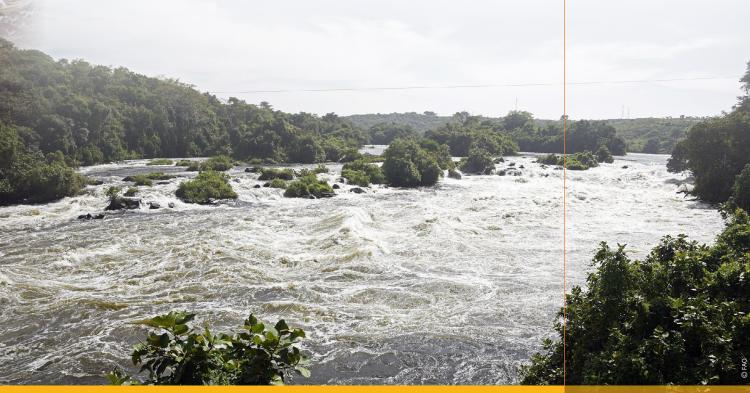
Furthermore, Khamutima was one of the youth representatives who participated in the development of the National Strategy for Youth Employment in Agriculture. Thanks to this experience, he was inspired to form an organization

called *Young Farmers Champions Network* (YOFCHAN).

"The objective of YOFCHAN is to help young farmers work together as a team in order to have better access to finance, markets, and land" said Khamutima. "It goes beyond merely advocating for more youth engagement in agriculture. We try to provide concrete support to young farmers. For example, we work to help them access markets and high-quality agricultural inputs. This helps youth perceive agriculture as a business."

In addition, Khamutima took part in the *Youth Inspiring youth* initiative, acting as a role model to attract fellow youth into agribusiness.







### **DRE Toolbox**

The main FAO publications and resources on decent rural employment are systematized in the online Decent Rural Employment Toolbox.

The Toolbox has been designed to **provide guidance** to policy makers, rural development practitioners and FAO staff.

It is organized in **modules** that cover the main components of FAO's approach to mainstreaming decent rural employment.

# An integrated set of tools and resources





# Incorporating decent rural employment in the strategic planning for agricultural development

This guidance document aims to assist policy makers in incorporating decent rural employment priorities in the design of agricultural development interventions, across different subsectors and value chains. It includes a Rapid Guide to quickly identify the most relevant contents.

> fao.org/3/a-i5471e.pdf



### Policy database on employment and decent work in rural areas

The Policy Database is an online inventory of current national, regional and global policies, programmes and studies that are relevant to promoting decent jobs in the rural areas of developing countries. The tool is aimed at policy makers and advisors of agricultural and employment-related planning, programme managers in ministries of agriculture and rural development and employment, as well as other national and regional stakeholders.

> fao.org/rural-employment/policies/en/



# E-learning course on promoting productive employment and decent work in rural areas

This course introduces the concepts of productive employment and decent work and their relevance for food and nutrition security and rural poverty reduction. It also explains how to integrate employment and decent work considerations into agricultural strategies and programmes, with focus on specific groups such as rural women, youth and children.

> fao.org/elearning/#/elc/en/course/DRE

## fao.org/rural-employment



In its work to end hunger, malnutrition and poverty, FAO has identified five key priorities, each channelled through a Strategic Programme. This initiative is being implemented in the context of:



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