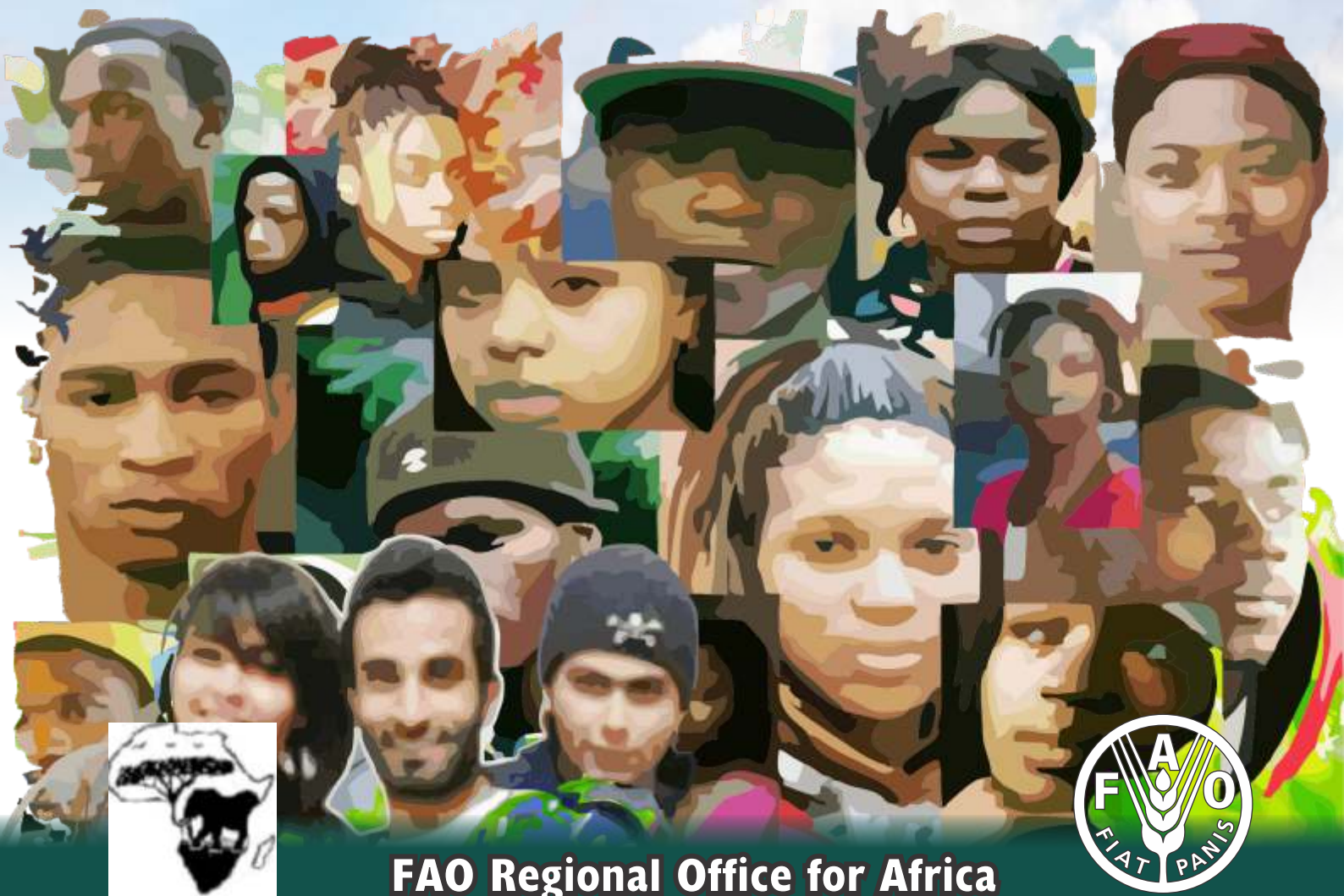


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# Nature & Faune

Volume 28, Issue 1

## African Youth in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development



**FAO Regional Office for Africa**

**Front Cover Photo:** Africa's youth

**Back Cover Photo:** Africa and its renewable natural resources



# Nature & Faune

*Enhancing natural resources management for food security in Africa*

*Volume 28, Issue 1*

## African Youth in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development

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## Message to Readers

*Bukar Tijani<sup>1</sup>*

This Issue of *Nature & Faune* puts forward the case of “**African Youth in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development**”. It carries twenty one articles contributed by different individuals, from : policy arena, conservation NGOs; the private sector; civil society groups; research and academia as well as youth groups . . The United Nations (UN) defines youth as people between the ages 15-24 years<sup>2</sup> while the African Union (AU) defines youth or young people as every person between the ages of 15 and 35 years<sup>3</sup>. For the purpose of this edition of *Nature & Faune*, the broader definition by the African Union is retained, with the term youth including the group of young people, male and female, married or single, from age 15 through 35.

There is consensus that a strong involvement of Africa’s youth in rural development, agriculture and natural resources management will boost food security in the continent. However, youth participation in land-based sectors in many African countries is very low, largely because of the perception that activities in the primary production sector (agriculture and natural resources) are characterized by drudgery, , minimal financial returns and therefore meant for the least educated in society. This perception is reinforced by the labor intensive nature of agriculture. Moreover, investments in the natural resources sector are long-term in nature, with a slow turnover rate, requiring longer periods to yield benefits. This state of affairs does not augur well for the involvement of the African youth in natural resource-based activities. In addition to these fundamental problems, many more challenges, such as insecure (land) tenure systems, restricted access to funding, uncertain markets, and

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<sup>2</sup> The United Nations Programme on Youth - <http://social.un.org/youthyear/docs/UNPY-presentation.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> African Union (2006), *The African Union African Youth Charter*. 11 , Banjul, Gambia

limited opportunities for value addition further limit the attractiveness of primary sector activities to the youth. The poor participation of Africa’s youth in agriculture and natural resources management is a critical threat to the continent’s food security. It must be urgently addressed. The African Youths is looking for opportunities in Agri-business which gives him/her the business space as peers in other non-agriculture related businesses such as in IT, oil & gas, automobile etc. What our youths should understand is that, there is even more returns in agri-business than most other businesses as it is dealing with renewable resources and of course the services that are of a continuous nature. This will require multi-level innovative interventions in many fronts, including: changing the current misconception by the youth; addressing meaningfully, the agricultural profitability issue as well as the issue of long term nature of natural resource-based investments; mitigating the land tenure constraint and that of youth access to financial services .

In the editorial of this issue of *Nature & Faune*, Martin Njanje highlights the increasing acceptance of migration as a ‘development enabler’ to be considered when the current Millennium Development Goals expire in 2015. It reveals how development partners and renewable natural resource management organizations can embrace migration and plan their interventions and investments efforts taking youth migration into account.

Under the Special Feature, Professor Kay Muir-Leresche examines the fundamentals of adapting university education to produce graduates for a changing world and the importance of practical experience to promote entrepreneurship. She asserts that there exist many successful, entrepreneurial and innovative farmers in Africa. However, the majority of farmers in the rural areas remain poor with low yields from their farms that are highly variable and vulnerable to climate change. Universities, she states, have an important role to play in preparing the youth for tomorrow’s employment landscape and to do this their graduates need to have the skills required to become job creators rather than job seekers. Agricultural and natural resource faculties are most particularly needed to produce the graduates and researchers that will transform African agriculture so that it meets growing demand for food security,



environmental sustainability and improved livelihoods. The graduates on their part need to be creative, innovative risk-takers who are motivated to assist smallholders to overcome their constraints, increase productivity and connect to markets. Michelle Mills and Nino Polizzotti concurred by sharing their thoughts on how vocational training can provide decent rural employment opportunities and contribute to sustainable rural development in Africa.

Mandivamba Rukuni and Raymond Zvavanyange in turn urge governments and non-state actors to re-configure the policies concerning agriculture, food systems and renewable natural resources sectors workforce with the youth in mind. They highlight the importance of robust policies for sustainable food production and how this presents both opportunities and challenges to African governments and leaders. They emphasize that given a re-configuration of agriculture, food systems and renewable natural resources sectors workforce with the youth at the centre, Africa is poised to enter new spaces in world food systems and markets. Babatunde Iyanda of the African Union examines the need to engage Africa's youth in agriculture and natural resources management policy processes for sustainable rural development. He delves into this from the perspective of the international and continental policy frameworks for youth. He asserts that until recently, policymakers rarely included youth in the decision-making process or even consulted with them on their concerns. He states furthermore that while African governments are increasingly putting youth concerns at the heart of the development agenda, a lot more remains to be done. Both governments and international partners would need to commit to fully engage young Africans in all aspects of planning and on-going programmes and initiatives which target youth and economic development. Catherine MacNeil, Carolyn Brown and Denis Sonwa as co-authors share their experience of a research programme designed to understand if and how youth, in the Congo Basin, are involved in institutions that relate to governance and environmental decision-making regarding community forests; and how they derive their livelihoods from the forest.

Mafa Chipeta takes the initiative to contribute an Opinion Piece, without which matters would have remained quite skewed. His key message that agriculture should not be sold as the principal

potential source of employment for the African youth is likely to rouse opinions - on both sides. It has strong views; some of which readers would disagree with, but that is the essence of scholarship. While the piece is provocative, – the point the author is making sounds altogether valid; in other words, African agriculture per se will not have the capacity of absorbing the huge mass of young people reaching the job market – this can only be done if agriculture triggers a set of associated value chain related activities that indeed will, to some extent, have this capacity. Other authors (among whom are Hugues N'gosso, Nora Kokanova) view the agriculture sector in Africa as having the potential to create a positive job outlook for rural youth in Africa.

Festus Akinnifesi follows hot on the heels of Chipeta, asking if South-South Cooperation could offer sustainable agriculture-led solutions to youth unemployment in Africa. He concludes by declaring that the growing demand for food and the expanding market, coupled with endowment of land and labor in Africa, create scope for employment and income generation opportunities for African youth. According to him, for Africa to fully reap its demographic dividend, it must create opportunity for increasing productivity and competitiveness of agriculture especially in the rural areas. South-South Cooperation can help to accelerate this agricultural transformation process.

This edition is rich in success stories of youths engaged in agriculture, natural resources management and rural development (see articles by Susan Canney et al; Sylvie Boldrini et al, Festus Akinnifesi, Adebola Adedugbe, Lateef Folorunso). You will probably suffer both laughter and sadness as you read Lateef Folorunso's memoirs as a Nigerian graduate of agriculture. It portrays an interesting look at reality. The lesson is that there is a need for more emphasis on providing financial planning services to youths starting new enterprises. Many a time the failures came from inadequate understanding of the economics involved! Cathy Farnworth and Borteh Sillah also share some lessons learned in involving young women in agriculture in sub-saharan Africa. Farnworth et al revealed that the term 'youth' is intended to cover both genders, yet in practice the word usually refers to young males, thus rendering invisible the gender-based constraints and opportunities young rural women face with respect to accessing land, credit, information and other resources they need to make

a living. There is an almost complete dearth of research data on the role of young women in agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa. Almost no programming is directed towards developing the capacity of such women to become effective agricultural actors. This contribution draws upon some of the very limited work that has been conducted and pulls out some tentative lessons for future work. Women in sub-Saharan Africa have the highest average agricultural labour force participation in the world, yet they are unsung!

Paolo Groppo and his colleagues in FAO stress the three foundations of the methodologies FAO seeks to promote: Improving Gender Equity in Territorial Issues (IGETI); Participatory and Negotiated Territorial Development (PNTD), and the Socio-economic and Gender Analysis (SEAGA). Groppo's article makes cross references to two field papers from FAO Somalia and FAO Mozambique to share how IGETI/PNTD and SEAGA have been adapted to suit each country. In this trilogy Marianna Bicchieri discusses the challenges and gains so far

achieved in pursuit of communities' land rights, gender equality and rural development: in Mozambique. And Carolina Cenerini probes the Somali challenge in working towards gender equality in natural resources management.

Under our regular feature "Country Focus", the spot light is on the Republic of Liberia. Through the eyes of James Marko and Michael Garbo, the Liberian youth in agriculture is presented; show-casing Liberia as the oldest independent republic in Africa having gained independence 1847! This nation is one of the most youthful countries in the world with the average age of Liberia's population being 18 years and 44 percent of its population only 14 years.

Gbehounou Gualbert and Joyce Mulila Mitti have news for our youths – check out the news section to learn how a continent-wide strategic framework for management of invasive alien plants in Africa holds promises for youth employment. And Renata Mirulla announces that Food Security and Nutrition Forum in West Africa launches survey on Youth in Agriculture – be on the lookout for the results of this survey.

Enjoy musing over this issue of *Nature & Faune*!



## Editorial

### Migration: A major challenge in engaging Africa's youth in rural development

*Martin Nganje<sup>1</sup>*

#### Summary

*The African continent continues to generate the largest number of international migrants most of whom attain migrant status in their youthful age. This is not surprising as countries on the continent are usually plagued by sociopolitical conflicts that displace people year after year. A significant proportion of migrants from countries which have now recovered from civil war is still reluctant to return home, constituting part of the African diaspora in and out of the continent. While migrant youth are known to send remittances to family members back home, such funds and the emancipated capacity of migrants still need to be captured and channeled towards rural development in Africa. With the increasing acceptance of migration as a 'development enabler' to be taken up as a process when the timeframe of the current Millennium Development Goals expire in 2015, this paper reveals how development partners and renewable natural resource management organizations can embrace migration and plan their interventions/investments efforts taking youth migration into account.*

#### Introduction

The United Nations (UN) describes 'an international migrant' as someone out of their country of origin, birth or citizenship for a year or more; and, 'youth' as those of the age range between 15 and 24 years. In this regards, 2013 has been a topical year for migration and the youth. The international youth day of 12<sup>th</sup> August 2013 was celebrated under the theme, "Youth Migration: Moving Development Forward," even as the year

staged the second ever "High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development", following the first Dialogue of 2006. Integrating migration in development featured prominently among the 8 point Agenda for Action of the UN Secretary General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, during the 2013 High-Level Dialogue (UN Secretary General, 2013). Point 6 of the Agenda for Action pronounced by Mr. Ban Ki-moon specifically called on, "UN Member States to mainstream migration into national development plans, poverty reduction strategies and relevant sectorial policies and programs". The Agenda also specified that the, "international community should define a common set of targets and indicators to monitor implementation of measures aimed at enhancing the benefits addressing challenges of international migration, for consideration in the framework of the post-2015 development agenda". Moreover, during the High-level Dialogue, the Global Migration Group's event on "Adolescents, Youth and Migration", confirmed the description of migration by the former Chinese Premier – Zhao Ziyang as, "Brain power stored abroad", reminding the youth to use such power for the development of their countries of origin (International Organization for Migration 2013: p. 78 para 2). According to UNICEF (April, 2013: p. 2), adolescents (15 to 19 years) accounted for 11 million migrants in 2010 with Africa accounting for the highest proportion in the world. This paper reveals how the intellectual, social, cultural and financial capital of Africa's youth migrants can be captured for the continent's rural development.

#### Context

According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), aside of sociopolitical conflicts, adolescents and youth migrate abroad primarily in response to the globalization of the possibilities of education. For instance, while 48,000 Africans enrolled in foreign universities in 1999, there were more than 79,000 in such universities in 2008 (UNDESA. 2011 /1). After foreign education, students reportedly often seek employment in the host country thereby establishing residence and migrant status. UNDESA also cites movements for adoptions, refugees and asylum as responsible for youth migration. This does not exclude migration of the older youth (20 to 24 year olds) in pursuit of remunerated work. Such migration has become a popular approach for individuals

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seeking to improve their welfare and survival. According to the late American economist, John Kenneth Galbraith, migration is the oldest action against poverty (Shamshad Akhtar, 2013, para 5).

While remittances to alleviate poverty are lauded, they contribute little to improve rural development in youth migrants' countries of origin. This begs responses to the following questions: (a) How can the globalization of education on the African continent contribute to checking migration of youth and enhance their contribution to rural development and sustainable renewable natural resource management at home? (b) How can African countries use already existing globalization mechanisms, such as youth migration, for the benefit of communities and resident youth populations? (c) How can banks and other financial institutions, including government sources, effectively support and strengthen processes engaged by Africa's migrant youth in collaboration with the resident youth in Africa towards more effective rural development?, and (d) What measures and strategies can be pursued to bring the voice and interventions of migrant youth to the table in a bid to advocate for their greater engagement in the development of their home countries on the African continent? Responses to these questions are discussed below.

## Discussion

### **How globalization of education can contribute in checking migration of youth while enhancing the contribution of African youth to rural development in countries on the continent**

The reason why Africa's freedom leaders mainly studied abroad was either that there were few or no universities at home or that those which existed did not offer the courses of their choice. This has changed 50 years later, with private universities now competing for excellence alongside State establishments. Both public and private sectors are establishing and expanding universities with increasingly globalized courses in provinces and regions in countries in Africa, with more universities on the continent now than ever before. For example, at its start in 1967, only 34 universities were part of the Association of African Universities (AAU). By 2013, this number had risen to 286 (AAU, 2013). However, the multiplication and diversification of universities has not stopped the desire of young people to travel abroad for education. Aware of this

condition, the Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) Program of the Great Lakes region is amongst others, facilitating African lecturers abroad to travel and provide lectureships in African universities (IBRD / World Bank, 2011, p. 236). The case is cited of a Congolese researcher at the University of Rouen, France, who undertakes MIDA supported lectureships at the University of Goma (Democratic Republic of Congo - DRC), starting from 2006. Although the effectiveness of such efforts, including North-South student exchanges and University twinning programs, have not been formally assessed in terms of encouraging students to seek and pursue education at home, the universities involved generally report satisfaction from the MIDA supported lectureships (IOM, 2007b, 6; in IBRD / World Bank 2011, p. 241). Other initiatives taken in response to training needs assessments include, among others, the establishment of the Kasugho University for Conservation and Rural Development in the DRC, initiated at the request of local communities. After training, graduates return to their communities, and are qualified to work as field researchers, rangers, wardens, protected area managers, teachers, conservation journalists, and outreach workers. These professionals currently manage a conservation and development vision fully embedded in local history, culture, and hereditary tradition and rights. Such efforts need to be replicated in other African countries. (For more information on this initiative, please see:

[http://www.conservation.org/where/africa\\_madagascar/congo/Pages/tayna\\_university.aspx](http://www.conservation.org/where/africa_madagascar/congo/Pages/tayna_university.aspx) ).

### **How youth migration can be harnessed for the benefit of local communities and resident rural youth populations in Africa**

Migration exposes people, especially the youth to new ideas, activities and general emancipation. It is for this reason, amongst others, that the African Union (through the African Ministers of Youth) adopted Article 21 of the African Youth Charter in 2006 proposing that, 'all parties should recognize the rights of young people to live anywhere in the world', an encouragement for the youth to engage in development activities in their countries of origin (IBRD / World Bank, 2011, p. 249; para 1). Aspiration for perfection in sports and for fulfilling their artistic talents, are areas that continue to encourage migration of African youth. Some successful youth migrant entrepreneurs are already now returning to their home countries to form music,



dress modeling and sports clubs, such as the 'Samuel Eto'o Sports Academy' in Cameroon. While such efforts are to be lauded as they encourage young people to discover their inherent talents, it is not clear how they directly contribute to community development in Africa, and more studies in this respect are needed. It is however possible to extend such efforts to include the formation and training of youth groups in the production of drama and role plays, which sensitize on good cultural techniques and the sustainable management of renewable natural resources including wildlife species. The effort of such groups can be hired for display during public manifestations organized by municipal councils as well as conservation and agricultural projects from rural to national levels. A proportion of the funds generated by the groups might be invested in the capacity building of rural youth as well as in local community development efforts for poverty reduction.

**How banks, other financial institutions and government sources can support and strengthen action by Africa's migrant youth towards effective rural development**

The recently ended High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development firmly inscribed migration as an enabler of development. This issue will be discussed as a process (not a fixed goal) when the timeframe for the current Millennium Development Goals expire in 2015. Banks and other financial institutions meanwhile will not be able to adequately facilitate financial transfers only by reducing remittance transaction costs from migrant youth for development projects in Africa. Effective action will require appropriate policy frameworks. Point 2 of the Agenda for Action, presented by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon at the 2013 High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development, noted that "there are enormous gains to be made by lowering costs related to migration, such as the transfer costs of remittances ..." There are various policy options to achieve this, where for example governments might match or double the financial amount of remittances sent for rural development projects in the country. As an example, Meseguer and Aparicio (IOM, 2013, p. 41) reported that, under Mexico's 3x1 Program, municipal, State and federal governments tripled the amount of funds sent by migrant associations for development projects in the country. Such efforts need to be emulated in Africa. Moreover, point 23 of the Outcome Statement of the Regional Experts'

Meeting on International Migration and Development of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA, 2013) proposes to "create the conditions, incentives and fiscal space to stimulate remittances and diaspora investments back home, including accessible financial instruments through banks [and] micro-finance institutions, among others..."

**Measures and strategies to ensure a voice and tangible interventions of migrant youth, in order to advocate their greater engagement in Africa's development**

Point 47 of the UNECA Outcome Statement of the Regional Experts' Meeting on International Migration and Development (UNECA, 2013) proposes to "Enact laws and policy reforms that ensure access to civil, economic, social and cultural rights and basic services for all vulnerable groups especially children (and youth) in the context of migration, regardless of their own or their parental migration status". The first step in harnessing the views of youth migrants for the benefit of development policies in African countries, is to support them in the generation of data for planning purposes through the establishment of youth migrant professional groups and networks. While several African countries are still reticent to engage and collaborate with their migrant youth and diaspora communities, others, such as the Senegalese government, exemplify such collaboration. According to the Senegal Ministry of Small and Medium Sized Industries, the Senegalese migrant community in the city of Parma, Italy, has been able to influence Air Senegal International to export fresh tomatoes grown in rural Senegal for processing (drying) in Italy (IBRD / World Bank, 2011, p. 217). Such examples need to be emulated by other countries in the continent. Direct measures to enlist the voice of migrant youth, include; inviting their representatives for presentations or video-conferencing in national and local conferences and meetings in their areas of expertise. Also, supported by civil society groups and/or the government, migrant youth might voice innovative views related to migration and development policy in bulletins, write articles in dedicated newspaper columns, operate websites, blogs and other social exchange fora such as radio and television. They may also use mobile telephone technology in advocacy related communication, to get across and influence national government policy on migration for development.

### Conclusion and Proposals

Until recently, migration has been an elusive subject during discussions on development planning in Africa. This was principally because development experts considered migration as an indicator of failed development policies and efforts at home. There is now a better understanding that migration, including that of young people, is a normal process of globalization to be reckoned with in development planning. By raising the questions in the sections above, this paper stresses that youth migration can effectively contribute to rural development in Africa.

The following proposals summarize the preceding assertion.

1. To limit the brain drain of African youth, university curricula should increasingly be guided by needs assessments. The Kasugho University for Conservation and Rural Development in the Democratic Republic of Congo is a good example of this point.
2. The intellectual, financial and social capital of entrepreneurial youth migrants can be captured for rural development by countries in Africa *i.a.* by supporting role-play and drama groups, depicting good cultural techniques and the needs and advantages of sustainable management of renewable natural resources. Sound resource management will help safeguard the short and long-term sustainability of livelihoods, and will also help ensure that the biological reservoir of the continent withstands undue erosion.
3. Governments of African countries can acknowledge and support rural development efforts of migrant youth and other migrants by matching foreign remittances that target rural development initiatives in their home countries.
4. As recommended by the UNECA, African governments should work with youths to develop participatory policies that harness their intellectual capacity, experience as trade brokers between agencies in their countries of residence and their countries of origin, and financial capital for the development of the continent.

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## Special Feature

### Adapting universities to produce graduates for a changing world: The importance of practical experience to promote entrepreneurship

Kay Muir-Leresche<sup>1</sup>

#### Summary

*Agricultural and natural resource faculties need to produce the graduates and research that will transform African agriculture so that it meets the growing demand for food security, environmental sustainability and improved livelihoods. To do this universities need to transform, take advantage of modern technology and become active facilitators of learning that provide opportunities for graduates to be creative, innovative risk-takers who are motivated to assist smallholders to overcome their constraints, increase productivity and connect to markets. These universities need to focus on promoting pedagogy, curricula and practical experiences that develop the required skills and commitment. They need to be active in providing broad exposure to entrepreneurship for their students and the opportunity to develop and work in their own enterprises. Students need to take responsibility for their own education, be prepared to be more innovative and committed to life-long learning and enthusiastic about gaining practical experience. A changing world calls for a different approach and students need to be encouraged to think of themselves as job creators able to take advantage of the opportunities presented by poorly serviced rural communities.*

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### Introduction: the need for transforming agricultural higher education

Throughout the world underemployment is more prevalent among youth than adults and is more prevalent in rural than in urban areas (World Bank, 2009). There are many successful, entrepreneurial and innovative farmers in Africa, but the majority of farmers in the rural areas are poor with low, highly variable yields, vulnerable to climate change. Agriculture is not seen as a viable income source and often the youth view agriculture as employment only of last resort and may consider becoming a farmer as condemning oneself to subsistence and poverty. Participants at a 2012 Farmers Forum quoted (seasonal) migration, within their own countries or abroad as a common strategy for rural youth to cope with a difficult rural employment situation and highlighted the social pressures arising from the low regard for agriculture (MIJARC, 2012). However as modern technologies help Africa to leapfrog old communications systems, as demand for organic and fair trade products grows and as research into locally relevant and sustainable agricultural systems expands, there should be greater opportunities for youth in agriculture. What is needed is to better prepare the youth to meet the challenges so that they are more entrepreneurial, more creative, innovative and determined; with the skills to take advantage of new opportunities, with the commitment to improve the livelihoods of the rural poor.

Although the practice of agriculture is a multidisciplinary activity often guided by indigenous knowledge, agricultural higher education is frequently structured around primary disciplines derived from formal science (Saint, 2005) There is a need to focus on a more interdisciplinary and problem-solving approach; to take advantage of modern technologies to move away from the transfer of information and towards developing capacity for learning. Most degrees emphasize theoretical and specialized knowledge still largely informed by the training of lecturers in the large-scale, capital intensive, commercial agricultural systems of the countries where many studied. A much greater focus is needed on producing graduates and research that can help to

improve the productivity of smallholder systems in Africa. Furthermore, there is very little emphasis on the soft skills<sup>1</sup>, innovation and commitment to smallholder agriculture that is needed. Graduates need to be able to adapt technologies to suit local environments, capacities and resources. Not even the post-graduate degrees emphasise more innovative approaches to learning, nor the attitudes and inter-personal skills that are essential to the success of graduates as effective change agents, employees and entrepreneurs.

Curricula often focus exclusively on technical aspects of production and lack sufficient emphasis on marketing, agribusiness, environment, and entrepreneurship skills that are increasingly in demand. Those specializing in the conventional crops, soils and animal sciences also need to make their programmes much more relevant to resource constraints and smallholder systems. Too often adding in some business or environment courses is seen as the answer. It needs to be much more than this. To be effective in the world, graduates need to understand the whole and not just the specialised parts of the system – a more integrated, holistic, or interdisciplinary understanding is needed even by those who will focus in one aspect, or they will not be able to address the concerns of the farmers and will become irrelevant. Certainly if they are to become entrepreneurs they will need a good grasp of the system and not just of isolated components.

There is a serious problem of youth unemployment in Africa, despite an extreme scarcity of skills as identified by the African Development Bank in their Annual Economic Outlook reports. The universities still continue to focus on public sector employment rather than meeting private sector demand and there needs to be much more emphasis given to relevance and quality to reduce the skills mismatch. There is an urgent need for African universities to transform to become more relevant so that they are at the forefront of reversing the skills mismatch and contribute to increased youth employment.

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<sup>1</sup> *Soft skills refer to the interpersonal skills including communication across the spectrum, team building, conflict resolution, personal effectiveness, life-long learning, tenacity, creativity and confidence to be able to think strategically and take the lead. It also includes an approach to education that influences attitudes, values and ethics.*

### **Commitment to transform agricultural higher education**

A number of African agencies including among others ANAFE, FARA, RUFORUM<sup>2</sup> and many international and bilateral agencies have been engaged in a range of efforts to assist in the transformation of African tertiary agricultural education. These efforts need to be supported and massively scaled up. Universities need to move away from traditional university curricula and stereotypes. It is critical for Africa to leapfrog older technologies and take advantage of the new opportunities available and produce graduates that are capable of innovation and adaptation. To do this it is necessary to develop confidence and skills for both faculty and students. This includes “...innovation competences to comprehend and evaluate new technologies, apply basic and strategic theory to development and solve complex development problems”....in addition personal and organisational flexibility to promote growth and continuous learning, “to formulate ethical problems and clearly communicate possible solutions at appropriate levels; awareness of different attitudes to scientific innovations and ability to discuss and advise policy for the benefit of society and lesson learning, especially with communities” (Okori and Ekwamu, 2012)

There have been ongoing efforts at curriculum development and revision and attempts to engage more closely with private sector and civil society as future employers, but these efforts need to be institutionalised. There also needs to be a change in the pedagogy and in efforts to link students with smallholder farmers to build their commitment to serve and expose them to existing systems so that they can identify business opportunities. There is very little direct and effective support to increasing practical experience for entrepreneurial skills.

It is also important to communicate what a transformed higher agricultural education system demands of its students. They should not be demanding dictated notes and ‘spoon-feeding’.

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<sup>2</sup> *ANAFE (African Network for Agriculture, Agroforestry and Natural Resources Education); FARA (Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa). FARA is the mandated lead organisation for CAADP Pillar 4; RUFORUM (Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture is a consortium of 32 universities in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa <http://www.ruforum.org/>).*

They need to be aware that knowledge is expanding exponentially and it is not possible for their lecturers to give them all the knowledge they need. They have to be prepared to be active participants, and in fact leaders, in their learning and be prepared to commit to life-long learning. They need to understand that they are going to have to learn to make their own way in a world where technology is changing so fast that we need to chart new paths as many of the old will no longer be relevant. It is a world of exciting possibilities but requires new attitudes to higher education by students, faculty and administrators.

### **Entrepreneurial skill and the importance of practical exposure**

Perhaps what is most lacking is to inculcate a more entrepreneurial approach in students. They need to cultivate this towards their own employment options, to working to transform rural communities and when they are working within NGOs and the public service. An entrepreneurial approach incorporates identifying gaps and opportunities and providing solutions. It requires the confidence and skills to take risks and to work with people to challenge the status quo and to deliver solutions.

Throughout the world, there has been a significant rise in entrepreneurship, much of which can be attributed to the technological revolution, largely driven by the personal computer, the Internet and the mobile telephone. African countries have been at the forefront of the use of mobile telephones to begin to unleash the 'vent for surplus' in rural areas. "These inventions enable capital-poor entrepreneurs to reach mass markets and compete with established giants..... furthermore "businesses which are started with an *opportunity focus* tend to create more jobs, enjoy more differentiation and therefore experience less competition. Businesses started out of *necessity* or *survival motivation* tend to create very few jobs, operate in markets of intense competition and are vulnerable to outside forces, such as downward turns in the economic cycle." (GUESS,2010) This highlights the importance of encouraging students to understand their market and to look for opportunities so that they create businesses that respond to demand. Students embarking on projects should be encouraged to be innovative and to take risks. The only way to really understand the entrepreneurial process is for students to be exposed through hands-on experience. They need to learn that it is acceptable

to fail and to see how to mitigate against risks and how to start again.

### **What is Entrepreneurship?**

An entrepreneur is someone who identifies a need and establishes a service to meet that need. It involves taking risks in bringing together capital, labour, knowledge and skills to make a profit by producing a commodity or service that people want and are able to buy. "Entrepreneurship involves many elements, some theoretical but most applied, that can be incorporated into a range of different courses and projects. Entrepreneurship can be applied in most fields of study and provides 'a revealing lens' for studying how cultural values, social institutions, economic policies, and legal practices interrelate to shape human behaviour. Entrepreneurship naturally and authentically draws together subjects usually taught and studied separately". (Kaufman, 2008)

Africa needs greater awareness of entrepreneurship in agricultural, forestry and other natural resources higher education in order to encourage more problem-solving, innovative and demand related research and management. Within most disciplines, even if traditionally pure science, it would be useful to encourage students to put their research into the local context and to consider how it meets current needs. They could be encouraged to identify gaps that their research can fill, and exposure to entrepreneurial concepts can assist them to be more salient. As an example, students studying biotechnology could be encouraged to consider what the local demand is and how to apply their knowledge in small businesses; animal scientists could be encouraged to consider the implications of their improved understanding of livestock nutrition for small feed businesses; in environmental science courses businesses to process waste products could be a focus, etc. Greater emphasis on entrepreneurship will also help to encourage graduates to become "job-creators" rather than "job-seekers".

### **Lack of Practical Experience**

The only way to effectively learn is to be able to put the ideas and theories to the test – to experience first-hand the principles that have been taught and to do so working with those who are most affected. Practical experience is an integral part of medical and engineering degrees but in agriculture it is often viewed negatively by students as manual labour and

by faculty and administrators as being too expensive. Internships and farm experience, where it is part of the curriculum, normally takes place on large-scale commercial farms, orienting the students to be employees for corporate agriculture. That has its place. But given that smallholder agriculture predominates in Africa and given its success in Asia, it is important to position universities to be able to effectively service this sector. They require innovation that delivers the goods, knowledge and services so important to their success. It is, however, very difficult to motivate students to be entrepreneurs unless they are able to “practice”. Furthermore they need to understand the needs of their society “...universities should redefine their academic foci to adjust to the changes facing the continent. This can be better done through continuous interaction with farmers, businesses, government, and civil society organizations” (Juma 2012). Juma also highlights the importance of providing practical experience to students through participatory research, internships and community service and emphasises that “one of the main teaching missions of universities for innovation is to translate ideas into goods and services through enterprise development. Training young people to learn how to create enterprises should therefore be part of the mission of universities.”

Kourilsky pointed out in 1980 that throughout the world those attending institutions of higher education need to change their mentality from “take-a-job” to “make-a-job” for entrepreneurship curriculums to thrive. For this to happen there need to be courses and approaches that encourage creativity, taking the initiative, good communication at various levels and enable the students to experiment with taking risks (Kourilsky, 1980). This is even more important for Africa in 2014.

Yakubu, in his presentation on higher education in sub-Saharan Africa noted that “Knowledge itself is not enough until it is translated into a form of benefit or reward for society..... transformation of knowledge into diffusible innovation is central to attempts by universities to be relevant and justify the massive public investment” (Yakuba, 2013). To achieve this universities need to focus more attention on assisting their students and their faculty to transform and diffuse the knowledge they generate so that it can be used. More focus needs to be given to the uptake of innovations developed and to lifelong learning.

However universities in Africa are challenged by political pressures for very high enrolment, with limited resources. Student numbers often increase without increasing the human, infrastructural and capital resources needed to ensure high quality and life-long learning, field-based research and effective outreach. Universities overwhelmed by demands are not in a good position to provide the practical experience so important to transforming knowledge. As the youth see very limited opportunities from agriculture and natural resource related degrees, so these disciplines lose attraction for the brightest minds. Students will only be highly motivated and interested in agriculture when they can clearly see the benefits. Exposure to entrepreneurship, the application of what they learn to the real world and close links with primary producers, communities and all the stakeholders in agriculture, will help to encourage the youth to invest in agriculture.

Universities need a much greater focus on experiential learning, practical exposure, problem solving, and entrepreneurship for all students, regardless of their disciplines or area of specialisation. Greater emphasis is needed on the skills which graduates will need to be successful entrepreneurs, the ability to make innovation intelligible, to communicate, to manage and to lead. “By its very nature, entrepreneurship in college cannot be limited to the classroom”. (Kaufman, 2009)

Even if the universities can provide the necessary exposure and training, the graduates still face problems common to all start-ups - credit and advisory services - which are especially necessary for youth with no track record.

#### **Opportunities for Internships and Support to Student and Graduate Small Businesses**

A number of universities have provided opportunities for their students (e.g. Swaziland) or upon graduation (e.g. Botswana) to establish small businesses and to undergo internships. The repayment rate of the credit provided for the start-ups has been remarkably successful, with very high repayment rates. Perhaps the most well-known example of practical experience and an active and well established student entrepreneurial project programme is EARTH University ([www.earth.ac.cr](http://www.earth.ac.cr)) in Costa Rica. It also provides practical opportunities throughout the degree for exposure that helps to develop soft skills, commitment and



entrepreneurship. It provides for internships within the surrounding rural community, the establishment of student projects as well as internships with private companies and civil society organisations as part of its curriculum (Juma, 2012).

RUFORUM<sup>1</sup> promotes much closer integration between universities and communities and supports projects that help to transform knowledge into usable innovations in rural areas. It then provides, through the FAPA (Field Attachment Program Award), an opportunity for students to go back to the communities after completing their theses to work with a local agency to encourage uptake. These internships also provide the students with windows to identify community needs and gaps for entrepreneurial projects. They also expose the students to the working environment and showcases their ability to potential employers.

Several universities have successful micro-credit schemes for their student entrepreneurial projects with excellent recovery rates. However if the universities prefer not to be directly involved in providing finance, they could go into arrangements with local micro-credit organisations or even put their students in touch with other opportunities (e.g. Queens College, New York arrangements with the Grameen Bank). Kiva is an organisation that provides no interest credit through donations to small enterprises in developing countries ([www.kiva.org/](http://www.kiva.org/)). It may also be possible for universities to make arrangements with other initiatives e.g. the Agriculture Fast Track Fund, a new multi-donor trust fund, managed by the African Development Bank (AfDB) designed to boost investment in Africa's agricultural sector. When students are required to carry out small businesses as part of their curriculum they should be able to get advice and mentoring together with links to credit. This could be done through faculty supervision, but would be much more effective if it is through links with the private sector. These arrangements would help to both mentor students and also provide greater opportunities for sharing between the university and the private sector, to determine demands for research and graduates, and also to develop links for more effective diffusion of new

<sup>1</sup> The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is a consortium of 32 universities in Eastern, Central and Southern Africa <http://www.ruforum.org/>

ideas. It provides greater exposure for the students to job opportunities and to understanding what is required in the private sector and conversely provides the employers with exposure to what the students are learning and are capable of.

It is important that the students are encouraged to establish innovative businesses and learn to take risks. Repetitive projects on bread-making and chicken rearing may enable students to take over where others left off, but they need to each be required to show how they have innovated and improved the business. This means that the academic rewards should be related to more than the financial success of the venture. It is a learning experience and students should be encouraged to be creative e.g. in recycling waste, introducing new products etc. Furthermore students can be encouraged to establish small non-profit work such as linking surplus food supplies from restaurants/supermarkets with feeding schemes, or providing old tyres to households as vegetable-growing containers – or a host of other opportunities to either make a profit, and/or to serve the local community.<sup>2</sup>

Universities can support and facilitate entrepreneurial efforts in a variety of ways, such as offering entrepreneurship seminars and lectures as well as business project plan seminars and providing contacts for general questions. Surveys of students showed that “...more than a quarter (26%) of South African students had never thought of starting their own businesses.... These findings imply that higher educational institutions can do more to create an entrepreneurial awareness in universities by promoting entrepreneurship as a career choice, and by providing courses and additional support.” (GUESS 2010)

It would be helpful if universities had dedicated offices and workspaces providing student entrepreneurs opportunities to share information, obtain advice and provide a critical mass to foster their work. Specialised programs in entrepreneurship are an option. The Enterprisers

<sup>2</sup> Among other places, students can go to <http://enterprisers.org.uk/> to get ideas and assistance. This example from EARTH university is also inspiring : <http://www.fastcocrete.com/3025751/earth-university-aims-to-inspire-donations-with-a-load-of-crap>

program, offered by Cambridge University, is a useful example of a short, focused co-curricular program with consequential results, particularly in concert with internships and other practical experiences.

Small businesses are very important as their absorptive capacity and the capital costs per job created tended to be much greater than that of large enterprises. They also tend to have much greater multiplier effects in the rural communities where they operate and are an important component of any strategy to develop rural areas. Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) ([www.gemconsortium.org](http://www.gemconsortium.org)) reports provide evidence that owner-managers who have a tertiary education tend to start enterprises which create more jobs, than owner-managers with only a secondary or lower levels of education. Entrepreneurship training and support to students and graduates in establishing small businesses will therefore not only contribute to the capacity of these graduates but also directly to employment and rural development.

### Conclusion

Universities have an important role to play in preparing the youth for tomorrow's employment landscape and to do this their graduates have to have the skills needed to become job creators rather than job seekers. Agricultural and natural resource faculties are most particularly needed to produce the graduates and research to transform African agriculture so that it meets growing demand for food security, environmental sustainability and improved livelihoods. To do this the graduates need to be creative, innovative risk-takers who are motivated to assist smallholders to overcome their constraints, increase productivity and connect to markets. These universities need to focus on promoting pedagogy, curricula and practical experiences that develop the required skills and commitment. They need to take advantage of modern technology and prepare their students to operate in the modern globally-connected knowledge economy. They need to be active in providing broad exposure to entrepreneurship for their students and the opportunity to develop and work in their own enterprises and to become familiar with the client communities they will work with. Students need to take responsibility for their own education, be prepared to be more innovative and committed to life-long learning.

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## Opinion Piece

### The arithmetic of youth absorption into Africa's farming job market

Mafa E. Chipeta<sup>1</sup>

In its call for submissions to this *Nature & Faune* volume on "African Youth in Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development", the editors have communicated the following:

*"About 65% of the total population of Africa is below the age of 35 years, and over 35% is between the ages of 15 and 35 years - making Africa the most youthful continent. By 2020, it is projected that out of 4 people in the African continent, 3 will be on average 20 years old. About 10 million young Africans arrive each year on the labour market".*

There are some stunning numbers and ratios here, which I have been tempted to build upon by way of commentary. In a continent where poverty and unemployment are widespread, it is the hope of many that agriculture can offer a large part of the solution to both challenges. The hope is thus often expressed that youth can be attracted into agriculture. Ideally, one should look at what could be realistic expectations for job openings in all agriculture – the value chain from the farm through processing till marketing and consumption. But the most frequent expectations are that it is "farming" itself that can offer jobs to African youth – i.e. jobs in cultivation in the case of crops, herding in that of livestock and household care in case of poultry and small stock.

It is commonly observed that youth seem to prefer jobs outside farming; a common conclusion is that farming is not attractive to them. I suggest in this note that we can make farming as exciting as we like but it will still not have enough room for more

than a few youth. I say this on the assumption that Africa will (despite any beliefs to the contrary) develop and will follow pretty much the same path as other regions have done. The "same economic path" means that *Africa will industrialise; it will create jobs in services, and (nowadays), it will offer opportunities in the knowledge economy – we cannot wish upon or condemn Africa's future people to the perpetuity of peasant agriculture.*

#### What History Shows

It is useful to first preface the numbers with some reminders of the realities in economic development which Africa will almost certainly follow as other regions have done before it when they progressed economically:

1. The first thing to note is that as countries develop, fewer and fewer of their people work in farming; yet their populations eat better and better. As economies develop, food security is about income security more than about tilling the land. In fact, the proportion of the population which remains in agriculture appears to be inversely related to level of food security;
2. Although as countries develop they have a smaller proportion of their population (and often also absolute numbers) engaged in farming, they produce more agricultural products, including food. In the world today, two things can be noted:
  - a. In most rich, industrialised countries, farming employs only about 3-5% of the population – although it cannot be denied that processing and trading in farm products can employ far more than this share;
  - b. Despite having so few people in farming, the rich countries produce most of the world's food surpluses that are exported commercially and for charitable food aid, including to Africa (a continent with 70% of the people working the land);
3. The farming technologies being used to generate the surpluses of the rich countries are available to Africa and even if adjusted to make them more environmentally friendly, they will if

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fully and correctly applied remain fully capable of producing far more food than the 1 – 1.5 tons/ha of cereal Africa is now producing;

4. For lack of technological upgrading in farming, Africa is hungry, despite having abundant land and water resources and about 70% of people doing farming as main economic activity. Africa consumes most of the world's charitable food aid and commercially imports a reported 50 million tons of grain annually, often paying with money that it borrows or gets charitably;
5. Other developing regions have applied the productivity-enhancing technologies to a greater degree than Africa and by now produce on average some 3.5 tons/ha of cereals<sup>1</sup>: they beg less for food aid than Africa and are far less dependent on commercial imports. In fact, Latin America is a major net exporter of agricultural products, including food.

#### So What Will Happen in Africa?

6. Will the African youth come to the rescue? Will they remain on the land en-masse and till it to generate farm surpluses to feed their people and the world? Will Africa buck the global trend and retain a high percentage of its people in future in farming? The answer to all these questions is NO: most youth will leave (they will have to). African farming will prosper and produce enough surpluses to feed itself and to help feed the world on the basis of a few professionalised and far more productive farmers – a few of the youth will be these farmers. But the ones who remain will not do farming as a part-time activity (currently Africa's crop farmers are busy only for the rainy season) - instead:

<sup>1</sup> **Eastern Africa's Worsening Cereal Deficits And Growing Dependence On Food Aid And Commercial Imports: Is There An Exit? Solomon S. Mkumbwa, Document No: SFE-PRS-10/01/01, FAO Subregional Office for Eastern Africa, 2010.** *The study states that since the 1970s cereal yield has stagnated at little over 1 tonne per hectare, with negative growth rates in the 1990s and early 2000s. As a result, the sub-region became a net deficit zone by the 1980s. For cereals in general, Eastern African countries generally harvest less than 2 tonnes per hectare while the average for developing countries is around 3.5 tonnes.*

- a. You can be sure youth will not be into back-breaking hand-hoe tilling;
- b. You can also be sure that many youths will not accept tiny plots to toil and sweat over: they will consolidate as other youth less willing to farm sell up their inherited plots and seek life in other careers;
- c. They will not be applying only 10kg/ha of nutrients (the current Africa average, while other developing regions are above 100kg/ha); and
- d. They will be using more irrigation, more on-farm energy, and more productive seeds and breeds.

7. What I want to say is that it is almost a law of nature that the productivity of farmers will not go up if they remain in large numbers on the land. We need to have fewer of them but more dedicated ones: *for reasons of dysfunctional land and other policies, poor sector management, technological and institutional inadequacies, Africa's current farming sector is a haven of disguised unemployment – the unemployed cannot produce with seriousness. The current 70% of underemployed rural people will be effectively replaced by a few – mostly youth - who will do the work that their parents and grandparents are failing to do.* All who are familiar with current farm surpluses in Africa know that only a very few farmers have anything to spare and sell; the rest are either producing just enough to eat or failing to achieve even that.

8. For future success, Africa needs a few, not a mass of youth in farming.

#### The Arithmetic of Youth in African Farming

9. Now to the numbers: I hate detailed numbers and generally prefer to use rounded-off figures. I will take Africa's rough population and use rounded figures to make my point; the attached table gives some insights. Readers should not get stressed about exact correctness – the message is clearer from the rough approximations. Key messages regarding capacity to absorb youth, come in the last three rows of the table and are derived as follows:

- a. Let us adopt a figure of 5 – 10% of the population remaining in farming as a good indicator that farming is performing well in terms of productivity; let us assume that Africa has the development ambition to achieve this ratio so releasing the rest of its people for often better-paying jobs outside farming;
  - b. If half of the people below 70 and above 10 are kept in agriculture, *25% of Africa's people would be farmers* – much higher than the global trends would lead us to expect for a developed Africa;
  - c. If a quarter of the people below 70 and above 10 are kept in agriculture (of whom most would be youth, this being Africa), *12% of Africa's people would be farmers* – still much higher than the global trends would expect for a developed Africa. *But perhaps this (being close to the upper limit in (a)) is manageable and each farmer can be productive and not be crowded in by disguised unemployment;*
  - d. If 10% of the people below 70 and above 10 are kept in agriculture (of whom most would be youth, this being Africa), *this would mean 5% of Africa's people being farmers* – almost spot-on for what a developed Africa may end up having in farming and yet feed itself and help to feed the globe.
10. If these last two ratios of Africans on the land are what we aim for as rural agricultural employment, *we are talking of between 50 and 120 million employees. Yet Africa has 65% of its population below 35 years, i.e. 650 millions. According to the paper (this issue) by Mills and Polizzotti, 61% of the population is under 24 years, i.e. about 610 millions.*
  11. It then becomes quite obvious that if we do not want to crowd agriculture and maintain it as a sector for disguised unemployment, *the total number of people of all ages in farming will be equal to only between 8% and 18%<sup>1</sup> of the people in the acceptable age range for agriculture. This leaves out most youth.*
  12. The question then is, what will they do? This paper is not the place to give a full answer but clearly, Africa will have to develop jobs outside farming, as all successful countries have done. Fortunately, if African farming yields more and more stable surpluses, it can attract investment into agro-processing industries and service activities higher up its own value chains. Fortunately also, Africa is urbanising, which means its demand will increasingly be for more processed and packaged food, fuel and fibre. Industry will have to be created to supply the processed food and a vibrant commerce will emerge to distribute agro-products; all this will generate more jobs in Africa, *provided that processed food and other processed products (e.g. cotton and leather clothing, wooden furniture etc) are not imported from outside the continent, as Africa does now for most industrial products.*
  13. But even the full agricultural value chain should NOT be dangled in front of youth with the pretence that it can employ all or most of them: the full agricultural chain till marketing of processed products may absorb 20 – 25% of the labour force – still considerably less than the total youthful employable numbers given in paragraph 10 above. It is time for Africans to start creating jobs beyond the agricultural value chains; many can then exit agriculture altogether and leave it to more professionalised and productive farmers – most likely mainly young ones.

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<sup>1</sup> These extremes come as follows: it is 8% if we compare the 50 million in the last row with an under-24 population of 610 million; it is 18% if the comparison is between keeping a quarter of suitable age groups in farming out of the 650 million under-35 population.

Speculative Table of Africans in Farming<sup>1</sup>: Now and in Future

Subset of Africa's population		Numbers	
Description	Basis for estimation of share	Millions	Approx % of Africa
Africa total Population	UN estimate, approx	1,000	100
<b>CURRENT REALITY IN AFRICAN AGRICULTURE</b>			
Rural & Agricultural population:	Generally accepted share; all rural assumed agricultural even though this is untrue	700	70
• Of which <age 10, and so cannot farm	60% of the 40% who are below 15	170	17
• Of which > 70 and so ineffective as farmers	5% (author's guess – with AIDS, one is lucky to reach 70)	35	4
• <i>Unproductive rural population</i>	<i>(Under 10) + (over 70)</i>	205	20
• NET effective potential farm labour - current	(Total Rural Population) - (Under 10) - (Over 70)	495**	50
	Of which: <u>Youth</u> of working age (>10 yrs, < 35?) – author's guess 50% of net effective total	250***	25
Result	At half a billion (about 500 million – see **), the share of Africa's working age population (i.e. total less the too old and too young) on the land is too high for farming to uplift into high productivity and prosperity. <i>Even after subtracting the too old and the too young – see ***, it remains 25% of Africa's total population on the land – many more than technology needs to produce surpluses.</i> To absorb so many, agriculture would have to remain of low productivity and in many other ways inefficient.		
<b>SCENARIOS BY LEVEL OF AMBITION</b>			
	<b>Ambition</b>	<b>'000 millions</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
If Africa wants selected shares of its population in farming	Keep half of the potentially effective age group people in farming	250	25
	Keep a quarter of the potentially effective age group people in farming	120	12
	Keep 10% of the potentially effective age group people in farming	50	5

<sup>1</sup> "Farming" is specified to include only the on-farm first part of the agricultural value-chain.



## Articles

### Can South-South Cooperation offer sustainable agriculture-led solutions to youth unemployment in Africa?

Festus K. Akinnifesi<sup>1</sup>

#### Summary

*At the core of Africa's youth unemployment dilemma is a set of complex interconnected issues, including a skills deficit, outdated education system, obsolete technologies, and limited income creation opportunities, especially in rural areas. This article focuses on multi-pronged solutions to address the problem. Strategic options that should underpin policies designed to create jobs for youth include, but are not limited to the following: First, taking advantage of the south-south cooperation (SSC) mechanism which can develop the skills of young people through knowledge sharing and exchange, know-how skills transfer, technology demonstration, adaptation and assimilation, and scaling up of best practices in agriculture and food security initiatives. Second, the creation of opportunities for rural pro-youth entrepreneurial development in agriculture and off-farm enterprises that benefit from southern-solutions. Third, a youth-mentoring network, where African youth are connected to mentors and other youth in the global south through exchange fora, virtual networks and internships. Such mentoring networks will ensure that youth do not merely seek job opportunities, but are proactively motivated to explore opportunities for creating and providing development solutions through finding, adding and creating values along the agricultural value chain, thereby creating multiple agricultural and off-farm employments for other youths. SSC has huge potential to improve productivity, return and competitiveness of agriculture in Africa, which in turn will create incentives for youth engagement.*

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#### Introduction

An overwhelming 84 percent of today's global youth lives in the developing world, the largest ever in the world's history (Zille and Benjamin, 2011). Specifically, about 65 percent of Africa's population is below the age of 35, with a continental average of 20 years of age, making it the continent with the highest concentration of young people. Currently, about one in three Africans, i.e. about 297 million, are between the ages of 10 and 24, and by 2050, this age group is projected to rise to 561 million (Devlin, 2011). This phenomenon of skewed demographic distribution of young people is generally referred to as the "youth bulge," and it constitutes both a threat and an opportunity. The youth bulge in Africa can be linked to high fertility rates, lower child mortality than in the past and, compared with countries in other continents, a relatively short life span.

Nearly 75 million African youth are unemployed, and many of those employed are generally job insecure, with little hope for advancement or building a viable career. Unemployment in Africa can be as high as 80 per cent, even for relatively performing countries (Oppenheimer and spice, 2011). Considering that unemployed youth are prone to criminal and antisocial activities that undermine the stability and development of a society (Awosusi, 2012), it is often portended that youth unemployment is like "a ticking time-bomb," and that something needs to be done to reverse the trend. No doubt, the future prospect of Africa lies in whether or not the potential of today's youth's bulge can be innovatively harnessed. Africa's youth are today's workforce and tomorrow's future.

A significant part of the African continent still grapples with unemployment and/or underemployment, hunger, poverty and disease; yet, today's youth are more educated and skilled than at any other time in history. Finding new and innovative ways of creating jobs is therefore one of Africa's most urgent challenges that currently receives less priority than it deserves. Young people in Africa constitute untapped resources, the leveraging of whose potentials could result effectively in substantial economic growth, improved food security, reduced poverty and the attainment of sustainable development.



As international policy-makers and the global development community firmly focus efforts on how to address the gloomy decades ahead, the sobering prospects of feeding nine billion people, reducing the number of people living in poverty and combating climate change, attention is being turned to concrete and innovative solutions. One of the ways of accessing potential development solutions is through South-South Cooperation (SSC), which is gaining increasing momentum, as an effective mechanism for achieving accelerated development impact in food security, poverty reduction and sustainable development. South-south cooperation is the mutual sharing and exchange of key development solutions—knowledge, experiences and best practices, policies, innovative technologies, know-how, and resources—between and among countries in the global south. SSC is widely accepted as a complementary model of development cooperation, in particular for sharing knowledge, technologies, policies, best practices, lessons learned and experiences among countries, towards overcoming common challenges and achieving development goals of food security, poverty reduction and sustainable environment. SSC can be said to be approaching its “tipping point.” According to Gladwell (2000), a tipping point is a moment at which an idea, trend or social behaviour crosses a threshold, tips and spreads like wildfire. This article will illustrate how SSC can offer a beacon of hope for addressing youth unemployment in sub-Saharan Africa, through agricultural and entrepreneurial-led southern development solutions.

### **Share of agricultural employment**

The share of agricultural employment in most developed countries is low, while “emerging economies” generally follow a decreasing trend. For instance, according to the report by Brooks (2012), the share of agricultural employment was reduced from 65 percent in 1961 to less than 10 percent in 2005 in the Republic of Korea, and from 75 percent to nearly 30 percent during the same period in Turkey. Argentina, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, and several other middle-income countries have reduced the share of agricultural employment substantially during the same period. These trends could be attributed to rapid agricultural transformation and technological advancement which leads to increased productivity with less use of human resources. The implication is that developed and emerging economies have released

the labour force from agriculture to other sectors due to increased productivity and increased efficiency in agriculture.

Contrary to developed and several emerging economies, agriculture remains the largest employer in most countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Although the rural population in Africa is large and the majority consists of young people, there are poor incentives for youth to be productively engaged in agriculture. Generally, the younger generation tends to associate agriculture with poverty, drudgery, hardships and low self-esteem. This leads to rural-urban drift and losses in the rural labour force. In order to engage today’s youth in agriculture, there should be an introduction of less labour-intensive, affordable and efficient technologies, backed by an appropriate policy climate for investment and market access tailored towards agricultural value-chains, income creation opportunities, off-farm employment and entrepreneurship.

Experiences in East Asian countries show that sizeable youth bulges in 1965 and 1990 coupled with better education and increased job opportunities resulted in significant economic upturn. This demographic dividend was a result of i) increased availability of workers, and ii) continued expansion of the working age population (Leo, 2011; Filmer et al, 2014). Unless current situation is improved with regard to appropriate agricultural investment that increases productivity and youth-focused employment policies, analysts have suggested that it would take Sub-Saharan Africa 300 years to reach an employment share in agriculture equivalent to the level in the developed countries of today, and 125 years to reach the level of countries in east Asia, and 31 years to reach the level of agriculture employment share in south Asia (Leo, 2011). However, to turn such gloomy forecast into advantage will require long-term commitment and innovative policies that sees youth as part of the solution rather than the problem. There has been a concern in some quotas that if agricultural productivity is increased the share of agriculture employment will decline. Africa has endowment of labor and land—two key requirements for agricultural development and transformation. According to the recent World Bank report, there is evidence that Africa farms can grow in number, size, and productivity without displacing labor (Filmer et al, 2014).

It is suggested that Africa has the potential to pursue the twin objectives of improving agriculture to create jobs, and at the same time advancing non-agricultural sectors for development (including manufacturing), and both of these should harmoniously contribute to economic growth. Several governments in African countries are introducing programmes for training and creating employment opportunities for young people in agriculture and entrepreneurship. The impact of such efforts could be accelerated if coupled with the potential of south-south cooperation (SSC).

### Leveraging southern capacity development

When a large young population is educated and provided with appropriate technical skills, and entrepreneurial and decent work opportunities, the youth bulge can translate to explosive economic development. With technological advancement, economic growth, and home-grown capacity development, countries in the global south are uniting, more than ever, to complement, influence, reshape, and even overhaul the traditional models of technical cooperation in a positive way. SSC provides a partnership among equals born out of solidarity, shared experiences and the pursuance of economic development. A large part of urban unemployment in Africa consists of young people who have dropped out of school, and is associated with rural-urban drift.

One of the reasons for youth unemployment, is a lack of entrepreneurial skills. How can SSC address this entrepreneurial skills gap? The exchange and sharing of home-grown scalable southern-developed solutions that has been proven and tested elsewhere in the global south, can help address this gap. These solutions include knowledge exchange, technology transfer, capacity development, and innovative policies. SSC seeks to promote the exchange of such development solutions to enable countries to jump-start and benefit from innovations, lessons and good practices, tried and tested elsewhere in the south.

Since 1996, FAO has facilitated the exchange and sharing of hundreds of southern-grown development solutions among countries. Fifteen southern countries have deployed over 1 800 experts and technicians to more than 50 countries, mainly in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and the South Pacific. These experts have been sharing their knowledge and experiences, and have helped

introduce, demonstrate and adapt new and scalable technologies in collaborating countries. Notably, most of the beneficiaries under these south-south initiatives are young people. SSC offers an important mechanism for leveraging capacity, expertise and resources from countries that have proven effective in improving food security, generating incomes and creating agricultural and off-farm employments for young people. In the last decade, nearly 700 Chinese experts and technicians have been fielded to Nigeria—funded by the country itself. This have been training farmers, vocational students and frontline extension staff and introducing new technologies in the diverse areas of agriculture value chain (**Box 1**). According to data provided by the states, over 3 million people have been trained in the use of various technologies under the South-South Cooperation programme in Nigeria (Pie-Smith, 2014).

Examples of successful SSC programmes facilitated by FAO:

- **Malawi-China:** over 200 improved crop varieties were introduced and over 10 000 extension workers and farmers were trained by Chinese experts;
- **Nigeria-China:** Under this SSC initiative, the Chinese cage fish farming technology has been adopted by no fewer than 5 000 fishing families in Ondo, Bauchi, Gombe, Nasarawa and Osun States of Nigeria (Oyebanji et al, 2013). Improved technologies in rice production, irrigation and aquaculture have become a significant aspect of the successful Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) of the country, and are transforming lives of large number of farmers, especially youth in 36 states of Nigeria (Thomas and Akinnifesi, 2013). In 2012, Lokoja was hit by the worst floods in 50 years. As part of the government's flood recovery programme, rice seeds were distributed to farmers for use in the receding waters. The Chinese SSC experts helped to design the land preparation and irrigation programme, and the Agricultural Development Program (ADP) provided training to some 5000 young and unemployed people on how to plant rice, control pests and diseases, and apply fertilisers. They were divided into 500 groups, and each was allocated a plot of land (Pie-Smith, 2014). This investment has already started to yield dividends.
- **Senegal-Viet Nam:** rice production has been significantly increased to more than double

through technologies introduced by Vietnamese and Chinese experts;

- **Chad-Viet Nam:** Vietnamese experts have introduced modern beekeeping that has impacted the entire value chain, including production, processing, packaging, marketing and exports;
- **Brazil-Africa:** The school feeding programme inspired by the Brazilian experience has been introduced into many countries in Africa under the scheme “Purchase from Africans for Africa”

(FAO, 2013), providing nutritious food to school children. The activities are, indirectly boosting agricultural production and creating income opportunities for small holder farmers through direct local purchases of food for school feeding. Brazil is also helping specifically to strengthen Angola’s agricultural sector in the framework of SSC.

#### Box 1 Defying the odds: How youth have defied unemployment through China-Nigeria SSC initiative in Nigeria

**1. Quail Farm Jos, Nigeria:** A young woman named Hadiza, bought 500 baby quails locally, and before long was producing 250 eggs a day. Gradually, she has built up a flock of 25,000 birds, with the training she received from an SSC expert. Some of the quails were shifted to Zamfara and many were sold to local farmers. At the end of 2013, one of the farms had 6000 quails, producing 3000 eggs a day.

**2. Uche Igweonu (32), Nigeria,** formerly an electronics entrepreneur was forced to close his IT shop due to the high cost of rent, low sales and underemployment. He was trained in modern technology for poultry production by a Chinese SSC expert posted to Kubwa Integrated Farm. Putting the skills acquired to work, Uche started with 2 000 birds which he later increased to 5 000 birds. He now owns Addyson Farms Nigeria Limited, where he sells an average of 80 crates of eggs per day, makes a net income equivalent of USD 500 per week after having paid the salaries of six workers, and settles additional USD 500 in bills. He has purchased land, constructed new cages, and a bore hole for water. His mentor has returned to China after completing his two year contract, but he stills communicates with him and receives technical advice through the internet.

**3. Yahaya Sani (31),** from Sabuwa, Katsina State, Nigeria, began traditional honey production at the age of 17 years. He was then trained in modern beekeeping and was mentored in a four-year SSC knowledge exchange programme by a Chinese expert. He learned how to set up an apiary and now has 48 beekeeping boxes , and is able to sell six cartons of honey every 2-3 months, earning a revenue equivalent of USD 3 024. His livelihood has improved because of his new skills. From his income, Yahaya has bought a house, a new Fadama farmland worth equivalent USD 1 100, and an ox for ploughing which he leases between equivalent USD 150 and 200 per day. Yahaya recently formed a cooperative with 48 members. More than 500 farm families have adopted beekeeping in the Sabuwa local government through this SSC initiative. Beekeeping and honey production, processing and marketing have now become a popular income generating vocation for youth in the area.

**4. Osin Farms, Oshogbo, Nigeria:** The farm adopted cage fish culture technology in 2009. With an SSC experts working with six workers, 18 cage cultures were established. Each of the 2 x 2 metre fish cage produces about one ton of tilapia fish in six months cycle – is worth around 900,000 naira (equivalent of US\$5600). In 2013, Osin farm has up-scaled its production to 120 tilapia cages in another site at Owalla dam, with a potential annual revenue of more than one million US dollar. In addition, the farm employs 65 youth in its diversified enterprises ranging from bamboo processing, to poultry, aquaculture.

**Source:** Oyebanji, O. Adamu, M.A. and Bello, G. ( 2013).

Modern fish farming and aquaculture, especially cage fish culture and integrated rice-fish systems are creating income opportunities and improving livelihoods in many parts of Africa through knowledge exchange, and skills and capacity development by experts from Asian countries including China, Indonesia, Japan, Viet Nam, and many others. The aquaculture technologies have positive implications for biodiversity conservation as traditional fishing is associated with poaching, over-fishing and the use of chemicals.

Within Africa, innovative knowledge and experiences in sustainable technologies, such as conservation agriculture and agroforestry that have the potential to reduce the need for chemical fertilizers and boost production for hundreds of thousands of small-scale farmers, are being exchanged among countries and scaled up among countries (Akinnifesi et al, 2010).

#### **South-South employment creation prospects and recommendations**

SSC, if specially designed for youth, can offer interesting trajectory for an alternative economic model that moves African development agenda further by creating innovative jobs and careers, income creation and entrepreneurship. This will ultimately contribute to economic growth and sustainable development. Important policy options to consider in addressing youth unemployment through the SSC instrument include, but are not limited to the following:

- **Promote youth mentoring networks.** SSC is a dynamic mechanism that intrinsically links people, nations, and institutions with technical knowledge and resources. SSC can help create jobs for young people by bringing experts from other countries or continents to train and impart knowledge to them. This could involve other knowledge sharing activities, such as youth-led seminars, debates, expos, innovation fairs, talk-shows, etc.
- **Revise, update and strengthen educational curricular.** Many of the educational systems in African countries are outdated, making young people unsuitable or unprepared for available jobs. This can be improved through the strengthening of the educational system

and creation of programmes and exchanges that target youth.

- **Youth entrepreneurial schemes in vocational schools and tertiary institutions.** Countries can take advantage of SSC support to incorporate modern technologies and entrepreneurship in colleges, tertiary institutions and vocational training schools. The colonial educational heritage in Africa handed down an educational system that emphasized mainly salaried jobs, and farming systems focused on subsistence agriculture without training in agribusiness and agricultural competitiveness.
- **Promote SSC youths exchange in agriculture.** African youth have very limited knowledge of the opportunities that are available in agriculture, mainly because there is no opportunity for exchange of experiences and internships that could broaden their knowledge. Promoting knowledge exchange between young people in countries in Africa and other countries in the global south could make a huge impact on improving skills and motivation.
- **Policies that support private sector investment, income creation and decent work.** To solve the unemployment dilemma that exists all over Africa, policies that proactively engage the largely untapped potential youth labour force in productive and creative entrepreneurship development is imperative. To achieve this, governments need to create a conducive investment climate that encourages private sector investment in agriculture, agribusiness and youth entrepreneurship which will help create jobs, generate income and diversify the economy.

#### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Unless today's African youth are productively engaged in modern agriculture that generates higher incomes and creates employment, the prospect of the post-2015 development agenda will remain bleak for Africa. Youth unemployment is not a simple problem that could be tackled by any magic bullets, but one that requires multifaceted and holistic solutions. SSC should not be seen as a panacea for addressing all youth unemployment



problems but it does have tremendous potential to contribute to the solutions when combined with other innovative options and enabling environment. The growing demand for food and expanding market, coupled with endowment of land and labor in Africa, creates scope for employment and income generation opportunities for African youth. For Africa to fully reap its demographic dividend, opportunity for increasing productivity and competitiveness of agriculture especially in the rural areas, is vital. SSC can help to accelerate this agricultural transformation process.

Relevant and effective policy choices are needed to address the challenges faced by young people in Africa, including creating and expanding opportunities for i) accelerated capacity development that increases access to affordable and sustainable southern-developed technologies; ii) exchange and sharing of knowledge, skills and other development solutions between youth within Africa and other developing countries especially, middle-income economies; iii) diversified opportunities through entrepreneurial-led agricultural self-job creation; and iv) improved rural amenities and relevant job creation opportunities. These actions will require deliberate youth-focused policy interventions and reforms that engage the private sector, providing a conducive investment climate and tackling agriculture from the perspective of enhancing the value-chain, income generation and creation of competitive employment. Such policy interventions taking advantage of SSC should not be limited to small-scale farming, but also support small-, medium- and large-scale businesses along agricultural value-chains. The productivity and competitiveness of agriculture should improve across Africa, and should be central of national economies not just local or opportunistic. Using SSC as a mechanism to implement these policy interventions has demonstrated that South-South Cooperation provides a beacon of hope for African youth.

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## Re-configuring the future of Africa's workforce in agriculture and food systems with youth in mind

Mandivamba Rukuni<sup>1</sup> and Raymond Zvavanyange<sup>2</sup>

### Summary

Developed countries face daunting challenges on narrowing down options to maintain sustainable food production, whereas Africa has to prepare now to be next the world's bread-basket. Africa has to re-orient its youth to lead the world's food systems and markets. Governments and non-state actors should therefore invest in re-configuring the agriculture, food systems and renewable natural resources sectors workforce with youth in mind. Africa has the world's most youthful population, maybe the fastest population growth, and is also urbanizing fast, with urban markets growing faster. African institutions need to commit and deepen organizational planning in line with the youth and urban demographic. The youth do not find agriculture attractive as a career and will largely migrate to urban areas, making it difficult to maintain a steady supply of interested farmers, extension agents, scientists and agribusiness entrepreneurs. Youth unemployment is now a problem for Africa as educated youth find limited economic opportunities to fulfill their dreams.

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Education and developmental solutions are needed to empower youth before they migrate to urban areas. There is also need for opportunities to ground youth in Africa's economic transformation and development. Agricultural education and training institutions need to transform their curricula which is often out-dated and focused narrowly on farm production rather than encompassing markets, agribusiness, processing and other life skills required by young entrepreneurs. Finally, Africa's training institutions also need to develop strong ties with the private sector, including processors, markets, transporters, and others who will increasingly serve as employers for their graduates.

### Introduction

Agriculture and agribusiness together are projected to be a US\$ 1 trillion industry in Sub Saharan Africa by 2030 compared to US\$ 313 billion in 2010, and they should be at the top of the agenda for economic transformation and development (World Bank, 2013). Moreover the world population will be 8 billion by then. Developed countries face daunting challenges on narrowing down options to maintain sustainable food production. Africa has to prepare now to be next the world's bread-basket within a 20-30 year period. Therefore Africa's youth of today will likely be the future drivers of the world's food systems and markets. This will determine how Africa feeds itself in the shorter term. The objective of this article is to urge governments and non-state actors to re-configure the policies concerning agriculture, food systems and renewable natural resources sectors workforce with the youth in mind.

### The youth and urban demographics

Africa has the world's most youthful population, with 60% of the population between 15 – 24 years. The population growth in many countries in Africa is also higher than in the rest of the world. This population growth and subsequent urban growth is closely associated with increased food demand (Thornton *et al.*, 2011). Urbanisation comes with changes in food preferences towards processed foods including high-value foods (dairy, meat, fresh fruits and vegetables) as well as food packaged for greater convenience. African institutions need to commit themselves and deepen organizational planning for a workforce configuration in line with the youth and urban demographic. Today, many young people in

Africa do not find agriculture attractive as a career and will largely migrate to urban areas. It is proving difficult therefore to maintain a steady supply of interested farmers, extension agents, scientists and agri-business entrepreneurs. With the estimated age of farmers at 60 in Africa and armed on average with a thousand-year old technology of the hand-hoe, it is not surprising that youth do not find agriculture “sexy”. Youth unemployment is a major political challenge, especially given that young people are becoming more educated and more empowered by modern information and communication technologies (UNECA, 2011). The challenge therefore is in channeling youthful energy into productive and efficient labor in agricultural value chains, from input supply, processing, trading and related services - financial, consumer, marketing, food safety, and so on. Africa has to produce around 25 million jobs a year for future stability, and agriculture and agribusiness currently offer the greatest opportunity for this (World Bank, 2013; McKinsey Global Institute, 2012).

#### **Frameworks for the youth dimension and perspective**

The current frameworks for the youth dimension and the ability of agriculture, together with other industries to absorb youths as a workforce based on their heterogeneity are: development, where youths are actively involved in development spaces often experimenting with donor systems and ways of operation; research-oriented, where youths are curiosity driven, innovators, and knowledge brokers. It is a pursuit of knowledge for its own sake; technological, where youths are savvy with gadgets, big data and internet based technologies; education and psychological, where youths express their artistic form as educators through familiarisation with nature, drama, theatre, visual arts, and photography. Youths also act as conveyors of extension messages; and lastly, open movement, where youths are global citizens and reliant on self-training and skills. The group includes freelancers, bloggers, citizen journalists and cybercitizens. The central message from the frameworks is that youths are a mobile group and ready to exploit opportunities in different employment spectrums. Agriculture, as a

sector of opportunity, becomes critical because of its close links across the value chain and its potential to attract youths in its service industries. Policy makers, governments and developmental institutions are then urged to empower youths,

especially with good education and life skills to have the desired migration mix.

#### **Implications for education, training and workforce competencies**

Contemporary African agricultural education and training institutions are generally not geared for a future agriculture and food sector dominated by today’s youth. Curricula are often out-dated and focused narrowly on farm production rather than encompassing markets, agribusiness, processing and other skills required by entrepreneurs (World Bank, 2007). Student enrolments in this sector have been declining over the past years in many African countries, and staffing shortage is high. Most educational institutions have a long history of training extension officers for the public sector, but traditionally extension workers do not have strong links to the private sector food processors that are expected to increasingly serve as employers for their graduates. Haggblade (2012) paints a picture of the changing realities that should drive Africa’s training and education agenda, not just for educating agricultural professionals but also farmers and other business practitioners. As a result of a rapid growth for agricultural produce in urban markets and an expected increase in the marketed share of growing food production over the coming decades, needs in processing and marketing are expected to grow twice as fast as value addition on the farm. Networked and integrated farming is the likely outcome. This means the skill mix required in agriculture will increasingly include food processing, food technology and food safety, and marketing and processing industries in the private sector. Therefore, it is important that African agricultural education institutions remain relevant and productive. For this, they need to change and expand from focussing on on-farm technical skills to include also off-farm skills. Training needs to focus on issues that are relevant and connected also to private business (Figure 1).

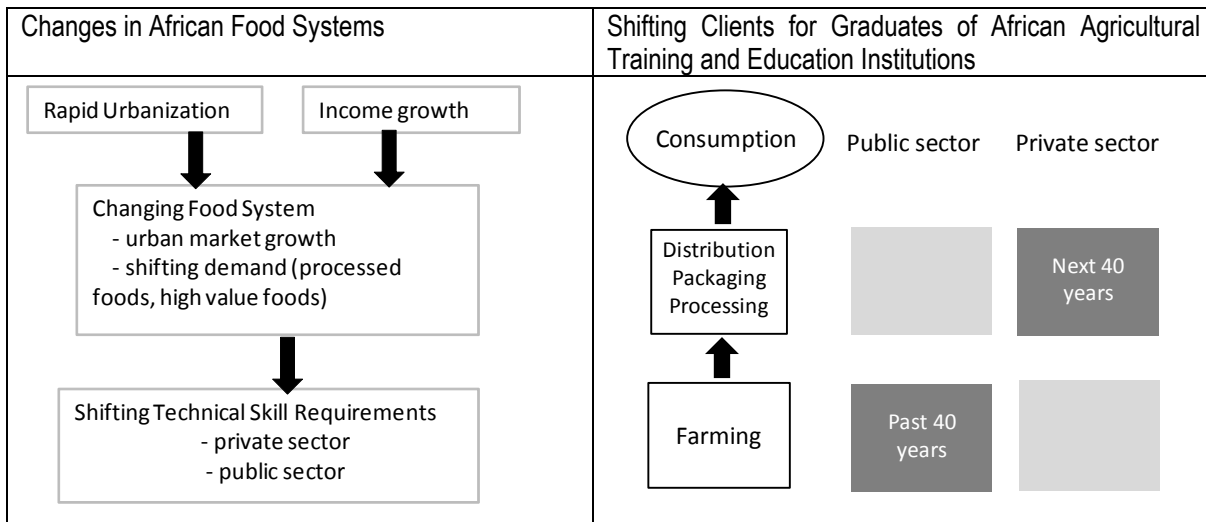


Figure 1: Changing African Food Systems and demand for Agricultural Training. Source: Haggblade, 2012

The curriculum and content must be geared to the future youth workforce. Furthermore, the education and research institutes will need to develop new structural models for engaging private sector employers as partners, sources of internships and mentorships and potential funders of students. Students should in the future contribute to curriculum development. Dynamic future developments in the agriculture sector will require a cadre of professionals with a different skill set and mindset than today. The education system needs to move away from a mere transfer of information to developing and honing technical skills that assist future professionals in the application of knowledge to agricultural problem-solving. Improving technical and vocational skills is crucial to enhancing African student competitiveness when compared to other parts of the world. Other skills of the future professional include: social, interpersonal and communication skills; negotiation and facilitation skills; critical thinking; leadership, business skills, and organizational skills (National Research Council, 2011).

### Conclusions

The importance of robust policies for sustainable food production presents both opportunities and challenges to African governments and leaders. Given a re-configuration of agriculture, food systems and renewable natural resources sectors workforce with the youth in mind, Africa is poised to enter new spaces in world food systems and markets. A key

factor to drive this new space penetration is Africa's youth. Educational, funding partners and private sector players will need to be in tandem with these new targets and policies so as to change mindsets, nurture the professional, vocational and technical skills, and ultimately create new knowledge. The re-configuring processes will be incomplete without the active engagement of political and governance structures and the deliberate fusion of all players. The longer-term result will be youths able to spearhead Africa's economic transformation and development.

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**Investing in Africa's future: How vocational training can provide decent rural employment opportunities and contribute to sustainable rural development**

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**Summary**

*This article explores the role of Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS) as an effective intervention to address the key challenges the youth face in employment in Africa and in turn, as contributors to sustainable rural development. It describes how the JFFLS integrated approach and unique learning methodology contributes to preventing child labour and promoting interest among rural youth in the agricultural sector, while stressing the importance of the sustainable use and management of natural resources. The approach is a win-win strategy for both rural people and rural development: it prepares young people for the marketplace by developing their business and life skills, while also teaching them sustainable agricultural practices that they can apply to safeguard their future livelihood.*

**The challenges that rural children and youth face in Africa**

**D**espite a concerted global effort to eradicate child labour<sup>3</sup>, this phenomenon continues to undermine development in Africa, depriving

children of their education and endangering their physical and mental well-being. The highest incidence of child labour in the world occurs in sub-Saharan Africa where more than one in five children are engaged in child labour, accounting for over 59 million child labourers (ILO, 2013). Alarming, nearly half of these children are engaged in hazardous work<sup>4</sup> (ILO, 2013). As child labour remains a major concern in the region, the development and implementation of national action plans for the elimination of child labour are receiving enhanced focus in the international community<sup>5</sup>.

For families living in poverty, children are often seen as a much needed and readily available source of supplemental labour and children are thus forced to enter the job market early, either formally or informally. In rural areas, children are even more at risk as agriculture remains the largest sector where child labourers can be found, with nearly 59% of all child labourers working in this sector (ILO, 2013). The work these children undertake is often hazardous, with frequent injuries that can have long-term debilitating effects and in extreme cases, can involve human trafficking, slavery and sexual exploitation.

Furthermore, Africa's unique demographics place pressure on an already fragile labour market. With 61% of the population under 24 years of age, Africa is the world's youngest continent. Although the amount of able and willing young labourers in the region will continue to increase, there are challenges in harnessing the potential of this youthful population through providing decent employment opportunities of children and youth. Overlapping categories of age groups set by the United Nations for "children" (any person under 18) and "youth" (a person between the ages of 15 and 24<sup>6</sup>) can complicate protecting

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<sup>3</sup> The term "child labour" is defined by the International Labour Organization of the United Nations (ILO) as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development <http://www.ilo.org/ipecc/facts/lang-en/index.htm>

<sup>4</sup> Hazardous child labour is defined as work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children (Article 3 of the ILO Convention concerning the Prohibition and Immediate Action for the Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, 1999 - No. 182).

<sup>5</sup> For example, ILO - IPEC (2013), *Marking Progress against Child Labour. Global Estimates and Trends 2000-2012*, Geneva, Switzerland

<sup>6</sup> Both definitions are officially adopted by the United Nations: children: UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 1 (1989); youth: Secretary-General Report to the General Assembly, A/36/215 (1981)



children of working age<sup>1</sup> while promoting opportunities for youth.

Additionally, a high incidence of child labour coupled with high under- and unemployment among those of working age leave youth with reduced employment options. The entrance of large numbers of child labourers into the labour market can lead to considerable labour market supply-demand disruptions. The excess supply of low-skilled child labourers can put downward pressure on wages throughout the same sectors in which youth labourers are seeking employment (Venkateswarlu, 2007). Thus, child labourers can effectively “crowd-out” youth from potential employment opportunities, while creating a low-skill labour trap, with the detrimental effect of reinforcing the demand for low-skilled labour.

A large proportion of Africa’s youth live in rural areas. Since rural youth often lack a basic education, access to information, and technical skills, they are frequently at a competitive disadvantage when they enter the job market. Furthermore, young people face a number of additional obstacles in starting their own businesses. For example, they may face difficulties in gaining access to financial capital, agricultural extension services, affordable input supplies, and marketing opportunities. As a result of these challenges, many rural youth settle into informal, low-skilled, manual labour to earn a subsistence income.

***Inter linkages between child labour, youth employment and renewable natural resource management***

Reducing child labour and promoting decent work for youth are closely linked goals. For children, not all agricultural activities they participate in are necessarily bad for them. Age-appropriate, lower risk tasks can provide them with experience, teaching them practical and social skills. However, harmful work or labour in agriculture that hinders children from acquiring education can make it difficult for them to participate in well-remunerated and productive work opportunities as youth, and subsequently as adults. This perpetuates a cycle of poverty, food insecurity and child labour across generations. In turn, large numbers of young people who are without decent employment can severely

weaken the perceived value of keeping children in school *vis-à-vis* sending them to work. Thus child labour and youth unemployment are two harmful elements that interact, mutually reinforcing each other, to perpetrate a vicious cycle to the detriment of young Africans.

If the above issues are to be effectively addressed, understanding the root causes of child labour is necessary. One such cause is unsustainable natural resource management. For instance, poor management of forests and their resources can lead to children traveling longer distances to collect fuel and water, or to increasingly risky practices such as taking small boats further and further from shore for fishing. Undiversified agricultural production and overexploitation of natural resources also contribute to a less resilient agricultural system that is more prone to economic and weather-related shocks. For example, unanticipated crop and livestock losses have been shown to lead to an increase in child labour, as households lose income and assets. Once children have been withdrawn from school to work, they often do not return to formal education.

The employment of a low-skilled and inexperienced workforce and use of child labour also has a negative impact on environmental sustainability. For example, cheap child labour may encourage the exploitation of natural resources, where such practices would otherwise not have been carried out or would have stopped due to low profitability. As a consequence, overexploitation and unsustainable resource utilization persist, further reinforcing a vicious cycle of poverty and child labour.

There is an undeniable need to make agricultural production more sustainable. Engaging young, rural people can be part of the solution. To do so, children will not only need the opportunity to develop the appropriate skill-set in order to later face multi-faceted environmental challenges; they will also need incentives such as high-quality, practical training and attractive employment prospects to be part of the process. Encouraging children and youth to be more involved in agriculture can be an opportunity to shape and encourage the farmers of the future to embrace more sustainable and climate-smart agriculture.

For the reasons above, addressing the challenges of youth employment and child labour demands an integrated response in which policies promote high-

<sup>1</sup> Working age level typically set by countries at 14-15 years

quality schooling as an alternative to child labour, children enter adolescence equipped with the skills they need to succeed in the labour market, and active labour market policies ensure a smooth transition from school to decent work. In this way, a virtuous circle is created: returns to education are increased; households have greater incentives to keep children in school; and the next generation of adults is better educated, more likely to have decent occupations and less likely to have to resort to using their children as a source of labour.

To achieve this, FAO is promoting the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools approach to address the interrelated needs of vulnerable children and youth<sup>1</sup>.

### Addressing child labour and youth employment through Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools

Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS) promote employment opportunities for rural youth in agriculture, taking into consideration child labour aspects as well as environmental concerns. The methodology was first piloted between 2003-2004 in Mozambique and Kenya. Since its inception, the JFFLS approach has been expanded to 20 countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, reaching over 25,000 young women and men (FAO, 2013). The main objective of JFFLS is to empower vulnerable children and youth to direct their own futures, improve their livelihoods, and develop competitive skill sets.

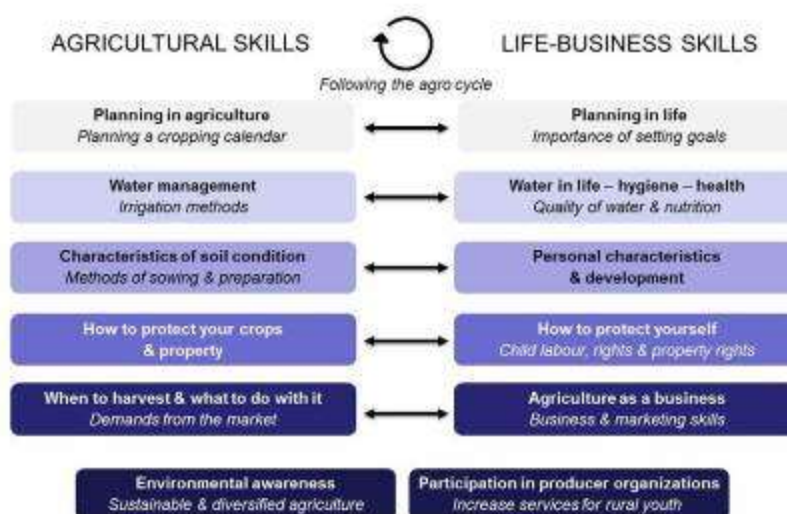
The JFFLS supports vocational trainings specifically tailored to rural settings combining employment promotion and access to markets through the facilitation of youth inclusion in producers' organizations, federations and unions and in collaboration with regional authorities. The high adaptability of the learning approach to local needs enables the modular methodology to address different socio-economic contexts (conflict, post-

conflict, in transition, high incidence of unemployment, food insecurity and malnutrition and poverty) and populations.

The JFFLS process brings together different ministries (such as ministries of education, youth and sports, labour, agriculture and trade) as well as producers' and other stakeholders' organizations, unions and youth associations. These linkages have proven crucial not only for strengthening the capacities of public administration, but also for supporting school-to-work transition and facilitating youth's access to productive resources (including land, capital, finance, assets, etc.) by creating fruitful partnerships with both public and private sector.

JFFLS uses an integrated approach and a unique learning methodology that combines agriculture, business and life skills to address the specific needs faced by rural youth. The topics for training (see figure) are chosen from a variety of modules jointly with the youth and in collaboration with the partners to ensure that the trainings respond to the actual needs. Materials are always adapted to the context to teach *agriculture skills*, such as: planning in agriculture (cropping calendar), environmental awareness and climate-smart agricultural practices, water management, livestock, characteristics of soil condition (methods of sowing and land preparation), integrated pest management (IPM), processing and conservation etc.

### JFFLS : An integrated approach



<sup>1</sup> FAO-ILO working together: JFFLS <http://www.fao-ilo.org/?id=20904>

These skills are taught in combination with *life and business skills*, such as: agriculture as a business (entrepreneurship, business, marketing, financial literacy, market demands etc), working in groups, personal characteristics and development, planning in life, protection (child labour prevention and land and property rights), water in life (hygiene, health), HIV and AIDS and other illnesses mitigation and prevention.

Making vocational training accessible to encourage future youth employment is also a strong point of the JFFLS approach. Children and youth who never received a basic education or those who eventually dropped out of school can benefit from this approach. JFFLS can help introduce participants to a new set of practical skills or enhance the theoretical knowledge of those already formally educated, making them more likely to be employed or better prepared to set up their own business activities.

The JFFLS approach considers the socio-economic challenges that rural children, youth and their families may face, as well as how those challenges affect their future livelihoods. While JFFLS graduates develop a wide range of agricultural and entrepreneurship skills, they also learn about the

negative aspects of child labour. The *child labour prevention module* raises awareness among participants, teaching students about the harmful effects of child labour, while also helping them to distinguish between child labour and agricultural activities that can teach valuable skills. Through a series of discussions, role-playing and case studies, various negative aspects of child labour are highlighted. Furthermore, appropriate agricultural work under safe and healthy conditions is encouraged and promoted. The youngest JFFLS participants become aware of agricultural activities that are potentially detrimental to their physical and mental development. Consequently, this knowledge can carry over to when they enter the marketplace as future agricultural producers and entrepreneurs: they will be better sensitized to avoid employing child labourers in their own work.

In addition to tackling socio-economic challenges, other learning modules of JFFLS consider the changing rural environment, and aim to provide children and youth with improved natural resource

management strategies. The *climate change module* helps JFFLS participants learn about agriculture's role in climate change, as well as the impacts of climate change on agriculture. It teaches participants ways to reduce impacts through relevant actions, methods and practices, such as climate smart agricultural practices.

With both public and private sector actors engaged, the JFFLS approach can be institutionalized and facilitate decent employment for rural youth of legal working age. Often supported by cooperatives, youth trainers lead other youth using the JFFLS methodology. This "training of trainers" for young cooperative members can be done jointly with farmers' federations and the regional or local government authorities. The potential outcomes are two-fold: first, JFFLS can directly empower youth to overcome existing barriers to decent employment and entrepreneurial opportunities in the agricultural sector; second, it can provide an example of a good practices that encourage the institutionalization of youth-centered employment initiatives in national policies, programmes and training curricula, with the aim to reach a greater proportion of a country's youth.

### Conclusion

JFFLS offers an innovative and scalable intervention that empowers children and young people to establish more stable livelihoods and take part in sustainable enterprising activity. However, this type of training is only one part of the solution. Ultimately, an enabling environment in rural areas must also be in place. Through strategic national and local policies, programmes and partnerships this can be achieved, giving youth the chance to apply their new knowledge and skills. Investment in approaches such as JFFLS, coupled with the creation of decent working opportunities, can help Africa's young population overcome the social, economic and environmental challenges they face and contribute to much-needed economic transformation and overall sustainable rural development.

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## The Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) regional project<sup>1</sup>: Issues and employment opportunities for the youth in Gabon

Hugues N'Gosso<sup>2</sup>

### Summary

*In spite of its stability sustained by good environmental policies, Gabon, as many other countries in Central Africa, is still faced with challenges in effectively owning its natural resources management. In addition to these deficiencies, there is the increasing phenomenon of rural exodus in Gabon with the following consequences: a breakdown of the family structure and rising unemployment among the youth. In the light of the aforementioned, there is a pressing need to answer the question: Can the project "Monitoring Systems and National MRV with a regional approach for the Congo Basin countries" contribute to operationalizing the current environmental policy in Gabon? Research shows that the objectives and activities of the MRV project are in line with the strategic thrusts and actions stipulated in the Strategy for an Emerging Gabon (PSGE)<sup>3</sup>. Thus, this project can, not only contribute to implementing the emerging environmental policy advocated for by the Gabonese State, but also to reducing unemployment among the youth and facilitating their return to the hinterland. Actually, the innovative aspect of the MRV project (strong technical and institutional makeup and cross-sectoral approach)*

<sup>1</sup> The Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) Regional Project is a component of the REDD+. REDD stands for "Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest degradation in Developing countries."

"REDD+" goes beyond deforestation and forest degradation, and includes the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.

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<sup>3</sup> Plan Stratégique Gabon Émergent (PSGE).

*and the close links between the project and youth employment, are all arguments outlining the comparative advantages and their significant collateral effects. However, the success of this project requires the efficient participation of all stakeholders involved in the process.*

### Introduction

Even though Gabon participated in all the negotiations on REDD+, the country is still reluctant to get involved in the mechanism. Several reasons explain this situation. In fact, with almost 85% of forests and a low population density (5.6 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>), the country has a virtually nonexistent deforestation rate. This situation is the result of favorable natural conditions, but also and especially, of initiatives by the country in the area of environmental policy. In addition to this environmental policy, Gabon has not forgotten its socio-economic development objectives inscribed in the Strategic Plan for an Emerging Gabon (PSGE). Thus, in a bid to find a compromise between environmental conservation and socio-economic development, the Gabonese authorities have opted to 'optimize land use' through the Gabon National Climate Plan (PNCG, 2013).

However, the implementation of this global policy on the ground is facing several challenges related not only to the lack of human, material and financial resources, but also to environmental governance and the issue of rural exodus. Actually, despite the countless natural resources of the hinterland (wildlife, flora, water bodies, minerals, etc.), the issue of rural exodus is still current. Today in Gabon, we are faced with a severe social and family breakdown in rural areas (N'Gosso, 2012). The lack of basic infrastructures, poverty and the lack of stable jobs, are the main causes behind the youth departing the villages to the cities. Unfortunately, these young people in search of better living conditions are often exposed to the harsh realities of life in the city and its ills (prostitution, alcoholism, smoking, criminality, etc.). The unemployment rate among the youth in Gabon is approximately 30% against 20% for the entire active population (Statistics, 2010). In this specific context, can the project on monitoring systems and Measurement, Reporting and Verification (MRV) with a regional approach contribute to operationalizing the PSGE? In other terms, what are the opportunities of the MRV project regarding youth employment?



This study aims at ascertaining how the MRV project, which is a component of REDD+, can strengthen youth employment. To that effect, we will firstly describe the innovative nature of the project, then highlight its strengths. Finally, we will propose a strategy in the form of an operational plan to improve the involvement of the youth during the project.

### **Innovative nature of the MRV project**

With its **strong technical and institutional makeup**, the MRV project is one of the few projects that cover all ten COMIFAC member countries. This regional coverage facilitates experience sharing among member countries. At institutional level, COMIFAC is the host organization of the project; FAO and the National Institute for Space Research of Brazil (INPE) will be in charge of the technical implementation. FFBC is responsible for mobilizing the funds required to finance the project. These arrangements will ensure the reliability of the project and its positive impact on the youth.

Moreover, we note with interest the **cross sectoral nature of the project**. These activities also impact the primary (forestry, agriculture, fishing, water, land management, etc.) as well as tertiary sectors (GIS, remote sensing and web interface).

### **Strengths**

- **Synergy between PSGE and the regional MRV project**

The regional MRV project has two functions: a monitoring function based on remote sensing, web interface and other monitoring systems, and an MRV function based on forest inventories and greenhouse gases. Consequently, it fits into one of the priorities of the PSGE: "Knowledge of natural resources is a prerequisite for their sustainable management".

The activities on these 2 functions are included in the PSGE and implemented on the ground by the Gabonese Agency for Spatial Studies and Observation (AGEOS<sup>1</sup>) on the one hand, and by the National Agency for National Parks (ANPN<sup>2</sup>), the Institute for Tropical Ecology Research (IRET<sup>3</sup>), the

<sup>1</sup> Agence Gabonaise des Études et d'Observation Spatiales

<sup>2</sup> Agence Nationale des Parcs Nationaux

<sup>3</sup> Institut de Recherche en Écologie Tropicale

Ministry of Water and Forests and the Ministry of Sustainable Development, on the other hand.

- **Raising awareness and training the youth in environment-related employment**

The project offers to populations in general, and to the youth in particular, the possibility to be sensitized and informed on the environmental challenges and opportunities in terms of stable employment. To date, the project has enabled to strengthen the capacities of three Gabonese civil servants between the ages of 30 and 35<sup>4</sup>. These have benefited from an international course on tropical forests monitoring in Brazil organized by FAO and implemented by INPE.

- **Unexplored sector of activity for the youth in particular**

The MRV project requires skills in the areas of measurement and reporting on forest covers, and adequate technological equipment for monitoring and verifying the forest cover. In Central Africa, these skills are not enough. Strengthening national capacity through the MRV project based on a proactive policy in favor of the youth, could boost youth employment and curb unemployment in rural areas.

- **Applicability of good governance principles**

**Environmental governance** is the way power over natural resources is organized. The sustainable management of natural resources requires a participatory-oriented management by all stakeholders involved. From that point of view, the establishment of the MRV project is in accordance with the principles of good governance which are: compliance with national priorities, transparency, equity, participation and sharing the income generated by the sustainable use of natural resources, etc. We are convinced that the implementation of these principles could facilitate youth employment.

<sup>4</sup> The United Nations (UN) defines youth as people between the ages 15-24 years while the African Union (AU) defines young people between the ages 15-35 years. (African Union, 2006)

- **Field activities requiring the return of the youth to rural areas**

The MRV project enables to bring together man and his natural environment. In addition to measurement, reporting and verification activities, the project can identify areas that are conducive for sustainable agriculture and get involved in the return of the youth to the rural areas. Thus, FAO, as the technical body of the project, could contribute to implementing the National Land Use Plan which is a project dear to the Gabonese Republic.

#### **Operational strategy**

The link between the MRV project and employment opportunities for the youth in Gabon requires the establishment of an operational strategy based on:

- A proactive policy for the youth during recruitment or training sessions related to the project;
- Capacity strengthening of the youth based on national priorities (Paris Declaration, 2005) in the areas of remote sensing and GIS, forest measurement techniques and research on allometric equations;
- A partnership between the regional MRV project and AGEOS for the acquisition, processing and dissemination of satellite information in the region.

#### **Conclusion and recommendations**

Far from being the best of its kind, the regional MRV project offers significant advantages in the areas of education and sensitization on environmental issues, environmental governance and environmental management ownership, etc. This project is mainly based on national forest monitoring systems and fits into the PSGE's interventions in the area of natural resources inventory and monitoring at national level.

The efficient implementation of this project at national level could further improve the well known efforts by the country to preserve the environment and ensure youth employment.

However, for an improved mainstreaming of the project in Gabon, we believe that the following recommendations should be followed up on:

- Honor international commitments;
- Prioritize youth employment in national policies;
- Devote sufficient resources to youth education and training;
- Sensitize and inform the youth on the overall strategy of FAO's environmental policy and missions and expertise in this regards;
- Provide development partners with a roadmap outlining the expectations of the country and strategic areas of intervention of the MRV project.

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environmental decision-making in the  
Congo Basin forest:  
The case of south eastern Cameroon**

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**Summary**

*Youth are an important group within forest communities of Central Africa but are often thought to be underrepresented within decision-making structures. Research carried out in this study aimed to understand whether youth are dependent on the forests for their livelihoods and if they are represented in local decision-making institutions related to forest governance. Research was conducted in six villages in Eastern province of Cameroon using surveys, interviews, and focus groups. Despite increased educational opportunities, youth continue to derive a large proportion of their livelihoods from forest resources. Differences in livelihood strategies and representation were noted based on gender. While youth remain underrepresented in formal village authorities and forest management committees, they play a large role in the development and functioning of other institutions.*

**Introduction**

The Congo Basin forest, is the second largest contiguous rainforest in the world (Bele et al., 2001), and makes up 15% of the total remaining rainforest and 90% of that remaining in Africa (Bellasen and Gitz, 2008). It stretches into the southern region of Cameroon. These forests have international,

national, and local importance. The forestry sector, particularly timber production, is Cameroon's third largest source of export revenue. Furthermore, over 80% of the local population relies on forest ecosystem goods and services to maintain a secure livelihood portfolio, making forests crucial for poverty reduction and national development (Bele et al., 2001). Farming is also a vital sector of the economy, contributing significantly to the country's GDP. Agriculture is a source of livelihood for 80% of the poor (Molua and Lambi, 2007) who mainly practice shifting cultivation to produce perennial and annual food crops (Njomgang et al., 2011).

The Cameroonian government revised its forestry legislation in 1994 (Mvondo, 2009) to include the creation of community forests. A community forest is composed of an area of forest within the permanent forest estate, from which a village or villages, represented by a management committee composed of local stakeholders, are able to define benefits to be derived from forest management activities, as outlined in a state approved management plan. A goal of the new forestry law was improvement of rural livelihoods by increasing monetary revenues, improving village infrastructures, increasing empowerment through forest management at the local level, and increasing rural employment (DeBlas, Ruiz-Pérez, and Vermeulen, 2011). It was expected that youth, who are more likely to accept change, would occupy a place in the decision-making process, ultimately contributing to the reduction of rural out-migration. For such changes to be realised, and to ensure long term success, it was considered that youth involvement in decision-making was necessary.

The aim of the research programme outlined in this paper was to understand if and how youth, defined in this study as men and women aged 19 to 30, who form a large part of the rural population in the Congo Basin, derive their livelihoods from the forest. For the purpose of this study, livelihoods concern income generation and personal and family sustenance. It also sought to investigate if youth are involved in institutions that relate to governance of community forests.

**Methods**

Research was carried out in six villages, which are responsible for the management of three community forests, near the town of Yokadouma, located in the

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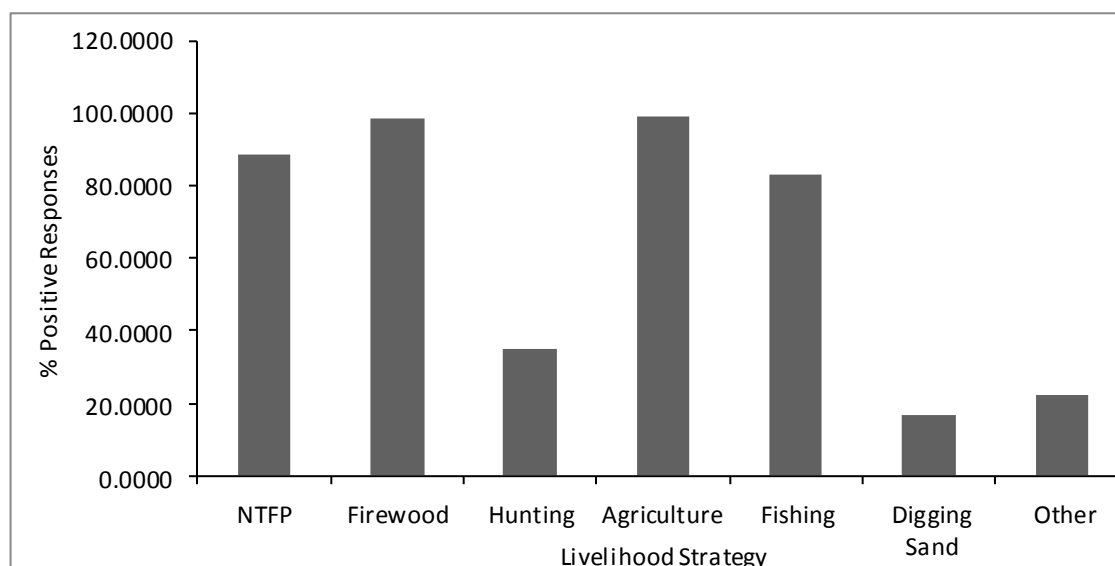


Figure 1. Livelihood strategies of 120 young men and women (aged 19-30 years) sampled by survey in six villages in the East province of Cameroon shown in percent of total respondents.

East Region of Cameroon. Persons in the age group studied varied in marital status, number of children, current state of education, dependence on parents or family, and position within society. This age group also makes up a large part of the population and has changing access to education, mobility, and communications (especially with the introduction of cell phones). For these reasons it is assumed that there will be differences in lifestyles and opinions between this group and their parents' and previous generations. Qualitative and quantitative data regarding youth livelihood strategies and their involvement in village associations were collected through use of a survey carried out face to face with respondents through visits to the villages. Interviews with key informants, who were active members within the villages were also carried out and provided an adult and youth perspective of the role of young people in the area.

## Results and Discussion

### Livelihoods

Young people were very forest dependent in the study area and maintained diversified livelihood portfolios based on forest goods and services (Figure 1). When asked about their livelihood strategies, persons included in the study stated that they engaged in agricultural activities by practicing shifting cultivation and through the production of cacao or coffee in agro-forestry systems, or both.

Respondents also relied on the forest for firewood, for the collection of non-timber forest products, and for hunting; and depended as well on rivers within the forest for fishing.

Youth in this area also depended on income from activities which were not directly related to the forest; providing their services as skilled or unskilled labour, and relying on savings and loans groups. Others reported that they remained dependent on family members for income.

In total, 42% of respondents relied on forest-dependent commerce from agriculture, hunting, or fishing; for example, selling prepared food or making and selling wine. Women were more likely to engage in these commercial activities, as well as in fishing. Young men were more commonly involved in cacao and coffee production, and in offering to work as skilled and unskilled labourers, and in hunting.

When asked which activity was the most important one for their livelihoods, most responses pointed to the growing of annual crops followed by cacao cultivation (Figure 2). Respondents also mentioned commerce, the collection and use of non-timber forest products, gold prospecting, and hunting. When asked why these activities were the most important ones, the majority of respondents stated that they were a source of earnings, food, or both.

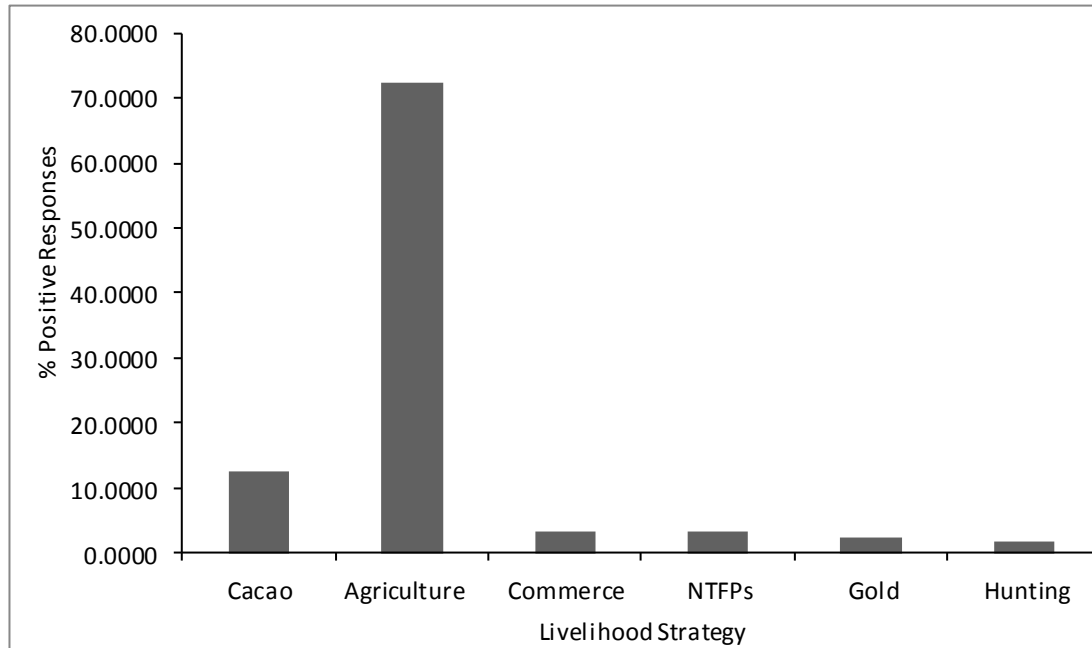


Figure 2: Percent of positive responses when asked which livelihood activity was the most important of 120 young men and women (19-30 years) surveyed in the East province of Cameroon

The importance of agriculture and other forest-based activities to the generation of income was considered significant, with 83% of the respondents gaining from three quarters to all of their income from such activities.

### Decision-Making

The high level of dependence of youth on forests for their livelihoods suggests that youth have an important stake in the successful long term, sustainable management of these renewable natural resources. However, even though young people form the majority of the population, they are under-represented or totally unrepresented in the traditional authorities of their villages, as well as in community forest management committees. Of three community forests studied, only one forest management committee had a youth member. Only two of the six villages included in this study had youth represented in their traditional authorities. These two youth representatives were chosen by the chief and were older than 30 years. Four youth in the group surveyed declared that they were associated with the work of the traditional authorities as chief's assistant, communicator, and chief's 'soldiers'. However, these positions are not decision-making positions. It should be noted that young women did not hold such positions.

Of 120 young people surveyed, close to 90% of both male and female respondents believed that youth should be included in decision-making positions in the communities. Reasons given by the respondents included the fact that youth had higher levels of education, were strong, mobile and innovative. However, when asked if they felt that youth would be accepted into decision-making positions they were less optimistic: just over 80% of males and just over 60% of females responded positively. This indicates that there are barriers to youth representation and full participation in decision-making in the villages and community forests included in this study. It was noted that in villages where youth were well organised and had elected or chosen a leader, they were more likely to be integrated into the decision-making structure. In these cases, while young people were responsible only for specific youth-related issues, the adults tended to view their participation more favourably. Youth participation appeared to be less effective and less influential in those villages in which the youth representative was chosen directly by the chief or the committee.

The above findings are surprising as many young people, women and men, are active in and leaders of other kinds of institutions in the villages, including



work groups, church groups, women's groups, specific youth groups, and savings and loan groups. These youth therefore have the ability and skills to participate in village institutions.

### Conclusions and Way Forward

Although youth rely heavily on forest resources for their daily needs and livelihoods this study shows that young people remain largely excluded from local decision-making processes regarding forest resources. The high level of participation among youth in other village institutions suggests that youth have the ability and skills needed to participate in local decision-making institutions. Further development of leadership skills among youth, both men and women, could foster their input and representation in existing decision-making structures. It is important to pay special attention to the inclusion of young women in such efforts, as their voice is excluded to a greater extent than that of young men. Finally, creating a dialogue between people of all ages, to address the communication barriers that exist within the villages, including among gender, could help foster mutual respect and understanding.

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## The potential of agriculture to create a positive job outlook for rural youth in Africa

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### Summary

*This article discusses the potential of agriculture to absorb Africa's growing under- and unemployed young rural population. With high regional and global demand for agricultural products as well as untapped land and labour productivity the agriculture sector is recognized as the prospective engine of socio-economic development in Africa. Yet, investments are not adequate and initiatives to speed up agricultural growth are continually separated from job creation efforts. Promoting more and better jobs, in particular for the fast-growing young rural labour force, should on the contrary be explicitly spelled out as a direct objective in agriculture and rural development investments and programmes. Implementation strategies should accordingly be designed to effectively address age- and gender-related barriers to accessing productive resources as well as extend the application of International Labour Standards to rural areas. In addition, research shows that not only are better targeted investments and programmes in agricultural and rural development required, but new on and off-farm jobs will only facilitate young people's entry into the labour market by meeting rural youth's career aspirations.*

"Millions of youth work in unsafe conditions. They have no benefits, no job security and limited rights. Young people may be resilient, but they should never be exploited. The opposite: we should be doing everything possible to encourage their potential."

*UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, 2012*

**D**espite concerns of ageing agricultural producers, agriculture is one of the most important sources of economic activity for African youth and will likely continue to be so over the next few decades (Proctor and Lucchesi, 2012). However, at present, the agricultural sector rarely offers attractive jobs to youth. According to Gallup data from 2010, 47 percent of rural youth work in agriculture. These young people represent the poorest group of working rural youth, in comparison with rural youth engaged non-agricultural economic activities (AfDB et al, 2012). In other words, many rural young people remain in poverty, despite working, predominantly due to the vulnerable working conditions and low remuneration of agricultural jobs (Van der Geest, 2010). In addition, due to the seasonal dimensions of agriculture, most rural youth also endure long periods of under- and unemployment (ILO, 2012a). As a result, they have to survive on average monthly or annual incomes which are significantly lower than the common poverty threshold equivalent to \$1.25 per day (ILO, 2012b). Alarming, rural labour markets, if not transformed, will not adequately generate decent work opportunities to absorb a growing young rural labour force at the required scale.<sup>2</sup> The costs of further rising levels of under- and unemployment of rural youth are and will be severe: sustained poverty; continued food and nutrition insecurity and unsustainable use of natural resources.

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<sup>2</sup> With almost 200 million people aged between 15 and 24<sup>2</sup>, Africa has the youngest population in the world. Estimates suggest that Africa's total labour force will be 1 billion strong by 2040, making it the largest and youngest worldwide. Furthermore Africa is the only region in which the rural population will be increasing (Roxburgh, C. et al., 2010).

Strong regional and global demand for agricultural products as well as untapped land and labour productivity are favourable conditions for agriculture to become the engine of socio-economic development and provide more and better jobs for rural youth in Africa (World Bank, 2013a). The World Bank estimates that with higher access to finance, better infrastructure, improved technology and irrigated land Africa's farmers and agribusinesses have the potential to create a trillion-dollar food market by 2030 (World Bank, 2013b). But such anticipated progress requires designing youth-smart agriculture investment plans along with greater priority in allocating public funds to initiatives that enable small and medium-scale farms to engage in commercial production. An increased rate of private investments in agriculture is likewise necessary for the sector to efficiently contribute to economic growth and employment creation for rural youth. For this to occur, policies regulating trade, licensing and taxation need to be modified to offer incentives to advance capital investments in agriculture (World Bank, 2013a). Simultaneously there must be guarantees that private investments respect the rights of existing users of land, water and other resources, that they protect and improve livelihoods at the household and community level, and that they do not harm the environment (FAO et al, 2010).

Policy incoherence is an additional factor hindering job creation for rural youth as initiatives to speed up agricultural growth are continually separated from youth employment interventions. Agricultural programmes should be seen as complementary to labour policy directions and programmes, since agriculture represents the sector of most immediate opportunity to create decent wage and self-employment (IFPRI, 2012). Hence, creation of more and better jobs, in particular for the growing young rural labour force, should be explicitly spelled out as a direct goal in agriculture and rural development programmes. This means that programme objectives should both address youth's limited access to land, finance, productive inputs, markets and relevant information as well as aim to improve the quality of rural jobs by including the extension of international labour standards to rural areas (FAO, 2013a). Moreover, policies should not only focus on improving the working conditions for self-employed small-holder farmers but they should also take into account the large number of poor land-less youth who survive on casual low-wage incomes (FAO, 2013a). Creating reliable wage employment,

including on medium- to large-scale farms, is therefore of equal importance to break the rural poverty cycle (ThinkAfricaPress, 2013).

Youth focused agricultural growth requires implementation strategies that allow high-level policy goals to be translated into services on the ground that effectively address practical age- and gender-related barriers in accessing resources (such as land, finance, productive inputs, markets and relevant information). Institutional bottle-necks that tend to hamper successful implementation differ according to national and local contexts, but every so often they are due to ineffective administration and management, limited resources at decentralized level and low capacity among local service providers. Supporting public institutional reform to overcome these challenges is necessary to enable governments to translate policy into action. Secondly, attracting rural youth to agriculture requires enhancing their skills in areas such as agribusiness and entrepreneurship; modern and climate-smart technology, financial literacy, application of ICT for profitable farming and on- and off-farm economic diversification strategies. By collaborating with rural service providers, such as extension officers or financial institutions, in developing and providing appealing products and services tailored to current and future rural labour market needs, young people can be enabled to take active part and drive agricultural and rural transformation. In addition, linking young producers to agricultural cooperatives and saving groups and/or fostering formation of rural youth associations will facilitate their participation in decision-making, strengthen their negotiation power as well as facilitate improved access to resources such as land, credit and markets (FAO, 2013b).

It is not only an increased number of jobs which will sustainably improve rural youth's livelihoods, but equally important are the quality attributes that come with these jobs. International labour standards need to be adequately acknowledged in programme formulation but also applied during implementation.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Decent rural employment (DRE) is work that respects at least the set of core labour principles highlighted in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, adopted in June 1998 and some other criteria specific to rural areas. This includes: Work that does not involve worst forms of child labour or forced labour; Work which ensures a living wage (beyond the poverty line); Work that does not involve excessive working hours*

To respond accurately to decent work deficits, reliable data and analysis is necessary and can be obtained through conducting decent work assessments along specific agriculture value chains or in selected geographical areas. Solutions can include introducing labour saving technology to reduce dependence on child labour; establishing minimum standards for Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) in contract farming or including labour standards in Corporate Social Responsibility codes of conduct and/or national agriculture investment regulations (FAO, 2013a). Bringing together labour and agriculture stakeholders, who traditionally operate disjointedly, for example by linking agriculture extension staff with labour inspection officers, will help to bring about practical solutions to remove the exclusion of rural workers from the scope of national labour laws and address poor rural working conditions.

For agriculture and rural development investments and programmes to achieve their intended positive outcomes, it is critical to understand the aspirations of rural youth and to ensure that they match the vision of the future agricultural sector in Africa. Being a farmer is a rarely expressed ambition of young people today and evidence shows that the majority of rural youth do not want to pursue their livelihood in agriculture as it does not conform to the socio-economic status they desire. The aspirations of rural youth are not only of importance to themselves or their families, but to all stakeholders with an interest in agricultural and rural development. Research does however demonstrate that young rural people who live in areas of high agricultural growth are more likely to be interested in making agriculture a central element of their livelihood than those living in low growth areas (Leavy and Smith, 2010). Hence, policy makers must focus their attention on creating profitable, resilient, and dynamic agricultural opportunities that will appeal to young people (World Bank 2013a).

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*(according to national standards); Work where no gender / age / other discrimination is experienced and positive measures have been taken to support the economic empowerment of women / youth / other vulnerable groups; Work where minimum specific value chain standards for Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) are respected; Work where freedom of association is guaranteed.*

## Conclusion

Creating decent employment opportunities for rural youth requires agriculture and rural development initiatives based on a sound understanding of rural employment conditions and opportunities as well as recognition of the work and life aspirations of the rural youth themselves. More productive and satisfying employment for rural youth should be based on investments that enhance agricultural productivity and programmes that attract youth to farming as well as efforts to improve non-farm rural employment opportunities. Further, the design and implementation of rural job creation initiatives have to consider the highly diverse and changing socio-economic realities in which young rural women and men live - there are no "one size fits all" solutions.

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## International policy frameworks: The need to engage Africa's youth in agriculture and natural resources management and its policy development processes

Babatunde Iyanda<sup>1</sup>

### Summary

In Africa over 200 million people are aged between 15 and 24 years, comprising more than 20% of the population. Most of these over 200 million young people is employed in the agricultural sector, yet 40 percent of the total unemployed in Africa are youths, and 70 percent of these live in rural areas, where young people face particular constraints in gaining access to land, credit, training and new technologies (Sibanda, 2011). Actively engaging Africa's youth in agriculture and natural renewable resources management policy processes as key players will be crucial in addressing Africa's unemployment, food security and developmental challenges.

Existing international policy and legal frameworks lay the foundations through which youth participation in policy development processes can take place. These frameworks contain provisions that specifically address youth issues related to agriculture, environment and natural renewable resources management in Africa. On the international arena such policy frameworks include the WPAY, which provides a policy framework for Governments and identifies 15 priority areas to advance youth development. From a continental point of view, the AYC and the DPoA are political and legal documents which serve as the strategic framework that gives direction for youth empowerment and development at continental, regional and national levels (see box 1 showing a

list of key organizations, frameworks, initiatives and related acronyms with brief description of mandate).

The success on implementation of such frameworks depends on the participation of young people in all aspects of the national policy development processes, from crafting to implementation, and subsequently, monitoring and evaluation. In short, youths need to be part of decisions and policy processes for agriculture in Africa. In terms of the CAADP agenda, the CAADP- KIS offers ways where youth can make active contributions that shape policies that influence opportunities which are of interests to youth and African development. Some of these opportunities include: Strengthening capacities of youth (and their institutions) on enterprise development particularly in value added activities such as food processing, packaging and trade; improving young people access to technology, knowledge and information; and provision of well-targeted innovative micro-finance packages.

### Introduction

Young people constitute the majority of Africa's population with over 200 million people between the ages of 15 and 24 (UNFPA, 2011). Moreover, forecasts by the African Economic Outlook show that the population of youth in Sub-Saharan Africa will be in excess of 280 million in 2020 and around 400 million in 2050 which will be a higher proportion than in any of the other regions of the world.

Most of this over 200 million group is today employed in the agricultural sector, where youth account for 65% of the workforce, yet over 40% of the total unemployed in Africa are youths and 70% of these young people live in rural areas. This notwithstanding, 79% of Africa's arable land remains uncultivated. With about 10 million African youth arriving each year on the labor market, this growing young workforce constitutes an opportunity for Africa but only if more jobs are created for youth (Report of the African Commission, 2009).

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**Box 1 – List of key organizations, frameworks, initiatives and related acronyms  
with brief description of mandate**

**WPAY-** The World Programme of Action for Youth is policy framework for Governments and identifies 15 priority areas to advance youth development.

**AYC-** The African Youth Charter is a political and legal document which serves as the strategic framework within which direction is provided for youth empowerment and development at continental, regional and national levels. The AYC aims to strengthen, reinforce and consolidate efforts to empower young people through meaningful youth participation and equal partnership in driving Africa's development agenda.

**CAADP-** Established by the AU assembly in 2003, the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme focuses on improving food security, nutrition, and increasing incomes in Africa's largely farming based economies. It aims to achieve this by raising agricultural productivity by at least 6 percent per year and increasing public investment in agriculture to 10 percent of national budgets per year.

**CAADP-KIS-** THE Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme – Knowledge, Information and Skills (CAADP-KIS) is a pan-African vehicle that translates the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA)'s vision into a workable framework to guide agriculture-led development.

**MDGs -** The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight international development goals that were established following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000, following the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration. All 189 United Nations member states at the time (there are 193 currently) and at least 23 international organizations committed to help achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, the goals are: 1. To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger 2. To achieve universal primary education 3. To promote gender equality and empowering women 4. To reduce child mortality rates 5. To improve maternal health 6. To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases 7. To ensure environmental sustainability 8. To develop a global partnership for development

**DPoA-** The African Youth Decade Plan of Action (DPoA), (2009-2018) endorsed by the Executive Council during the Assembly meeting, provides a framework for multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional engagement of all stakeholders towards the achievement of the goals and objectives of the African Youth Charter. The DPoA will also facilitate more coordinated and concerted action towards accelerating youth empowerment and development.

**FARA-** The Forum for Agricultural research in Africa (FARA) is an apex organization bringing together and forming coalitions of major stakeholders in agricultural research and development in Africa.

**RCM-** The Regional Coordination Mechanism (RCM) was established pursuant to ECOSOC Resolution 998/46 to hold "regular interagency meetings in each of the 5 regions (Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America & Caribbean and Western Asia) with a view to improving coordination among the work programmes of the organizations of the United Nations system in each region".

**NEPAD-** The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is an economic development program of the African Union. NEPAD was adopted at the 37th session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July 2001 in Lusaka, Zambia. NEPAD aims to provide an overarching vision and policy framework for accelerating economic co-operation and integration among African countries.

**PRs-** A Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) is a document that sets out a framework for domestic policies and programmes to reduce poverty in low-income countries. Since 1999, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have required governments to produce a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) as a condition for debt relief under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. PRSPs are also required for concessional loans (at low or zero interest) through the Banks International Development Association and the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility.

**ADF-** The African Development Forum (ADF), an Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) flagship biennial event created in 1999, is a multi-stakeholder platform for debating, discussing and initiating concrete strategies for Africa's development. It is convened in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC), African Development Bank (AfDB) and other key partners to establish an African-driven development agenda that reflects consensus and leads to specific programmes for implementation.

Young people in Africa have enormous potential that could be harnessed in addressing Africa's unemployment, food security and developmental challenges. African young people have been equated to the abundance of natural resources on the continent (UNFPA, 2011).

Given that the right policy instruments are in place coupled with ensuring the proper engagement of Africa's youth in policy development processes, young people have the potential to play a significant role in agriculture and natural renewable resource management for sustainable rural development (NEPAD-FAO-ILO, 2011).

Against this background, the communiqué developed during the 2012 FARA second annual dialogue of Ministers of Agriculture, Science and Technology emphasized the inclusion of youth in the mechanisms of integrating research, extension and education in the CAADP country process for increased agricultural productivity in Africa. Furthermore the 8th Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) partnership platform meeting recognised that mobilising the potentials of young Africans remains the dominant driver for achieving the CAADP objectives (Odularu, 2013).

### Discussion and Conclusion

Existing international and continental policy and legal frameworks lay the foundations on which youth participation in national youth policy development processes can take place. They also contain provisions that specifically address youth issues related to agriculture, and to environment and natural renewable resources management in Africa. From an international point of view there are many UN entities that are committed to work on specific youth issues related to agriculture, environment and natural renewable resource management in Africa. These entities work closely with the African Union Commission under the RCM process to address youth issues in the region (see Box 1. above).

Additionally, in 2006, following the review of progress on implementation of the WPAY, the UN Organizations working in the region and the African Union, together with their development partners, dedicated the fifth ADF to the theme, "Youth and Leadership in the 21st Century". Other areas of activity include support to the implementation of the MDGs and the 2000 Dakar Framework for Action on

Education for All, which also provide guidance to countries on ways and means of promoting youth development and empowerment.

From a continental point of view, AU has instituted policy frameworks and action plans to address issues related to youth in agriculture. At the Seventh Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held in Banjul, Gambia on July 2nd 2006, the AYC was adopted. Furthermore, the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union declared, during its Executive Council meeting held in January 2009 in Addis Ababa, the years 2009-2018 as the Decade of Youth Development in Africa.

Until recently, policymakers rarely included youth in the decision-making process or even consulted with them on their concerns. While African governments are increasingly putting youth concerns at the heart of the development agenda, a lot more remains to be done. Both governments and international partners should commit to fully engage young Africans in all aspects of planned and on-going programmes and initiatives which target youth and economic development. Young people have repeatedly demonstrated a willingness and an ability to contribute to the development process, from the identification of issues to implementation and monitoring. However, to reap full benefits of their contribution, youth participation in programmes such as the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSs) needs to be strengthened. For example in the implementation frameworks of CAADP, youth is not sufficiently mentioned (MAIZU, CTA 2011).

However, the CAADP-KIS, a pan-African vehicle that translates NEPAD's vision into a workable framework to guide agriculture-led development, offers ways to incorporate the youth contribution into the CAADP implementation. CAADP's overall goal is to improve livelihoods, food security and environmental resilience in Africa's largely agrarian economies. After its 10-year planning phase which laid greater emphasis on the regional strategies, the current implementation era, which is referred to as the Knowledge, Information and Skills (KIS) phase, focuses on the country level, and seeks to strengthen African countries' capacities to be



proactive and forward-thinking in maximising opportunities as well as minimising threats for positive agricultural transformation. The KIS phase of CAADP is, therefore, expected to give a stronger attention to the youth as actors in agricultural development in Africa.

In order to take advantage of this demographic dividend for driving CAADP-KIS framework, sound policies, institutional structures and youth involvement/development are needed to boost youth capacity. To this end, there is a need for country initiatives to study, understand, and shape the effectiveness of the youth component of CAADP-KIS. Furthermore, if improved agricultural productivity, within the CAADP agenda, is to be youth-driven, innovative strategies are to be called on to play a vital role in the new paradigm of agricultural competitiveness; this will require the recognition of social norms and practices in the agricultural supply and demand value chain. A paradigm shift in agricultural productivity must work with, rather than against, youth involvement and participation.

This further requires the role of the state in strategically steering the direction of choices and opportunities towards youth inclusiveness according to the CAADP Framework. Youth being an effective lever with a huge transformative power for achieving CAADP goals, its success will not be achieved solely through the application of pre-designed mechanisms aimed at achieving sustainability by leapfrogging traditional modes of production.

### Way forward

There are many international commitments and conventions on Youth issues but commitment does not always mean action. For example, even though many African countries are signatories to various AU and UN conventions, many of these have yet to be implemented. Even in those cases in which conventions have been adopted and are actually being implemented, youth involvement has often been minimal.

The success of interventions which are to benefit youth depends on the success of operationalizing them into policies that engage youths in the agriculture sector through capacity building and networking, action research to generate evidence and inform policy processes, and policy advocacy in food security, agriculture and natural resources. Key

activities should include building and/or strengthening the knowledge and capacity of youths to contribute to agricultural policy development, training them in the value chain approach and its application for the development of selected agricultural products and creating awareness among stakeholders of the potential contribution of youth to agriculture, economy and poverty reduction. At the same time as young people need to be given opportunities to participate in policy development processes, governments and international partners should provide technical and financial support to youth to allow young people to realize their full potential as agents of change.

Practical and achievable measures which should be put in place by both governments and international partners, include:

- Strengthening the capacity of youth clubs, associations and organizations at community and national levels;
- Promoting interaction between policy makers, international partners and youth in order for the former to learn about the problems and experiences of young people;
- Instituting regular consultations with youth organizations to get their inputs into the development process; and
- Promoting youth leadership at local, national, sub-regional and global levels

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## Engaging youth and communities: Protecting the Mali elephants from war

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### Summary

*Among the devastating features of the recent conflict in Mali was the ease with which armed groups recruited the local young men to join their cause, and enabled them to occupy and control the north part of the country. Youth unemployment was a key contributing factor. Post-conflict, many of these young men are unable to return to their communities for fear of reprisals and risk radicalization. Having nowhere to go increases the likelihood that they turn to membership of armed groups and are forced to adopt their beliefs and aspirations. This article describes how recruiting youth in elephant and natural resource protection provided an alternative to recruitment by the armed groups in the Gourma region of Mali. Despite being paid only in food, none of the young men recruited joined the armed groups because this was regarded as a more “noble” occupation and they gained pride and self-esteem in being able to provide food for their families and benefit the community. As part of a community response, these “vigilance networks” were an essential element in protecting the elephant population despite total lawlessness and the proliferation of fire-arms and banditry, at a time when Africa is losing thousands of elephants to fund warfare by rebel groups. The success of this intervention is rooted in a project that began in 2002 with a focus on elephant conservation. Activities developed into a landscape approach which has, over the past four years, expanded to include community natural resource management that not only protects elephant habitats but also increases*

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*the quantity of resources available for local livelihoods. The longer term aims include increased ecosystem resilience through habitat restoration.*

### Introduction

One of the devastating features of the recent conflict in Mali was the ease with which armed groups recruited the local young men to join their cause, and enabled them to effectively occupy and control the north part of the country. Their success in recruitment was not surprising given the incentives offered and the lack of alternative employment (IRIN, 2013), but experience in the Gourma region of Mali suggests that one option to counter such recruitment is to employ these young men in natural resource protection and management that improves local livelihoods and achieves conservation objectives. It also has a role to play in post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction (Ganame & Canney, 2013).

### The Mali Elephant Project strategy

The Mali Elephant Project began working in the Gourma region in 2003 with a three year scientific study of the elephant population and its migration route. The approximately 550 Mali elephants are an internationally important population representing 12% of the West African elephants. They are the northernmost African elephants and make a unique migration that covers over 32,000km<sup>2</sup>, the largest range recorded for the species. The Mali Elephant Project is an initiative of The WILD Foundation and the International Conservation Fund of Canada<sup>3</sup> working in close partnership with the Malian government's Direction des Eaux et Forêts. The aim of the project was to help understand how these elephants had managed to survive when all others on similar latitudes had disappeared, to clarify the threats to their continued existence, and to identify priorities for their conservation (Canney et al., 2007). It was clear that a conventional protected area approach was impossible given the lack of resources and an area that was roughly the size of Switzerland. Therefore, a different approach was developed: a landscape approach that emphasizes stakeholder involvement, multiple objectives and adaptive management (Sayer et al., 2013), one that

<sup>3</sup> The Mali Elephant Project - <http://www.wild.org/where-we-work/the-desert-elephants-of-mali/> and <http://icfcanada.org/mali.shtml>



viewed the elephants as part of the whole socio-ecological system.

The first step was to engage all stakeholders at local and national levels to create a shared vision for the future of the elephants. Over the next three years, meetings and workshops were held with stakeholders to understand their perspectives and concerns. This information enabled the design of outreach and information materials relevant for each stakeholder, and ultimately helped design incentives that would recruit them to the cause of elephant conservation.

Action on the ground was based on in-depth socio-economic studies of the local population to understand their livelihoods and attitudes, and to collect data that could be used as a basis for discussion to create a common perception of the problems. Key findings were that much of the local negative environmental impacts from human activities originated from outsiders, and that while each ethnicity had their traditional systems of resource management, they were reluctant to respect those of another ethnicity. The result was a resource which was considered free-for-all, and a *tragedy of the commons* that enabled, for example, the over-exploitation of local resources driven by distant commercial interests and the needs of urban populations (Ganame et al., 2009).

Establishing a common perception of the problems fostered a sense of unity between the diverse clans and ethnicities in the region, and enabled them to embark on discussions to find solutions. The discussions focused on the creation of representative community structures that, supported by national decentralisation legislation, would enable local communities to take control of their natural resources and manage them sustainably.

To ensure sustainability, all members of the community needed to support the proposed systems, and for this needed to be transparent in their views and equitable in benefit sharing, while committee members needed to be accountable for their actions. Elected management committees of elders determined the rules of resource use. These included charging outsiders for access to local resources, protecting elephant habitats, and keeping the elephant migration route free of human occupation. Action was supported by “brigades” of young men who patrolled regularly by camel to detect infringements, and engaged in resource protection activities such as the construction of fire-

breaks. These brigades developed, over time, by trial and error, into community-forester patrols; government foresters helped the brigades with enforcement, while the brigade members were trained to detect infringements of forestry law and formally acknowledged as auxiliary foresters, thus extending the capacity of the foresters. When adjacent communities witnessed the positive impacts of these activities, they wanted help by establishing similar systems. The programme worked well until the conflict of 2012.

### Strategy adopted during the conflict

Following the initiation of the conflict, Government retreated, firearms proliferated and the area became lawless. Project personnel feared for the elephants in the face of animal massacres by rebel groups to fund their military campaigns in other parts of Africa. In April 2012, the project convened a four-day community meeting to discuss the situation and allow the community to voice their concerns. They noted that they were unable to procure food grain as all supply vehicles were hijacked by the armed groups, and they were very concerned about the recruitment of the young men by these armed groups. Project brigades were also feeling vulnerable in carrying out their work to protect the elephants, and requested armed back-up.

The project was able to distribute grain by donkey cart to avoid hijack, while community leaders agreed to convey the message throughout the population, including to the leaders of the armed groups, that killing elephants was stealing from the local population. At the same time the project employed 520 young men to support the community leaders and the brigades by creating “vigilance networks” across the elephant range. Their tasks were:

- Gathering information about any elephant killings, including the perpetrators and the instigators.
- Undertaking habitat protection activities such as fire-break construction and forest protection meant that many more resources - of pasture, wood, wild foods - were available over a wider area. This reduced the concentration of humans and elephants in a few areas and potential conflict.
- Supporting the community elders in spreading the message, throughout the community and to the armed groups, that killing elephants means stealing from the local people.



- Extending the understanding of the human –elephant relationship and activities to resolve conflict across the elephant range.

This provided an alternative to the recruitment by *Al-Qaeda* militants of young men to join their cause and impose islamist rule, who were lured by money (\$30-50/day) and the status of "having an occupation". None of the young men that were recruited by the project joined the armed groups despite being paid only in food. They regarded working for the project as more 'noble', there was a sense of pride in being able to provide food for themselves and their families, and benefit the community. Working for the project was also perceived as less risky, as joining an armed group might mean ending up on the losing side, pursued by the army and/or having to find ways to reintegrate into their communities when returning home.

### Analysis of current situation

The project strategy has so far proved successful with only seven out of the approximately 550 elephants killed: six by a local militia commander for "blood ivory" (Christy, 2012), and one for food by an itinerant herder from Mauritania. The strategy has worked so far because community leaders established the social norm stating that killing elephants was morally reprehensible. Tuareg rebels were culturally constrained from disobeying their leaders, and jihadi groups were constrained by needing to maintain the good will of the local people, on whom they depended for food and water. The existence of vigilance networks and brigades meant that anyone who did kill an elephant would not get away with it: their identity would be known. The threat to the elephants continues. Now that the area is no longer under the control of armed groups, the vigilance networks can work together with a newly constituted anti-poaching unit composed of Mali's best foresters. The young men who worked for the project are central to these initiatives. Mounted on camels they can act as "the eyes and ears" for the landscape, while the foresters can take action based on information provided by them, thus ensuring enforcement.

### Conclusion and recommendation

The mobilisation of the community to protect the elephants in this way was possible because of the firm foundation provided by tangible results and trust that had developed between the project and the local people, the government and other relevant stakeholders over the previous years. It was also

because the projects structure and philosophy allowed it to adapt its activities to the needs of the situation.

From the beginning it adopted a landscape approach or system approach, consistent with the ten principles described in Sayer *et al.* (2013). This meant that the area of intervention was defined by the elephant range plus its socio-ecological context i.e. those areas and domains containing actors who create an impact on the elephant range for at least a part of the year. In addition to the ten principles, key features of the project's firm foundation included the assumption of long-term engagement, focusing on linking existing assets into a mutually reinforcing network that would tip or nudge the system into a new state that supported elephant conservation. Any one component might appear relatively impotent, but by supporting and connecting them, the project aimed to create the conditions under which elephant conservation might emerge.

The first step was developing a shared vision. This established limits which then directed action towards finding more efficient ways of using resources and incentivising resource husbandry. It meant that subsequent action on the ground could be implemented rapidly. In return for protecting the elephant migration route and its habitats, the community are helped to overcome their problems and challenges. These might vary in detail from place to place but on the whole it involves protecting water, pasture, forests, wildlife and wild foods and using these resources sustainably so that more are available over a greater area. Most importantly, it also gives them control over the land and its resources, empowering them to prevent others (particularly commercial interests from towns hundreds of kilometres away) from over-exploitation and causing environmental degradation. They can also prevent incomers from clearing forest for cultivation, and thereby protect a source of wild foods, fuel, game, and services such as water retention and soil stabilisation as well as key elephant habitat; and they receive revenue from charging for access to water. These activities provide an occupation for the young men that has status within the community, an idea that might be replicated wherever there is environmental degradation.

Do they need elephants to do this? Maybe not, but the local people know that elephants attract the

attention of the wider community - national and international - and are proud of that. They view elephants as an indicator of a healthy ecosystem and that their livelihoods depend on a healthy ecosystem. They also know from direct experience that elephants are important as seed dispersers and in forest regeneration. Elephants knock down otherwise inaccessible fruits and seeds from high branches that are gathered by the women for food and sometimes sale. Fruits and leaves are also eaten by livestock. Dung is valued to help conjunctivitis, a widespread problem in these environments. They are in awe of witnessing elephants' social interactions, their care for their young, and reported behaviours include covering their dead with soil and branches and standing vigil, or in constructing a causeway of branches to help rescue another elephant stuck in mud. They also feel that every species has a right to exist and that it contributes something to the ecosystem that is unique to it, a notion that was described as being encapsulated in the word *baraka*. Each species has its own *baraka*, and if a species is lost, the ecosystem is irretrievably diminished. Once peace is restored there is the additional possibility of revenue from tourism, as pre-conflict they have witnessed tourists paying to be guided to see the elephants. Together these 'elephant plus points' are linked to produce an overall benefit that is greater than the sum of the parts.

The facilitation process brings the clans and ethnic groups together through helping them reach a common perception of the problem (providing relevant data where necessary); helping them work through a solution that all agree too; and then helping with implementation. The quality of the process is key to enable the community to feel that they are in charge and responsible. Introducing or mimicking actions, without them emerging from the community process, (as, for example, if a team of people was brought in from elsewhere to construct fire-breaks) would not produce the same result, nor would it be sustainable. There are also benefits at the national level. Committed individuals within the government were identified, and involved in the project as true partners so that they could share in project achievements. By supporting these individuals in their work, morale was boosted, and political will soared within the Direction des Eaux et Forêts and the Ministry of the Environment.

The ultimate aim is for the resource management and elephant protection systems to be operating autonomously over the elephant range, and this is a work in progress. Although the conceptual phase aimed to consider the elephant range as a whole in its full context, and establish a shared vision, action on the ground began in one place, the top priority. The model was initially developed and refined over a relatively small geographic area, and is now being extended piecemeal to communities across the elephant range as resources allow. The Brigades are initially supported with incentive payments while they are learning to implement the new procedures, and during the time it takes for the community to witness the benefits for themselves. When they have demonstrated that they are proficient in resource management the incentive payments stop and the project leases camels to allow them to operate autonomously. A camel procurement committee is formed to determine the arrangements for the purchase, care and monitoring of the camels, and the community can keep them so long as they are used for resource management. The first set of communities are now functioning autonomously although will be continually monitored to refine and adapt the approach.

The project is an attempt to engage with the complexity that underlies most conservation problems and it suggests that much can be done with few resources through the "soft technology" of community engagement. More specifically, it suggests what can be achieved in areas suffering a combination of degraded ecosystems and youth unemployment, and in particular where youth are vulnerable to radicalisation by extremist groups.

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*Community-forester patrol (photo credit: Nomba Ganame ©The WILD Foundation)*

## The role of the youth in community forestry in Gabon

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### Summary

*In the wake of the creation of the first community forests in Gabon, the village associations in charge of these forests are handicapped by their own working capacity. Affected by rural exodus, communities however rarely integrate the youth (between the ages of 16 to 24) who reside permanently in the village in village associations. The youth are generally excluded from the decision making process of elders. In fact, the youth that reside permanently in the village do not generally hold any diploma and have no professional qualification. Consequently, they are hardly respected by the people around them and their opinions are not taken into account. They are left out of any activity conducted by the associations unless these activities are remunerated. However, the*

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*involvement of the youth in village associations is necessary, not only to increase the work capacity, but also to ensure the perpetuation of interventions since the youth will be the first and future beneficiaries of the community forest.*

### Introduction

Community forestry was introduced in Gabon for the first time in 2001 through the Forest Law Code No. 16/01. By adopting this participatory mode of forest resources management, the government showed its willingness to bring together sustainable natural resources management and local development (NDOUTOUME *et al.*, 2008). In 2004, a decree defining the conditions for creating a community forest was added to the legislation (MEUNIER *et al.*, 2013).

After several years of experimenting through a European Union-funded project (DACEFI, *Développement d'alternatives communautaires à l'exploitation forestière illégale*<sup>6</sup>), a chapter in charge of creating and managing community forests was created in 2012 within the Ministry of Water and Forestry. Thanks to the joint work of this Technical Directorate and of projects funded by international donors, five community forests were created in 2013.

Currently, community forestry stakeholders in Gabon are involved in implementing the models inspired from experiences conducted in other countries in order to efficiently manage and exploit these resources (VERMEULEN *et al.*, 2006; ROMANO, 2007).

One of the main difficulties facing these actors is the poor working capacity of village associations that have been entrusted with community forests.

### What role does the youth play in village associations?

Data collected from five communities assisted by the DACEFI project and presented in Table 1 indicate that young people between the ages of 16 and 24 represent an average of 18% of the permanent population of the village. According to the American Central Intelligence Agency, approximately 20% of the population in Gabon are aged between 16 - 24 (CIA, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> *Development of community-based alternatives to illegal logging*



Table 1. Distribution by age group of the permanent population of five pilot sites of the DACEFI-2 Project located in the Ogooué-Ivindo province in Gabon (2013)

Village	0-15 years		16 to 24 years		Over 25		Total
La Scierie	48	(44%)	18	(17%)	42	(39%)	108
Massaha	148	(45%)	56	(17%)	122	(37%)	326
Nzé Vatican	178	(50%)	61	(17%)	119	(33%)	358
Ebyeng-Edzuameniène	23	(20%)	12	(10%)	82	(70%)	117
Mbès	71	(66%)	34	(31%)	3	(3%)	108

Table 2. Number of young people between the ages of 18 -24 occupying a position in the Executive Board of their association within the nine pilot sites of the DACEFI-2 Project (2013) and proportion of youth among the members

Village Association	Number of young people in the Executive Board	Proportion of youth in each village association
La Scierie	0	23%
Massaha	0	26%
Nzé Vatican	0	27%
Ebyeng-Edzuameniène	1	10%
Mbès	1	4%
Zolendé	0	-
Hendjé	0	-
Engongom	0	-
Ekorédo	1	-

Generally, the statutes of associations stipulate that any mature person residing in the village is a member by default. Consequently, associations have a significant number of young people between the ages of 18 to 24 as illustrated in Table 2. Actually, these are rarely informed of their membership and are not involved in the activities of the association. Moreover, they are virtually absent from the Executive Boards which are generally composed of seven to ten members.

There are several reasons for this low level of involvement according to the interviews conducted with 20 youth aged between 16 and 24 from these eight communities:

1. The lack of information (60% of the individuals interviewed are unaware that an association exists in their village).
2. The feeling of exclusion by the older adults;
3. The feeling that their stay in the village is only temporary (45% of the youth interviewed specified that they are schooling in the city);

4. The lack of interest in village life (60% of the youth interviewed said they are not interested in village activities).

It is noteworthy that 15% of the youth explained that they visited the village because they needed to earn money for their study fees. Auzel *et al.* in 2001 and Cuny *et al.*, in 2011, made the same observation in Cameroun.

However, 15% of the youth interviewed said they are aware an association exists in their village and expressed the wish to be part of its executive board. They did not express any intention of becoming active members of the association. They probably overlooked the fact that being part of the executive board is not the only way of getting involved in an association.

Interviews conducted with the members of executive boards of several associations have shown that the older ones consider that the youth:

1. Have little interest in the development of their village;
2. Are more interested in their hobbies than in working;
3. Are chasing easy money and are not reliable;
4. Who reside in the village, are not sufficiently competent to join the executive board in view of their poor education.

As highlighted by Olivier de Sardan (1995), this is certainly an illustration of the monopolization of a project by the elders or nobles of the villages to the detriment of other groups of people (women and youth) in order to increase their prestige for political or economic purposes.

In addition, there are other impediments to the integration of youth in associations. Generally, the statutes of village associations require their members to pay up their membership fees to be eligible as members of the executive board or to vote.

Finally, during meetings held in these associations, the proportion of youth is generally very low unless the meetings have a leisurely aspect or are training sessions. For example, trainings that offer employment opportunities (controlled felling or artisanal sawing) are preferred by the youth (BETTI and BOBO, 2007 ; ABE'LE *et al.*, 2003).

### Conclusion

By acknowledging the user rights of communities over the forest, community forestry also provides the opportunity to transform villages into local employment centers through the development of economic activities geared toward woodworking. Thus, it is a unique opportunity. From the moment income-generating activities exist, they immediately attract the youth to their village. This observation is confirmed by the fact that young unemployed and school dropouts, or students on vacation, come back to their village to engage in remunerative activities. Consequently, it is important for them to hold their due place in the decision-making processes.

It is therefore crucial to assist associations in the process of integrating the youth who already reside in the village. This is however a slow and arduous process that could be implemented by improving the

promotion of the ins and outs of community forestry, in order for the current local influential people to make way for the decision makers of tomorrow.

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*A young lady is busy sandpapering during carpentry training. Photo: Sylvie Boldrini*

## Engaging youths in agriculture through Information and Communications Technology

Adebola Adedugbe<sup>1</sup>

### Summary

*The youth is a vital resource for the development of agriculture in Africa. Agriculture is viewed as unattractive to youths and they tend to have a negative perception towards it. There is therefore a need to make the agricultural sector attractive to youths through re-branding, education and making full use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), and other technologies in agriculture to attract youths. The use of social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter has been successful in youth engagement in agriculture in some countries in Africa, especially in Nigeria. More youths in Nigeria are effectively engaged in agriculture, especially along the value chain, with the support and collaboration of the Nigerian government. The social media networks have served as feedback mechanism, where youth ask questions and make enquiries on how to start agribusiness. It is important that government and the private sector capitalize on the potentials of new technologies; to link the youth to agriculture; and farmers to markets along value chains.*

### Introduction

Africa is a net importer of food, spending more than \$20 billion each year on food imports. As the African population continues to grow and urbanize at a fast rate, African agriculture and related value chains will be required to grow and evolve quickly. Addressing these problems calls for various initiatives, spanning macro-economic policy

improvements and access to technologies, that can catalyse adequate food production. Some technological applications such as mobile phones, internet and radio can potentially help farmers raise agricultural yields; reduce excessive use of pesticides and other agro-chemical inputs; increase the nutrient value of basic foods; and contribute to the development of elite livestock breeds and crop varieties adapted to tolerate drought, salinity and low soil nutrients. Young people as future leaders in any economy; need support and mentoring in order to address the mounting challenges in this sector which requires in-depth understanding of the challenges they face and the role they must fill. The aim of this paper is to identify and highlight the potentials of young Africans in agriculture through ICT and to rouse the interest of Africa's youths in sustainable agricultural development in the continent.

### Where are the future agriculturists?

The role of agriculture is a major factor in determining the state of development of the economy of a country. Despite the impressive contribution of agriculture to the economies of African countries, the sector remains largely underdeveloped. Most farmers are still at the subsistence level and operate at a small scale, having less than 2-hectares of land (FARA 2012). The level of technology is also low, production remains weather-dependent, and consequently, farmers' incomes are low. Poor market access, weak infrastructure and limited ability to influence government policy also characterize the sector. Further, over 600 million people in sub-Saharan Africa are youths under the age of 30 years, and about 65% of them work in subsistence agriculture according to FANRPAN News<sup>2</sup>.

At a Livestock and Fish Toolkit Conference, organized by International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), in September 2013; the author of

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<sup>2</sup> Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network (FANRPAN). The mission of FANRPAN is to promote effective Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources (FANR) policies by: Facilitating linkages and partnerships between government and civil society; and by building the capacity for policy analysis and policy dialogue in Africa, and supporting demand-driven policy research and analysis.



this article (a member of Young Professionals in agricultural Research for Development (YPARD), a platform for professionals in agriculture) visited a farmer in Mukono district, some 60km away from Kampala city, Uganda. During interaction with a farmer, it became evident that only one of his children was involved in the farm work. The others had gone to the city in search of white-collar jobs. The irony of it was that the farmer and his wife were aging and there is a risk that they will have no one to whom to hand over the farm business. In the same district in Uganda, a diary shop was visited to discuss with a local woman who collects milk from a number of suppliers and takes them to Jesa farm in the district. Her case was not different from that of the farmer mentioned above; none of her children was involved in the business. The Youth are a vital resource that should be supported and youthful energy should be channelled towards the development of the continent through improved agricultural practice. Since young people make up more than 60% of the African population, ignoring this big part of the population would be most imprudent.

The development of ICT is important in stimulating youths in Small and Medium size Enterprises to compete favourably and effectively as a way to fight poverty through job and wealth creation. Indeed, one of the strategies for promoting entrepreneurship is by increasing the availability and diversity of online information. The business benefits thereof include: saving time and money; developing ability to make youths' voices heard; increase the income of rural and urban farmers; access to a range of low-cost information in real time; develop national and regional markets to ensure remunerative prices; improve market supply by strengthening value chains; provides quick information on available agricultural products; and job creation for youths.

In most of African countries, the farming population is rapidly aging and today's farmers will not be there in the next 30yrs. Generally African youth today has a negative perception of agriculture, and see agriculture as a job for the poor, elderly and illiterate; with low economic returns. A good number of the farmers the young people see around that could serve as role models are poor. So the motivation to take-up agriculture as a career path is lacking. This has largely contributed to rise in rural to – urban migration, where young people in the rural areas move to the urban areas in search of greener

pastures. Unfortunately, most of these young people do not have the requisite skills and knowledge to work in the big and lucrative organizations in the cities. This has contributed to over population, high level of unemployment and the high crime rates in urban areas, where enough jobs are not available.

### Discussion

There is a need to acknowledge the importance of education in rebranding agriculture as a competitive professional career choice. The use of innovative Information and Communications Technology (ICT), as a means to attracting youth to a career in agriculture will help harness the vast potentials of young people. Web and mobile based technologies that support interactive dialogue and multi-media communication, commonly referred to as social media has led to a change in how individuals, communities and organizations communicate. Young people with the use of social media networks like Twitter and Facebook disseminate information; create awareness and opportunities on agriculture related activities. Groups of youth in agriculture now come together to work on common problems, interests and aspirations. They collaborate online to generate thematic maps and online applications to monitor events, track commodity prices and to determine the path and direction of the spread of pests and diseases. Goodluck, a 35-year-old farmer who lives near the town of Maseno in Western Kenya wakes up in the morning and switches on his smartphone to check the weather forecast, the day's market prices for his crops and any announcements from the authorities that might be important for his business and his cooperative. Just before leaving for his farm, he suddenly remembers that he had heard about a new pest outbreak in the area on the radio the previous night. He wanted to talk to his input supplier, Kahilu, about it later in the day and sends him a quick SMS to arrange for a meeting. He also reminds himself that he should get in touch with the farmers' helpline to find out if they have any update on the pest outbreak. This hypothetical example shows a picture of the new Africa. The digital revolution is transforming peoples' lives, both rural and urban. The way they work, socialize and network, how they look for and share information and the manner in which they conduct their daily businesses, have changed dramatically. Mobile devices are transforming markets. Increased access to data networks and the internet, constant innovation, ease of use and decreasing costs are

fuelling this growth and opening up a new world of information on agriculture to millions of people.

In Nigeria, agriculture is done more on subsistence level with low input and poor output. Farmers lack access to credit facility and fertilizer. But today, with the 'Agriculture Transformation Agenda', (ATA) embarked upon by the present Nigerian government the situation is improving. The trouble-free access of farmers to agricultural inputs has been possible because of the transformation in the agricultural sector through ICT. Youths in agriculture and farmers now receive subsidies on fertilizers directly through a cell phone based system, which was developed to send subsidies via electronic vouchers. This technology first launched in Nigeria and West Africa has reached 1.5million farmers including the youth in agriculture and 7.5million felt the impact in the first year. A data base of farmers was developed with 10 million registered. This technology in Nigeria has been successful through youth engagement with their knowledge of ICT under the able leadership of the Honourable Minister of agriculture and rural development in Nigeria. This is also part of the Agricultural Transformation Agenda by the Nigerian government to aggressively transform this sector. In Nigeria and across the African continent, ICT has given the African Youth a window of opportunities if they decide to pursue agriculture as a career path. Thus ICT can help link youth to agriculture in ways previously not possible, while at the same time, ICT is today widely available and accessible. To give more examples, a young man who processes raw unripe plantain into flour has successfully engaged a number of youths in the production process. Another young entrepreneur is involved in youth advocacy and empowerment in agriculture by organizing workshops and seminars on capacity building, entrepreneurship and creating networks. He has been able to provide leadership and mentorship to other young people who have a passion for agriculture but lack the requisite knowledge by assisting them learn about the opportunities in agriculture; especially with the use of ICT since not many young people like going into hand-hoe farming.

ICT has been a tool of attraction to young people who now can see the business side of agriculture. The number of youth in ICT involved in agriculture in Nigeria is on the increase (YPARD 2013), with most being members of continental and global agricultural organizations like YPARD. The federal ministry of

agriculture and rural development in Nigeria says agriculture has created millions of jobs for youths, especially along the value chain. This is also supported by the involvement of more Nigerian youths in YPARD activities. To illustrate, a young Nigerian made a presentation at an event by ILRI on Livestock and Fish agrifood toolkit that was held in Kampala, Uganda in September 2013. He spoke on engaging youth in agriculture along the value chain system and how he was able to empower 30 other young people in his community and about a hundred people along the value chain system. The author's experience as a social media reporter at the 6<sup>th</sup> Africa Agricultural Science Week (AASW6) organized by Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), in Accra, Ghana in September 2013, impressed on his mind the importance and how far-reaching social media could be in creating awareness and capacity building. Young people from Africa and other parts of the world were given the opportunity to send and post live conference messages online via Facebook and Twitter. They were also offered some training on the effective use of social media before the commencement of the conference. The youths who participated as social reporters at the AASW6 are now bloggers on agriculture, agripreneurs, social media consultants, pig farmers and agro-fishery experts. Social reporting has opened a window of opportunities for young people, especially those who were unemployed or under-employed. At the last ICT4Ag<sup>1</sup> conference in Kigali, in November 2013, some youths came up with new ICT innovations that can accelerate the development of agriculture, such as rural telephony and climate smart change. In Nigeria, more young people are into agriculture through social media; writing blogs, serving as agents and retailers of farm produce. Consequently, many of these young people now see agriculture as a gainful undertaking and a source of livelihood.

Social media has been helpful in providing quick information and opportunities on agriculture. It has also given young people in Africa a more comprehensive view of the potential role youths in ICT can play in the development of agriculture.

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<sup>1</sup> *Using information and communication technologies to modernize agriculture was in focus when experts from around the world gathered in Kigali, Rwanda, to participate in the Information and Communication Technology for Agriculture (ICT4Ag) conference held on November 4–8, 2013.*

Young Professionals in Agricultural Research for Development (YPARD), a platform for professionals in agriculture of which the author is a member, has been involved in creating awareness about agriculture amongst youths. The use of Tweets and Facebook has led to the successful engagement of youths in live conferences, seminars and workshops on-line. Social media can amplify the voice of information and mobilize youth in agriculture in real time. The use of innovative ICT by young people is thus changing the face of agriculture.

### Conclusion

As the target date draws nearer for the date set for meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the shift towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which build upon the MDGs and converge with the post 2015 development agenda (<http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/index.php?menu=1300>), including meeting food and nutritional needs, remain cardinal problems in Africa. Agriculture has to be made a gainful undertaking, an undertaking that youths can depend on for their livelihoods. Poverty reduction and food security in Africa depend on a vibrant commercial agriculture sector that includes smallholder farmers. African countries would need to commit themselves to investing adequate resources in training youth in agriculture related business entrepreneurship, to support incentives such as credit facilities, and to develop market quotas. It is also important to promote and build capacity along the agriculture value chain, and to create and sustain opportunities in this sector for future generations. Engaging young people in agriculture through the application of ICT, used as a way of attracting them to work in this sector is critical to economic development of countries and will help reduce unemployment, hunger and poverty. It is important that governments also invest time and resources in the education of young professionals in all aspects of agriculture including, climate smart agriculture, considering the full value chain. Young professionals should be positioned to undertake research and to build upon earlier research and experience, thus filling critical gaps and helping to respond to real needs in the sector, region and continent. If agriculture in Africa is to be transformed to achieve food security, to drive economic growth and improve living standards,

Africa must take advantage of youth in ICT to boost the entire value chain.

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[www.ict4ag.org](http://www.ict4ag.org) (re-conference issue no 74, October 2013 )

## Bureaucratization of the rural world

Jon Anderson<sup>1</sup>

Let's get together tomorrow.

Tomorrow? Can't. There's a meeting of the water user group.



The day after?

Sorry, there's a meeting of the community forestry association.

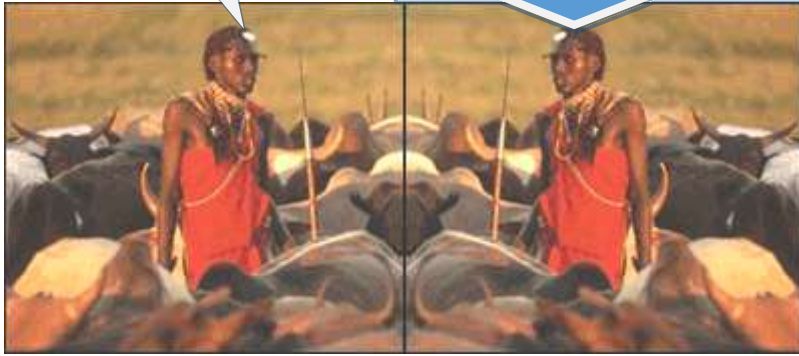


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This month  
some time?

Well there's the meeting of the livestock  
cooperative, followed by the conservancy  
sub-committee on monitoring and  
evaluation, and the bylaws working group  
of the ad hoc committee on institutional  
reform. and then...



Forget  
it....

?



## Involving young women in agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa: Some lessons learned

Cathy Rozel Farnworth<sup>1</sup> and Borteh Borteh Sillah<sup>2</sup>

### Summary

*There is an almost complete dearth of research data on the role of young women in agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa. Almost no programming is directed towards developing the capacity of such women to become effective agricultural actors. This paper draws upon some of the very limited work that has been conducted and pulls out some tentative lessons for future work.*

### Introduction

Women in sub-Saharan Africa have the highest average agricultural labour force participation in the world (Ashby *et al.* 2009). In Ghana, for example, women produce 70 per cent of the nation's food crops, provide 52 per cent of the agricultural labour force, and contribute 90 per cent of the labour for post-harvest activities (ADF, 2009). In East Africa, the female share of people economically active in agriculture currently stands at about 51 per cent (FAO, 2011) though there is national variation, with 70 per cent of agricultural labour provided by women in Kenya, for example (Ellis *et al.* 2007). The significant role of women in farming is now widely acknowledged and discussed (FAO, 2011; IAASTD, 2008; World Bank 2008a; World Bank 2008b) yet there is an almost complete dearth of research and analysis on the roles young women play in the sector. Furthermore, although extension and advisory services are attempting to reach women in many locations (Manfre *et al.* 2013; Pretty *et al.* 2011; Kristjanson *et*

*al.* 2010), specific programmes aimed at young rural women are almost non-existent. This paper cites from some of the fragile work in progress on including young women in agricultural programmes and seeks to draw tentative lessons for future work.

Young women are positioned very differently to young men with respect to obtaining a livelihood from agriculture, natural resources, and opportunities in rural development more broadly. The term 'youth' is intended to cover both genders, yet in practice the word usually refers to young males, thus rendering invisible the gender-based constraints and opportunities young rural women face with respect to accessing the land, credit, information and other resources they need to make a living. Huge numbers of women across the continent still access land through male kin in customary land tenure systems. Their livelihoods are thus dependent on their ability to maintain relationships to fathers, husbands, sons and other male relatives. When these relationships fail, due for example to widowhood or divorce, women may be made to leave their land by their husband's clan. In customary systems single mothers may not be able to access any land. As a consequence young women may see no place for themselves in rural areas and seek to leave. Young People With Different Abilities (PWDA), particularly women, face even more constraints in earning a living from the land. They are typically amongst the poorest sectors of the population. They lack access to land and education, are marginalized because of their disabilities, and many depend on begging to survive. Often, young female PWDAs are hardly seen, invisible within their homes, unlike male PWDAs who are more likely to be on the streets.

This paper examines two initiatives that have explicitly targeted young women, both from Kenya. They are the Value Girls Programme, which aimed to develop entrepreneurial skills, and Yes, Youth Can! (YYC!) which aims to integrate young women and men into political decision-making processes from community to national level. The Value Girls programme was innovative and appeared to secure many benefits for participants. The YYC! programme has much promise but gains to date appear to be less clear cut. It is included here to show that offering young rural women space to speak does not mean that they can take it without complementary support to strengthen their ability to participate effectively. The third initiative is from

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Sierra Leone and targeted young women with disabilities. Each case study is limited by its geographical focus and local cultural norms. However, all work on gender needs to be tailored to specific locations given the great diversity in gender norms and practices across Sub-Saharan Africa.

### Value Girls, Kenya

Between 2008-2012, Cardno Emerging Markets Group, an infrastructure and environmental services company, implemented the Value Girls Programme on behalf of the Nike Foundation and USAID Kenya through the Global Development Alliance. It targeted young women aged 14 to 24 years on the shores of Lake Victoria around Kisumu in Kenya by training them in horticultural and poultry rearing enterprises. A specific aim of the programme was to reduce the risk of girls engaging in the 'sex for fish' trade which in some locations is one of the only livelihood options open to young women. As an economic strengthening programme, Value Girls expected to increase the incomes of participating girls through increased sales, higher productivity, and increased profits through better private sector linkages. In addition, it expected to provide other benefits including raising the girls' profile in their communities, developing and strengthening specific business skills as well as their overall confidence, protecting their assets, and it aimed to provide a structured opportunity for mentoring, safe spaces, and social networks. The Value Girls Programme further aimed to contribute to Nike Foundation's learning agenda by testing a viable model to economically empower girls and documenting important learning experiences arising through the process (Cardno Emerging Markets Group, 2009).

Value Girls reached 2,400 young women and girls. It was committed to methodological innovation. Start up involved developing a pilot programme, discussing the outcomes of pilot with beneficiaries, redesigning the programme accordingly, and then scaling up. One of the lynchpins of the programme was mentoring, whereby an older businesswoman resident in the community mentored five young women on their selected business. Back up was provided by the programme, including helping to link the young women to markets as well as training in savings management, business planning, and record keeping. At the same time it encouraged independence by providing matching funds rather than grants. Value Girls Programme learned that it was important to invoke male support for the

women, and thus provided young men with T-shirts with slogans like 'I support a Value Girl', and other incentives (Farnworth *et al.* 2012).

### Yes Youth Can! Kenya

Yes Youth Can! (YYC!), funded by USAID Kenya (2011-2015), was created to address and challenge the role of young men in militias during the 2008 post-election violence in Kenya by offering a package that combines youth entrepreneurship with youth voice and leadership across ethnic lines. It supports the empowerment of Kenyan youth as envisioned in the 2010 Kenyan constitution and aims to develop peaceful leaders among 18-35 year-olds, with the complementary objective of improving their socio-economic status. To date almost one million youth from thousands of villages have come together. Approximately 20,000 village-level bungees have registered with the Government of Kenya as Self-Help-Groups. YYC! works to actively promote young women as leaders and to ensure parity of representation at all decision-making levels of the organization. It provides young women, many for the first time, with the space to express their views and take on significant decision-making roles. Since women's lack of voice, particularly in rural areas, is a critical factor in their disempowerment, YYC! potentially offers rural women a major opportunity to transform their lives on their own terms. This said, a study of YYC! showed that many young women, particularly rural women, found it difficult to effectively use this space (Farnworth *et al.* 2012). They explained that:

1. Young men do not always respect their opinion and do not actively listen to their views. In particular, men originating from communities where women traditionally have had no leadership role or right to participate in community level decision-making forums can find it difficult to accord women decision-making roles. For instance, in one Youth Bungee visited, men failed to support women candidates for election to leadership positions. Furthermore, interviews with Bungee members showed that the young men had applied for a grant for livestock keeping on behalf of the group without consulting the women members, who would have preferred a project supporting vegetable production. Women Youth Bungee members also wanted support to eliminate female genital mutilation and child marriage but these were 'non-discussables' at group level.

2. Existing gender relations meant that young women were sometimes unable to build upon the possibilities for change that the YYC! programme offered. Men and women in all Youth Bungees met agreed that women typically take up vice-chair and vice-president positions rather than trying to seek top leadership roles. Some men argued that women often fail to express significant views despite the seniority of their position. This is traceable to the fact that women lack experience speaking and voicing their views with confidence.
3. Women also pointed out that young married women are rarely considered 'youth' by their communities although married men retain this appellation, according to the Kenyan Constitution, until they are 35 years old. This affects the legitimacy of these women's voices in the Yes Youth Can! forums.
4. Such women said they faced significant childcare issues. They explained that it was assumed that other family members will take care of their children when they are called to Yes Youth Can! meetings, but this is not in fact the case. They requested that childcare facilities be provided at all meetings, as well as transport costs for themselves and their children.

The study showed that YYC! bungees in some particularly rural, locations appear to be replicating, rather than challenging, cultural norms that exclude women. This is an important lesson because it shows that male youth are not necessarily more progressive than their elders. It will take time for young rural Kenyan women to capitalize on the many opportunities offered by YYC!. Offering space is not enough, assertiveness training to help women articulate their ideas clearly is important, as is specific funding for women-centered projects and activities aimed at demolishing harmful cultural practices. At a deeper level, women may need gender training to identify and recognize their gender-based constraints and to feel able to suggest measures to Youth Bungees and support organizations to overcome these. Young men also need support to enable them to change. Organizations like Men for Gender Equality Now (MEGEN) in Kenya, and similar organizations in other countries belonging to the MenEngage Alliance, are well placed to provide behavioural

change programmes to such initiatives (MEGEN, 2013).

#### **Young women with different abilities (PWDA) in Sierra Leone**

The Women's Cooperative Agricultural Association in Kailahun Town has twenty-five members. Their disabilities include polio, visual impairment, leprosy and amputations. The aim of the Association is to enable members to attain food self-sufficiency. The young women are significantly marginalized due to their disabilities. They obtain money for their group membership through begging. Group members engage in inland valley swamp cultivation of rice and vegetables, and cultivation of their own backyard gardens. Due to their disabilities, they employ other people to carry out about 90 per cent of the work such as clearing the land, plowing, and planting. Group members are involved in weeding, bird scaring and harvesting.

IFAD provided a year of support to mixed sex groups – where young men took a leading role - across the whole district. As part of this, the Development Capacity and Needs Assessment Survey of PWDAs and Youth in the four project operational districts (Kailahun, Kono, Kenema and Koinadugu) brought 73 female youth PWDAs to attend training in different careers. Further support was provided by the Loan Cooperative, in conjunction with ENCISS<sup>1</sup> Programme. This provided a loan of three million Leone (approximately 700 USD) at 15 per cent interest for one year. However, international assistance to date has failed to help the group solve their basic problems. Women PWDAs need access to monies to either lease or purchase land, and they require farm tools, seeds (rice, groundnut, maize, vegetables) and improved planting materials like sweet potato vines and cassava. The group further requires pesticides and herbicides together with training in their use, grain stores and drying floors, post-harvest processing equipment, and training in food processing, storage and preservation. Solving these challenges involves working with other agricultural stakeholders to raise awareness of the

<sup>1</sup> The ENCISS Programme is an initiative of UKaid and the EU aimed at improving accountability and strengthening citizens' voice, participation in decision-making and access to information. ENCISS seeks to strengthen the relationship between society and state, and supports Sierra Leone's poorest communities. <http://www.enciss-sl.org/about-us>



problems facing young female PWDAs in particular. Programmes and training courses need to be organized together with the young women themselves as part of a commitment to mainstreaming PWDAs and empowering them. Governmental structures including the District Council, Ward Development Committees, and civil society organizations should work closely with NGOs wishing to support female PWDAs to ensure effective programme design and implementation.

### Conclusion

This short paper shows that some promising steps are being taken to address the plight of young women in rural areas. At the same time, the innovational aspects of programmes like Value Girls are easily lost when funding stops. Capturing and replicating best practices and scaling up remain key challenges.

The differential relationships of young women and young men to agriculture and natural resources, and cultural norms underpinning these differences, need to be investigated in much more detail through gender-based, age-specific constraints and opportunities analyses. Preparing effective strategies for the future will critically depend on mobilizing young women and men to meet the challenges, and this in turn demands that women as well as men are able to articulate their ideas, speak effectively, take on decision-making roles, and are able to listen as well as be listened to. Both young women and young men need support in behavioural change processes.

Legal and policy changes are important too. For young women these can include co-titling, offering incentives for retaining/transferring land in the name of women family members, simplifying and standardizing procedures for land title transfers, and evaluating the gender and age equality responsiveness of policies and their implementers (Valle, 2012). Finally, young women are not 'adults in miniature'. Rather, the transition to adulthood involves important cognitive shifts which overlap with physical, social, and emotional development. This influences their needs, identities, and behaviour. They respond to incentives differently than do young children and adults. Better understanding of the biological, social and cultural dimensions of youth behaviour, and specifically young women, will facilitate the design of better programmes. To ensure this happens, strategies must be informed by young women themselves (USAID, 2012).

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<http://www.menengage.org> for information on the MenEngage Global Alliance, a grouping of non-governmental organisations working to engage men and boys in measures for gender equality.

<http://www.enciss-sl.org/about-us> The ENCISS Programme is an initiative of UKaid and the EU aimed at improving accountability and strengthening citizens' voice, participation in decision-making and access to information. ENCISS seeks to strengthen the relationship between society and state, and supports Sierra Leone's poorest communities.



## Memoirs of a Nigerian graduate of agriculture

Lateef Akinwumi Folorunso<sup>1</sup>

### Summary

*A graduate of agriculture shares his experience after graduation. Government's efforts at improving agriculture in Nigeria, his training, challenges faced and ordeals by his colleagues are discussed. Suggestions are made to youths and the government on how to improve agriculture.*

### Introduction

I graduated from Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ibadan in 2004 where I showed so much passion for agriculture that my colleagues call me "FARMER". I worked as a farm assistant whenever the University was on break and I acquired on-the-job skills in apiculture, aquaculture, poultry production, landscaping, vegetable production, feed milling and other agro-allied ventures. Before graduating I had visited half of the states in Nigeria so I was fairly conversant with the challenges and opportunities of agriculture in the respective states. I was not afraid to start off an agro-allied venture. With this background, I think I am in a position to voice out the yearnings of graduates of agriculture in Nigeria.

### Government efforts at boosting agriculture in Nigeria

Past Nigerian governments have made a lot of frantic efforts to alleviate poverty in the country. How effective these efforts have been, and the sincerity in implementing them, remains a recurring question (Agbi, 2009). Various policies, programmes and projects were put in place to solve Nigeria's food problems but these problems continued unabated and food importation has risen (Aina and Omonona, 2012). Mabogunje (2000) outlined some of these schemes to include: (i) Plantation Agriculture Development Scheme between 1950's and 1960's; (ii) Farm settlement schemes, since late 1950's; (iii)

Government owned food companies or corporation in 1970's; (iv) National accelerated food production programme in 1970's; (v) Operation feed the Nation of 1976-1979; (vi) World Bank Assisted Agricultural Development Projects, 1974; (vii) River Basin Development Authority; (viii) The Nigeria Green Revolution and Directorate of Food, Road and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI) (now Nigeria Agricultural Insurance Company), (ix) Go back to land Programme of 1984, and recently (x) Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWIN), (xi) Growth Enhancement Scheme (GES) among others. Apparently, various policies enacted by government determine type of or combination of crops a farmer will cultivate (Folorunso & Kumoye, 2013).

### My Experience

In December of year 2001, I entered a partnership with a colleague to cultivate dry season vegetables and maize. We leased an acre of land at Ajibode village near University of Ibadan, acquired a water pumping machine and other farm inputs that could be used for irrigation. The first challenge was trekking a distance of four (4) kilometers to and from farm every other day, we had no alternative than to trek because the road was not motorable and to get a commercial motorbike that will carry us with loads was not affordable. We had to carry the water pumping machine back home everyday because it was not safe on the farm. In January 2002 there was a nationwide fuel scarcity and we bought fuel at thrice the normal price. It was this exorbitantly expensive fuel (a factor we never envisaged) that we had to use to produce our vegetables and maize. Profit from vegetables was used to buy fuel and irrigate maize. Fuel price normalized when maize was harvested in February 2002, we sold at prevailing market price and incurred a huge loss. Our source of capital was from our meagre savings and loans from our parents, who had to write off the loans as bad debt.

In July 2004, I partnered with one of my mentors to set up a farm. He provided the seed capital of one million Naira (Nine thousand US Dollars at the exchange rate then), we leased a land for five (5) years to start off at Iddo local government area, registered a farm enterprise (IBZ-026308) with Corporate Affairs Commission (agency saddled with registration of companies) and opened a current account at Union Homes Savings and Loans. Earthen ponds, farm house and poultry pens were

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constructed and some staff were employed to assist in day-to-day running of the farm. The farm hatched catfish fingerlings, produced table sized catfish, honey, layers, broilers, arable crops and was into landscaping along with consultancy. Challenges faced were: 1) we had to generate electricity to power all activities during the day and at night for staff convenience and safety; 2) no access to health facilities, Primary Health Centres nearby were not functional; 3) no safe drinking water, special thanks to "water guard" (a chemical used to purify water before drinking); 4) during egg glut (period of excess supply over demand), eggs were either thrown into fish ponds or given to pigs; 5) pilfering by workers. This piece will be incomplete if some ordeals were not shared with the reader. I once had to bury one hundred and fifty kilogrammes of catfish because they died after cropping them from the pond, consumers want them live and I had no facility to re-refrigerate them. I went to several places where they sell frozen fish and appealed to them to assist in freezing the dead fish for a fee but they were incapacitated because their cold rooms were either not working or generator was not in proper shape to power the cold room. Also, after several campaigns by the Government that cassava will be included at a certain minimal level in confectioneries, I planted two (2) acres of cassava in August 2005, the total cost expended was fourteen thousand naira, however the cassava was sold for eleven thousand five hundred naira after harvesting.

### **My colleagues' ordeal**

In year 2005, a colleague got a loan of (one million naira), leased a pen at Egbeda Local Government in Oyo state and invested on broiler production, he had three thousand broiler birds at different stages of growth. The plan was to cull (slaughter) seven hundred and fifty birds every fortnight, out of which some were dressed and supplied to eateries, others were sold live to market women. The eatery pays three days after delivery while, market women pay instalmentally within a fortnight. Things went smoothly until Bird flu struck! Although his farm was not infected by bird flu but consumers refused to consume poultry products, eateries could not accept new supplies, market women could not sell their stock and pay outstanding bill, birds on the farm continued consuming feed on daily basis. All my colleague's savings was used to procure feeds hoping that things will normalise within a short period. But situation worsened and at a certain time all sources of finance was exhausted, my colleague

watched helplessly as the birds started dying of starvation. This happened to various farmers until the then Governor of the state ate an egg on a live television programme to convince people on safety of poultry products for human consumption.

Another colleague who specialised on production of exotic vegetables planted water melon among other crops. In year 2006, there was glut and in order not to loose his highly perishable fruits, he took his fruits to a market in Lagos which is about 160km from the farm site at Ibadan. He hired a C-20 Toyota bus (at seven thousand naira) for transportation, he paid the bus owner an advance of one thousand naira with an agreement to pay the balance as soon as he collects money for his fruits from market women. Guess what! When they arrived at the market and after a lengthy negotiation, market women agreed to pay the sum of seven thousand naira for the bus load of water melon!! My colleague had no alternative than to collect the money from the women and use all the money to settle the transportation bill leaving nothing for his farm produce. Who is at fault? My friend that ventured to take his products to market instead of losing his produce? Bus driver who will remit to bus owner, maintain himself, his conductor and his bus? Market women who will bear risk of perishable fruits if the fruits are not sold on time? Government? Who?! Why?!!

In June 2012, a woman came to buy bus load of garden eggs in one of the villages at the outskirts of Zaria all the way from Onitsha (over 500km). She was at the farm harvesting and loading the garden egg into a hired van when she heard on radio that some insurgents blew up churches in Zaria and Kaduna towns and the state government declared a 24-hour curfew to avoid reprisal attacks leading to religious crisis in the state. She was stranded for a week while the curfew lasted and only got home with half the farm produce that was purchased. She incurred a loss of over two hundred and fifty thousand naira (about one thousand five hundred dollars). In year 2013, a colleague planted 3 hectares of cowpea and 2 hectares of water melon in Zaria. Unfortunately, rain stopped earlier than usual apparently due to global warming and what he harvested was nothing to write home about.

Ironically it should be noted that in 2013, another colleague had a bumper harvest of 53 tonnes of maize from 17 hectares of farmland and 7.6 tonnes of rice from 4 hectares of farmland in Zaria. This



goes to show that farmers are on both sides of the coin; agriculture is not a tale of woes all the time. It also has some success stories.

### Way forward

Disasters that befall farmers have serious adverse effects on financial position of the nation (Epetimehin, 2010). The concept of basic subsistence is measured by the availability of infrastructural services, such as safe water, sanitation, solid-waste collection, healthcare, schools and security (Agbi, 2009). Government agencies and Non Governmental Organisations have embarked on several programmes to boost agriculture but it is quite unfortunate that the basic needs of farmers are yet to be met. Whatever government policy, subsidy, grants and loans given to agriculture graduates will be absorbed by economy within a short period if basic needs are not provided. Farmers needs include: 1) rural electrification, 2) good road network, 3) farm insurance, 4) functional primary health care, 5) soft loans among other interventions that aims at reducing cost of production. Federal government of Nigeria has taken bold steps by: 1) establishing the Nigeria Integrated Power Project; 2) strengthening of Federal Roads Maintenance Agency (FERMA) to rehabilitate roads; 3) establishment of Nigeria Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) of which Aina & Omonona (2012) reported ignorance and lack of awareness by majority of farmers of the need, practice and values of agricultural insurance as constituting problem to the scheme.

### Conclusion

From the aforementioned, it would seem that the most important factor at the national policy level is greater stability in the economy. Risks and uncertainties cannot be overemphasised as risks from drought etc are always looming but artificial fuel price rises of 300% cannot be envisaged. For the youth and farmers, profitability analysis must be carried out before investing. Moreover a range of

different scenarios with costs of inputs, yields and prices must be included, this is necessary so that the investor is aware of what profit to make at the best case and what loss could be incurred at the worst. This can assist the farmer to make an informed decision about taking the risk (and/or buying insurance). Youths planning to go into Agriculture can gain insights from the experiences narrated.

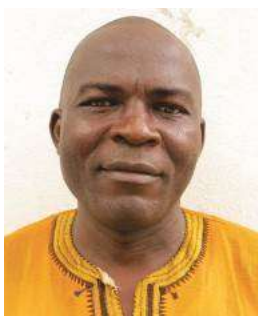
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## Country Focus : Liberia

### The Liberian youth in Agriculture

James C.D. Makor<sup>1</sup> and Michael F. Garbo<sup>2</sup>



James C.D. Makor



Michael F. Garbo

#### Summary

*Liberia occupies the pride of place in the African continent, as the oldest independent republic! Agriculture is an essential part of the Liberian economy, and serves as the main source of income for many rural dwellers. The average age of Liberia's population is 18 years and 44 percent of Liberia's population is 14 years. With the inflow of large scale Multi-national agricultural companies, the scarcity of land for agriculture is becoming the order of the day. In the past the youth were constructively engaged in agriculture (livestock, forestry, fisheries and crop production) and thereby contributing immensely to the economy. During the 14 years long civil armed conflict which ravaged the country many youth abandoned agriculture to engage in short term, unsustainable and often illegal income*

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*generating activities such as: hunting, mining, logging and commercial motorbike transportation. Most of these short-term income generating activities, contrary to agriculture, pose a danger to the nation's biological diversity and the environment. It has also diverted the potential agricultural work force thus undermining future food production in Liberia. To mitigate this potential disastrous situation, Government, private sector and civil society organizations need to encourage youths by providing appropriate policy, legal, institutional, financial and social instruments and resources that will enable youth to re-engage in agriculture again.*

#### Background

Liberia which covers a land area of 111,369 square kilometres and is home to about 3.7 million people is Africa's oldest independent republic (gained independence 1847). Liberia suffered from fourteen years of civil war (1989-2003) which left many people homeless and traumatized. Many youths were forced to join various warring factions. It is estimated that 21,000 children, some as young as 6- 9 years, were used as soldiers and sex slaves. The destructions of infrastructure and the breakdown of the rule of law and the entire social system (including health, education and agricultural system) are still evident throughout the country.

The average age of Liberia's population is 18 years and 44 percent of Liberia's population is 14 years old or even younger (Rachel Mahmud 2013). Moreover 64% of the population is between ages 15-35 years. The youths of Liberia as in other countries emerging from long civil war, face trying times and their erratic behavioral patterns, as a result of war trauma, is often of concern to communities as this affects the economy especially the labor market. They generally exhibit low self-esteem, poor confidence/trust and broken human relationship. These are barriers that need to be overcome before they can be engaged in any meaning activity, especially agriculture which was a major source of youth employment and rural development before the war.

#### Importance of agriculture to the youth

Agriculture is a strategic sector because about 70% of the population depends on it for livelihood. It is a significant net contributor to the economy in terms of employment and foreign exchange earnings, and a primary determinant of nutrition, education, poverty

reduction, and rural transformation. Unlike education and other investments that have a long gestation period, the effects of agricultural investment on economic growth and development are fast. Agriculture is a vital means of youth employment and sustainable livelihood development in the Liberian society and has and will continue to contribute towards the development of the country and its economy. Before the civil war, the youths were heavily involved in agriculture with focus on activities such as rice production (the staple food of the country), rearing of livestock, food-crop production (cassava and potatoes) and cocoa as the main cash crop. A couple of large agro-industrial companies, Firestone, a multi-lateral rubber production company and the government oil palm company offer youth employment opportunities. Though many of the youth were students before the armed civil conflict, these agricultural activities still attracted them because it was a means to earn money, part of which was used to pay school fees. The agricultural activities, especially at the village levels, engendered in the youth the dignity of labor, promoted rural development, and deterred them from migrating to big towns and cities thus making great contributions to the achievement of Liberia's national development policies. A number of youths are reported to have moved from basic agriculture to become agricultural entrepreneurs. This was possible because of the enabling environment created by government policies and legal instruments and framework. There was a guarantee for land, functional cooperatives that provided training courses to farmers and a financial loan system through the Agriculture Development and Cooperative Bank (ADCB). In addition, the government encouraged youth participation in agriculture by creating special vocational training centers such as Boy's Town youth center, Booker T. Washington Institute in Margibi County, Monrovia Vocational Training Center (MVTC) in Montserrado County and some agricultural and marketing corporations to encourage young farmers. There was a Liberia sugar production company in Mary Land County that attracted agricultural students from all parts of Liberia and West Africa in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

However, agricultural production in Liberia is low due mainly to: limited or poor infrastructure, weak land management and water control systems; impaired market access as a result of limited network of roads; limited scope for crop

diversification and rudimentary production techniques; poor food value chains including storage, processing, and marketing channels; limited financial resources; and low institutional capacity. The end of the war ushered a surge in law enforcement and thereby deters engagement in illegal mining, logging and hunting resulting in rural to urban migration for jobs, education, and better living conditions. In spite of this challenges and apparent bleak picture, agriculture still remains a pillar for development and growth and youth involvement is still fundamental. Government is revamping the agriculture sector with support from multi-lateral donors and NGOs. The two new big multi-lateral companies (engaging in oil palm production and rubber respectively) have a labour force mainly made up of youths. The increase in law enforcement has resulted in some youths departing from the illegal activities to re-engage in agriculture. Several multi-lateral funded conservation projects are not only employing youths but are supporting agriculture as a means of limiting illegal mining and exploitation of threatened biological resources in protected areas.

#### **Opportunities for youth engagement in agriculture**

The opportunities for youth engagement in agriculture in Liberia are substantial. Liberia is nestled within the dense humid tropical rainforest with huge potential for development. Liberia has 46% of the remaining Upper Guinea Forest in West Africa which stretches from Togo to Guinea. The nation is endowed with abundant natural resources which, if properly tapped will provide a boost for national development especially for rural communities. The Liberian economy currently depends largely on natural resources, specifically from the agriculture and forestry sectors. These resources include iron ore, diamond, high quality timber, arable land, crude oil and gold. These are attracting several foreign multi-national agricultural and natural resources-based companies to the country. For the youths to be meaningful re-engaged and contribute significantly to agriculture development again, adequate measures need to be put in place to re-create an enabling environment. Concerted efforts have to be made to address the challenges that face the youths. The good news is that Liberia is taking concrete and bold steps in this direction. The administration of the current president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has revised national youth policy and action plan known as the "Liberia

Youth Act". The 2010 Liberia agriculture sector investment program (2010 LASIP) had a number of youth targeted activities such as: support to the National Youth Policy and Agenda; Development and implementation of a Youth In Agriculture Program, training, and enhanced access to inputs, credit, land, and technologies; facilitating and supporting the private sector to establish agro-industries in rural areas that will provide supplementary or alternative employment for youth; Establishing and implementing special initiatives directed at increasing youth interest. These are laudable efforts that contribute to narrowing the policy implementation gap common in many developing countries.

### Conclusion

Agriculture was and still remains the main contributor to the economy of Liberia. It is major source of livelihood for the rural communities and the greatest employer of the youth and through which the youth contribute to development. The protracted civil war resulted in a shift from agriculture to illegal activities such as diamond, gold mining and hunting, which generated fast cash over a short period as compared to agricultural activities. The war also resulted in the breakdown of the social and economic systems in general and the agriculture sector in particular. Agricultural activities are gradually picking up since the end of the civil war, more than a decade ago.

Government is putting in place policies and legal frameworks that are creating an enabling environment for agriculture. These are being backed by programs and projects such as the development of agriculture education and skills enhancement facilities, provision of financial support for youth in agriculture. In addition, the huge agricultural potential of Liberia is attracting large-scale commercial agriculture companies, many of which rely on the youths for their labour force. In spite of these efforts, challenges remain in the agriculture sector such as: impaired market access due to limited road network; limited scope for crop

diversification and rudimentary production techniques; poor food value chains including storage, processing, and marketing channels; limited financial resources; and low institutional capacity. Urban migration is still high resulting to multiple problems, especially in the national capital Monrovia. However, if government continue to aggressively and effectively pursue ongoing programs, especially with focus on grass roots empowerment and rural infrastructure development, agricultural development and youth education and employment, agriculture will soon regain and even exceed pre-war levels. Youth engagement in rural development through agricultural production is feasible and Liberia's institutions are exploring it.

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## FAO Activities and Results

### Improving gender equity in territorial issues when negotiating land deals

Paolo Groppo<sup>1</sup>, Clara Mi Young Park<sup>2</sup> and Margret Vidar<sup>3</sup>

#### Summary

*This article presents an innovative approach to land and territorial issues that FAO is testing in the field in several countries, including Mozambique, Angola and Somalia. Initial field experiences are confirming how difficult it is to move towards an inclusive, gender sensitive and rights based approach to natural resources management, particularly land. Gender as a paradigm of diversity is not easily accepted, especially in relation to access and management of natural resources. This is probably due to the fact that working on gender issues intrinsically implies addressing power relations, an aspect that is quite often missing in development interventions.*

*The critical shift will occur only when the (sustainable) management of natural resources will be recognized as being first and foremost a socio-political decision to be taken by all those concerned,*

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*rather than a technical approach, as it is often perceived. Recognizing and addressing the existing asymmetries of power, together with a stronger focus on human rights, in particular of the weaker actors, is an essential element to supporting more inclusive, responsible and just decision-making.*

#### Introduction

Natural resources are shrinking<sup>4</sup> and degrading<sup>5</sup> rapidly while the global population is increasing and will continue to do so for the next decades. In addition, food habits are changing in some major countries like China and Brazil towards more animal protein based diets (Alexandratos & Bruinsma 2012, p.4). This, in turn, creates new demands on food markets, for instance for feed, as well as on access to and control of natural resources. Additional factors, including rising demand of global markets for food, forest products, minerals and energy resources are also contributing to the phenomenon known as the global land rush (Anseeuw, Wily, et al. 2012). Thus, competition for land and natural resources is likely to intensify over the next years with major impacts in “radically restructuring agrarian economies, transforming livelihoods and rural social relations and, with this, changing the power dynamics in the countryside across the global South, with major implications for national, and indeed regional and international, politics” (White et al. 2012, pp.619–647).

This article presents an innovative (still in progress) approach to land and territorial issues named Improving Gender Equity in Territorial Issues (IGETI) that FAO is testing in the field in several countries, including Mozambique, Angola and Somalia.

Building on its longstanding experience on territorial and gender issues, FAO has started integrating gender considerations into Participatory and Negotiated Territorial Development (PNTD) as a

<sup>4</sup> FAO Solaw Thematic Report N. 2: Scarcity and abundance of land resources: competing uses and the shrinking land resource base. [http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/solaw/files/thematic\\_reports/TR\\_02\\_light.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/solaw/files/thematic_reports/TR_02_light.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> FAO Solaw Thematic Report N. 3: Land degradation [http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/solaw/files/thematic\\_reports/SOLAW\\_thematic\\_report\\_3\\_land\\_degradation.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/solaw/files/thematic_reports/SOLAW_thematic_report_3_land_degradation.pdf)

way to mainstream diversity of approaches and stakeholder acceptance into territorial development. Initial field experiences are confirming how difficult it is to move towards an inclusive, gender sensitive and rights based approach to natural resources management, particularly land. Gender as a paradigm of diversity is not easily accepted, especially in relation to access and management of natural resources. This is probably due to the fact that working on gender issues intrinsically implies addressing power relations, an aspect that is quite often missing in development interventions.

Putting dialogue and negotiation at the center of land-related processes is a pragmatic way to foster inclusiveness and participation, whilst starting to address asymmetries of power and otherness of stakeholders. With respect to this, gender can be a key entry point for igniting a negotiation mechanism, based on real participation and negotiation among all relevant actors. The suggested approach, as an evolving version of the PNTD family of approaches, does represent a first step in this direction.

It is important to highlight that this approach does not and cannot end at the field level, where issues around natural resources management are usually dealt with by local actors and practitioners, such as agronomists and extension workers. A complementary intervention is needed at the policy-making level right at the onset and from the very beginning of project operations. Finally and importantly, support is also needed at the political level in order for the approach to become more “structural”, with dialogue and participation there as well. In fact, addressing asymmetries of power should start from the top.

A well-known international expert has recently defined the world food system “a patchwork of billions of different people, with huge asymmetries in knowledge and power.” These asymmetries, she argues, are part of the reason why there are still

Substantial share of the world's land and water resources, and their ecological integrity, are under stress from increasing demand and unsustainable agricultural practices. Further demand from agriculture and other sectors, taken with the anticipated aspects of climate change, will add stress and threaten their future production capacity.

people going hungry.<sup>1</sup> By putting people, the territories they live in and the question of power asymmetries back at the core of development processes, PNTD/IGETI is emerging as a possible alternative to traditional rural development approaches.

### The human rights based approach

According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights<sup>2</sup> all persons are born free and equal in dignity and rights. The purpose of international and regional human rights treaties is to give meaningful effect to that vision; it is clear that there are frequently disparities between individuals and groups, some of whom enjoy “more rights than others”. Human rights treaties aim to protect a range of interrelated and mutually dependent human rights, including the universal right of everyone to an adequate standard of living, including food, clothing and housing, and to the highest attainable standard of health. They also aim to protect the right of everyone to enjoy protection of their family, privacy, right to participate in public life, association and assembly. They are underpinned by the principle of non-discrimination, which outlaws discrimination against groups or individuals on the basis of sex, race, religion, language or other similar reasons.

Additional treaties and instruments have been adopted to address the rights of particular groups and individuals who often suffer discrimination or need special protection. This is the case for women, children, the elderly, persons with disabilities, migrant workers and their families, and indigenous peoples, as well as those suffering from racial and ethnic discrimination.

A human rights based approach to development seeks to contribute to the implementation of particular human rights, and to do so with a focus on the weaker actors in society; those who are discriminated against, those who lack bargaining power, and those who lack the education, information and organizational strength to realize their own rights.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Camila Toulmin, IIED Director *World Leaders on Food and Nature*, September 2012, 12  
[http://blog.ecoagriculture.org/2012/09/12/worldleaders\\_ju.cn/](http://blog.ecoagriculture.org/2012/09/12/worldleaders_ju.cn/)

<sup>2</sup> Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948, resolution 217 A (III), available at <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml>

<sup>3</sup> See also, United Nations, *The Human Rights Based Approach to Development Cooperation: Towards a*

A human rights based approach also seeks to strengthen entitlements of people. These can be entitlements related to access to and management of natural resources, entitlements with regard to freedom of information, and entitlements to social protection and social assistance. A key element in natural resource entitlement is the official recognition of customary land and natural resources rights of communities, groups and individuals. At the same time it is necessary to have provisions that protect the weaker actors within communities, and in particular the rights of women to non-discrimination.

Human rights standards provide a number of procedural rights relating to how decisions should be made and implemented. FAO normally summarizes the relevant principles under the acronym PANTHER, which stands for participation, accountability, non-discrimination, transparency, human dignity, empowerment and rule of law.

#### **From Participatory and Negotiated Territorial Development to Improving Gender Equity in Territorial Issues**

PNTD is based on the recognition that territories are made by men and women - individuals and/or groups. The diversity of actors, their varying values and the interdependencies among them often lead to conflicting interests that cause the improper use and inefficient management of local resources. The critical point here is how to meaningfully engage all these different actors, particularly women and the marginalized ones, like ethnic minorities, indigenous people and others, who risk being excluded from decision-making processes because of the relative weak position they hold in their communities.

Gender relations are relations of power between

Gender is an inequality of power, a social status based on who is permitted to do what to whom.”

Source: MacKinnon 1987, p.8

women and men (Agarwal 1997), which intersect and combine with other social differences and divisions that are determinants of power asymmetries, such as class, status and position,

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*Common Understanding Among UN Agencies, 2003, available at <http://hrbportal.org/the-human-rights-based-approach-to-development-cooperation-towards-a-common-understanding-among-un-agencies>*

religion, age and ethnicity. Power relations, including gender relation, often largely determine the outcomes of decision-making processes around the management of local resources. As a result, for instance, gender inequalities in access to and control of land and natural resources continue to permeate agriculture and rural economies. On average, women comprise less than 20% of all landholders in developing countries and when they do control land, it generally relates to plots that are smaller, and of inferior soil quality, compared to those of men (FAO 2011a).

There are several critical aspects that need to be addressed when dealing with power asymmetries, particularly when the gender dimension is considered. Who has the capacity to speak with the different parties (government, private sector, local actors, social/ethnic movements and other organizations) at stake? What type of mechanism can be proposed? How can the conditions be created for the stronger actors to accept giving up part of their power? How can the less confident and weaker actors be convinced and supported to enter into such a mechanism? Which are the conditions that can create a level playing field for all the actors, women and men? What institutional support is required? And finally, what can be reasonably expected as concrete results?

Once different actors, whose positions are often conflicting, are brought together, the next point is to find a common ground for dialogue. Experience has shown that jumping right into discussing problems linked to natural resources (access to land or water or similar) may be counterproductive, as these are highly sensitive and may also be contentious. In fact, bringing different constituencies and people, women and men, towards a common agreement on rules of access, use and/or management of natural resources, is a difficult task.

The IGETI approach supports communities in shaping the design of their own territorial development strategies through participatory and inclusive consultation, negotiation and decision-making. It is a mediated process of consensus building, during which different actors learn about each other and start finding common ground for discussion.

The starting point as well as the main obstacle lie in the recognition of the ‘others’ as counterparts, with their different positions, needs and aspirations,

which are reflected in their respective use and identification with the same resources. The gender dimension can be an extremely important vector to stimulate mutual acceptance. Although gender equality may be difficult to achieve, discussion around women and men's different roles and responsibilities can help the initial ice breaking sessions and create the conditions to move towards addressing and negotiating other issues.

This process is entirely about confidence/trust building as its scope is to open and ease the way into discussing and reaching consensus on issues related to natural resource management.

Timing is another critical aspect. Nobody can anticipate how much time will be needed for actors to come to mutual understanding and agreement; it may even take decades (see Israelo-palestian conflict).

This is why both PNTD and IGETI are to be considered evolving approaches that tend to move along a continuum that goes from mutual acceptance to the implementation of sustainable practices that have environmental and socio-economic benefits for all.

The PNTD/IGETI approach is grounded on building reciprocal trust. Building this trust can positively affect the actors involved in decision-making processes and facilitate collaboration. The approach is particularly beneficial to women and men who do not trust institutions to promote their development.

While PNTD/IGETI leads to the implementation of projects and programs, this is not its main objective or end result: the main aim is to create a level playing field where diverse territorial actors can use dialogue and participation to negotiate their own vision of development and of development issues.

The reciprocal trust that territorial actors develop or renew should also serve as a springboard for tackling subsequent, more comprehensive and challenging discussions that address more complex social inequalities and conflicts of interest.

Developing rules that counterbalance the existing differences in bargaining power and/or diverse personal capacities and interests will make it much easier to find ways to harmonize multiple and diverse proposals and integrate them into a broader approach/strategy that is beneficial to everyone.

The outcomes of this process, which prepares territorial actors to take collective decisions, may be varied. The "Territorial Social Pact" requires that territorial solutions be negotiated. And yet, the fact that they are negotiated is less essential than the fact that negotiating them makes them socially legitimate and that the process can be repeated over and over again to address other and more important problems. This is why the dialogue process is not over after one decision has been made: not only should the dialogue process create "common ground" where agreement can be

The process of consensus building is articulated as follows:

- **Gender-sensitive territorial diagnosis:** understanding who the actors are, their strategies, visions and interests and how they interact with the territory, in terms of access and use of natural resources, but also in term of roles, responsibilities and division of labour (women and men, for instance may have very different roles with regards to using and managing certain resources);
- **Dialogue and gender-sensitive proposals:** identifying possible thematic areas and issues around which dialogue can be initiated and helping to prepare for it;
- **Negotiation process and consensus building:** supporting the negotiation process amongst actors in order to reach consensus and formalize a Social Territorial Agreements (STA).
- **Implementation, feedback and monitoring and evaluation:** supporting the implementation and monitoring of STA and feeding inputs back into the process.



negotiated and reached over and over again, but it should also help the actors to form a mutually trustworthy relationship that will nourish constructive dialogue over a long period of time.

"It is still a long, long way to Tipperary"<sup>1</sup> as the song says, to get gender dimensions structurally introduced into major natural resources management programs in general, and into land rights and tenure issues in particular. The critical shift will occur only when the (sustainable) management of natural resources will be recognized as being first and foremost a socio-political decision to be taken by all those concerned, rather than a technical approach, as it is often perceived. Recognizing and addressing the existing asymmetries of power, together with a stronger focus on human rights, in particular of the weaker actors, is an essential element to supporting more inclusive, responsible and just decision-making.

### Concrete examples

Examples of initial implementation of these approaches are given in following two articles illustrating the case of Mozambique and Somalia. In Mozambique, FAO intervention started immediately after the end of the civil war in 1992. The trust-building exercise led to a request for technical support to the revision of first the National Land Policy and later of the Land Legislation. From the beginning FAO tried to couple work at the local level with work at the national policy one, whilst promoting the involvement of actors who were not part of the table before (academia, NGOs/CSOs). Gradually it was thus possible to forge an environment of dialogue with and among many partners in different institutions. Years of awareness raising, training and joint capacity building efforts to promote community land rights have led to start opening the Pandora box of women land rights. This is the central focus of the project intervention described in Marianna Bicchieri's article.

More recently, as part of a series of interventions in countries undergoing complex crises, FAO has started engaging in fieldwork in Somaliland. A parallel effort has also been initiated to improve the

<sup>1</sup> "It's a Long Way to Tipperary" is a British music hall song written. It became popular among soldiers in the First World War and is remembered as a song of that war. Now commonly called "It's a long way to Tipperary", original printed music has the extra "long," making the correct title "It's a long, long way to Tipperary".

knowledge base on the rules and traditions of accessing and managing natural resources, as well as to confidence building exercises with local and higher level authorities. The will is to create a space where issues of access and management of natural resources might be addressed along the principles of dialogue and negotiation indicated in the PNTD approach, whilst promoting dialogue on gender issues. This is the subject of Carolina Cenerini's article.

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## Communities' land rights, gender equality and rural development: Challenges and achievements in Mozambique

Marianna Bicchieri<sup>1</sup>

### Summary

*Access to land is fundamental for the food security and well being of all rural people. In countries where women are the major work force on the land, the security of their rights over this key resource is a fundamental condition of household food security and equitable economic development. Unfortunately, in many such countries, including Mozambique, these rights are in fact not so secure.*

*As land is getting scarcer due to a number of reasons such as population growth, climate change, environmental degradation and land speculation, the existing customary safeguards of women's land rights are eroding. Rural communities are losing their lands, and vulnerable groups such as women, orphans, elders and people leaving with HIV-AIDS, within this communities, are being disproportionately affected. Many families are taking new measures to either hold on to or to obtain as much land as they can, and young widows are being dispossessed of their land and their children disinherited.*

*To tackle these issues, FAO is supporting the Government of Mozambique, through its Juridical and Judicial Training Centre (CFJJ) of the Ministry of Justice, to provide land rights and gender-focused training for judges, public officials at all levels and paralegals. This article presents the experiences and impacts achieved by the paralegals in the promotion of a more gender equitable access to land and natural resources in Mozambique.*

### Introduction

**M**ozambique is internationally recognized for its progressive legislation when it comes to protecting rural communities' land rights and

promoting a more equitable access to land and natural resources. In a country in which almost 70% of the population leaves in rural areas (Census 2007) and depends on agriculture for their livelihoods, that legal protection is extremely important. At the same time, considering that women are a major work force on the land, the security of their rights over this key resource is a fundamental condition for their household food security and to enable an equitable economic development. However, despite the Mozambican comprehensive legal framework, these rights are in fact not so secure.

### Land rights and gender issues in Mozambique

The Mozambican Constitution affirms the State's recognition of customary systems for conflict management and resolution (juridical pluralism) as long as these systems do not contradict constitutional values and principles (article 4)<sup>2</sup>. Through this provision, the statutory law formally recognizes the power of customary law.

The Mozambican Constitution also states that, in Mozambique, land belongs to the State; it cannot be sold or mortgaged, and all Mozambicans have the right to its use and benefit (article 109). At the same time, the Land Law establishes that the rights for land use and benefits (DUAT in its Portuguese acronym) can be obtained by: i) individuals and communities occupying land in accordance with customary practices, as long as these customary practices do not contradict the principles of the Constitution; ii) by Mozambican citizens using the land in good faith for at least ten years; iii) by other groups or individuals who can apply for a DUAT title (article 12). With respect to women's rights, article 12 is very clear in stressing that customary practices are only accepted if they do not contradict the Constitution. Therefore, there is no space for any negative or discriminatory customary practice against or towards women, and men and women have the same rights of access to and control of land and natural resources. The law also provides that both men and women have equal rights of requesting individual land titles (art. 13, no. 5). In addition to that, the Constitution establishes the principles of universality and equality of all people

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<sup>2</sup> Article 4 of the Constitution recognizes all the "different legal systems and customary norms that coexist in Mozambican society as long as they do not contradict the fundamental principles and values of the Constitution".

(art. 35) and gender equality (art. 36), recognizing the equality of rights, duties and opportunities for all citizens, and specifically among men and women.<sup>1</sup>

The Land Law also establishes that the absence of a land title must not be an impairment to the Communities' DUATs. If, on one hand, this system is positive, since the land rights of communities are recognized without a land title, on the other, this can cause vulnerability and put rural communities' land at risk. The administrative process for issuing a land title is complex and expensive, so it is good that the land titles are not mandatory for the recognition of rural communities' lands rights. However, in the absence of the land title, communities' areas are not delimited and included in the national cadastre system. Without this formalization, there is room for uncertainty regarding the exact extent of a community's area, or whether a given area is occupied or not. Therefore, their *DUATs*, recognized by the land law, are in fact not really secure. In times of land rush this uncertainty has been causing issues in Mozambique: some areas occupied by rural communities, but considered "unoccupied land" by the Government, have been conceded to national and foreign companies for private investments causing unrest and conflicts (Norfolk and Hanlon, 2012).

At that same time, gender issues in Mozambique are causing even more vulnerability among rural women. They are both the major producers of food and responsible for the management of their households, but they do not have real decision-making power in their families, or real rights over land. Mozambique has several ethnic groups and different sets of traditional practices and customary tenure arrangements. In general, these fall into two groups: matrilineal systems in the north and central parts of the country, and patrilineal systems in the south of the country. Under matrilineal systems, land rights are allocated through the maternal line; under patrilineal systems, they are allocated through the paternal line. However, during recent years both systems have been undergoing a process of change due to migration flows and to rapid urban concentration and growth. Thus, it is now difficult to speak about pure kinship systems, with mixed matrilineal and patrilineal practices becoming the norm (Villanueva, 2011). Nevertheless, in any case,

men are mostly the traditional authority for allocating land rights and making decisions about land tenure (Seuane, 2009).

So, whether women in Mozambique live in patrilineal or matrilineal communities, most of their access to land comes through some form of relationship with the men in the community – their fathers, husbands, uncles. Before HIV, in a normal household reproduction cycle, they would use assets allocated to them through these relationships, even if in different ways depending upon the specific cultural context. While women are primarily responsible for using and caring for this land, they rarely have any right of ownership or secure tenure over it. Older women, maybe widowed, would be looked after by the children, now grown up, once they inherit the land left to them by their fathers or the family lineage system. With HIV/AIDS, however, many men are dying earlier, and the children are too young to claim their inheritance rights.

Meanwhile, land is also getting scarcer, as private sector investment, population growth and climate change reduce real land availability. In this context, many families are taking new measures to either hold on to or to obtain as much land as they can, and young widows are being dispossessed of their land and their children disinherited.

Deprived of a parent, and residing in communities where little alternative care options and support exist, children find themselves in situations where they are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. At a time when the extended family is traditionally expected to rally around and support them, there is considerable evidence to show that, in many cases, the opposite occurs. Wishing to further their own economic interests, some family members will seize the property and belongings that a widow and her children should inherit. Valuable resources such as land, housing, money, household furniture, cattle, agricultural implements, and clothing are taken away in the name of culture and tradition, leaving the widow and children in even greater need (Save the Children, 2007).

So, young families are being evicted and very often, they cannot even go back to the woman's family home, as there is no land for her to farm there either. As a result, they often end up in a vulnerable situation as landless poor, often migrating to urban and peri-urban areas and forced to take up high risk

<sup>1</sup> On this, please also see <http://www.fao.org/gender/landrights/report/en/>



activities like prostitution and other exploitative work in order to survive; there is evidence linking these issues to the feminization of HIV/AIDS in Mozambique (op.cit. Seuane, 2009).

### Addressing the challenges

As evidenced above, there is a clear gap and imbalance between the comprehensive legal framework and the reality in the field. It is evident that efforts are needed to translate the good legislation in practical tools to foster the change on discriminatory practices against women and also improve the land tenure security of rural people in Mozambique.

FAO has been working with the government of Mozambique since 1995, three years after the signing of the peace agreement, to formulate and implement the land policy, land law, the forestry law, and all related regulations and technical annexes. Gender and women's right over land have been a feature all through this long cooperation with Mozambique, beginning with the principle of "*guaranteeing the right of access to and use of land by women*" in the 1995 National Policy developed with FAO technical assistance. In 2006, with support from the Kingdom of the Netherlands, FAO started a program with the Juridical and Judicial Training Centre (CFJJ in its Portuguese acronym) of the Ministry of Justice.

The programme adopted a twin-track strategy aimed at legally empowering local people and building capacity at local government level. This program included paralegal training courses designed to ensure that the ordinary rural citizens of Mozambique are not only more aware of their rights, but are able to successfully use these rights in pursuit of economic and social benefits, and learn how to defend these rights when necessary, by recourse to the justice system. Gender and women's rights have always been included in the training modules for both levels. However, after 3 years of running paralegal courses and seminars, it was decided that it was necessary to address the role of women in these processes more directly.

For that purpose, since 2010 FAO has been supporting the Government of Mozambique through its Land and Gender Project GCP/MOZ/086/NOR, promoting rural communities land rights and at the same time within the communities, a more gender equitable access to land and natural resources. A

strengthened component on gender equality and women's and children's rights was developed, as well as an awareness raising campaign and research activities. The project also supported capacity building activities implemented by CFJJ, targeting community leaders, men and women at local level and also government officials, so people became aware and enabled to exercise their rights and the State better prepared to address gender issues proactively.

Throughout paralegal and government officials training courses, new concepts have been transmitted at different levels of Mozambican society, challenging the traditional system that is mostly negative towards women. The paralegals trained also received follow-up technical support to work in their communities transmitting the knowledge gained during the trainings.

In addition to the training and field activities, the project also took concrete action to raise awareness of the advantages of women's land rights and gender equality, especially in the context of HIV-AIDS related tenure insecurity, through a national advocacy campaign. A series of materials have been prepared to spread information all over the country even in the most remote rural areas. The messages spread through the advocacy campaign were geared not only to empower women to learn about and exercise their rights, but also to appeal to men's sensibilities. One important feature of the training programme was its focus not only on women, but especially on men. Given the impact of conservative male thinking in Mozambican society, it is essential to focus strongly on men – they are the leaders and guardians of customs and they are the ones who must give up part of their power to promote gender equality. Women have the tendency to want to change and improve their own situations. Even if in the beginning, women may be resistant to the idea of gender equality because of cultural issues, they eventually become interested in these ideas and support them, as they realize it will improve their lives. But men are even more resistant, because accepting these ideas necessarily means that they must relinquish some control and power, and why would anyone ever choose to give up power? So it is critical to work with both men and women, but especially with men, to make them understand that these changes will bring huge social advantages, and then everyone will win.

It was curious to notice the training's different impact on both men and women, and on younger and elders. While elder people attending the trainings, including women, were sometimes more conservative, defending the inequality between men and women as "something from our culture", the new generations were more forthcoming and receptive, disproving indeed this kind of thinking and defending the idea that the culture is something in constant change. In some occasions, the youth were the ones advocating gender equality during the training sessions, trying to convince the elders that a more equitable access to land and natural resources would benefit everybody - men, women and especially the children - who are also becoming landless when their mothers are evicted after the death of their fathers.

Hundreds of people were trained and thousands of people have been reached in community meetings carried out all over Mozambique. In consequence and among the project's results and impacts, some rural communities have changed discriminatory practices towards women, traditional courts started recognizing and fostering widow's and children's rights, women have been appointed as customary judges (in general just elderly men used to be appointed as traditional judge) and paralegals manage to obtain land titles in favour of vulnerable women.

Reducing power asymmetries in the rural landscape and promoting a more gender equitable access to land and natural resources is a 'work in progress'. That 'work in progress' is far from being concluded nowadays - worldwide and specially in the development world. However, the Government of Mozambique, FAO, its partners and the Kingdom of Norway (which financed the above program) can be very proud of the impacts so far and they expect to scale up the activities in a new phase.

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## The Somali challenge: Gender equality in natural resources management

Carolina Cenerini<sup>1</sup>

### Summary

*Somalia in 2012-13 experienced crucial new political changes that offered greater opportunities for security than the country had seen in over twenty years. If this window of opportunity is used or missed will depend largely on choices made by Somali people, and all of the other stakeholders that were involved in the Roadmap political process, which ultimately led to the presidential election and the end of the transitional period. External actors such as UN Agencies, Donors community, regional neighbors such as Kenya and Ethiopia will also play a critical role. In this framework, getting involved in land related issues is more important than ever.*

*Decline in security conditions in Lower and Middle Shabelle, a combination of Al-Shabaab influence and clan disputes over land and power, does not appear to be easily reversed in the short term, and poses a real threat to territorial development in Somalia. In light of this, FAO Somalia has developed the FAO Somalia Land Initiative beginning of October 2013 that calls for immediate action in Somaliland and South-Central Somalia with the aim to increase inclusive access to land and to promote capacity for integrated and adaptive natural resources management at community, regional, and national levels.*

### 1. Introduction

**S**omalia continues to be at the epicenter of one of the world's biggest humanitarian crisis. Lack of an effective centralized government for the entire country remains a major challenge. Somalia is the country most affected by drought within the Horn of Africa, which led to the declaration of famine in South Central Somalia in June 2011. As

a consequence – together with the devastating effects of two decades of civil war, millions of Somalis remain in pressing need of humanitarian assistance. Of the total estimated population of 9 million, over one third live in extreme poverty<sup>2</sup> and in addition to this Somalia has experienced massive displacements which resulted in a strong presence of internally displaced people (IDPs are estimated around 1.1 million<sup>3</sup>) and refugees hosted in neighboring countries (Somali refugees in the Horn of Africa and Yemen are estimated to around 1.1 Million<sup>4</sup>).

The situation of Somali women is particularly problematic and presents real concerns for their access to justice and overall human rights protection. Women make up about 50% of the Somali population and the gross inequalities and inhuman conditions they endure both as a result of the conflict, and in general, is a key factor contributing to Somalia's extremely poor human development index<sup>5</sup>. Gender-based violence has been a significant feature of the war in which customary conventions to protect women and children and preserve human dignity have been violated.

Women play a pivotal role on pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihoods. They are the managers of the household, look after livestock except camels. Although, they do most of the household chores and economic activities, women are not fully involved in decision making processes. Somaliland Women's ownership of small businesses in the rural areas is currently improving although their access to market is usually restricted to local markets.

To explore other business opportunities, women are facing many challenges, such as: lack of financial capital for growth, due to limited number of rural financial institutions that can provide women with loans; high illiteracy level that limits women's engagement on market; lack of business skills among and absence of small enterprises managed by women; lack of political will by the Government to prioritize women's under-representation in decision-

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<sup>2</sup> Somalia National Human Development Report 2011

<sup>3</sup> Figure endorsed by HCT Somalia in August 2013

<sup>4</sup> Somali Refugees in the Region, UNHCR May 2013

<sup>5</sup> Security Council resolution 1325

[http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1325%282000%29](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1325%282000%29)

making processes. Stronger advocacy campaigns, development of the capacity of women's organizations' to lobby for change, and promotion of women's participation in the decision-making process need to be taken into serious consideration.

The Gender Affairs Unit (GAU) of the UN Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) has developed an implementation matrix to ensure that Women, Peace and Security concerns<sup>1</sup> are an integral part of each of the four Roadmap pillars adopted in Mogadishu in September 2011 by representatives of various political entities within Somalia. The pillars are Security, Constitution, Political Outreach & Reconciliation and Good Governance. In October 2011, the GAU also developed Somalia's National Security and Stabilization Plan (NSSP)<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, commitments number one and number five in the "Seven Point Action Plan of the Secretary-General on gender on responsive peace building"<sup>3</sup> guide the UNPOS Gender mandate to promote more systematic women's participation and the availability of gender expertise to support peace processes. This means including gender experts in mediation teams and supporting women's civil society peace forums. Furthermore, the UNPOS Gender mandate aims to promote women's participation as decision-makers in public institutions and that temporary special measures such as positive action, preferential treatment and quota-based systems are used.

## 2. FAO Somalia Land Initiative



<sup>1</sup> UNDP MDG Review for Somalia 2007

<sup>2</sup> National Security and Stabilization Plan (NSSP). October 2011

[https://www.cimicweb.org/cmo/Piracy/Documents/Somalia/20111111%20TFGOVERNMENT%20NSSP%2018%20October%202011%20including%20FOREWO\\_1.pdf](https://www.cimicweb.org/cmo/Piracy/Documents/Somalia/20111111%20TFGOVERNMENT%20NSSP%2018%20October%202011%20including%20FOREWO_1.pdf)

<sup>3</sup>

[http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/seven\\_point\\_action\\_plan.pdf](http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pbso/pdf/seven_point_action_plan.pdf)

Source: BBC, July 2013  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-14094503>

It is more and more evident that Somalia is nowadays facing enormous problems related to access of land and other natural resources. Livelihoods of Somalis without access, or with very limited access to land and other natural resources are vulnerable because they have difficulty in building up tangible assets such as livestock, seeds, facilities related to food production, and recuperating after natural shocks.

Political and environmental changes, regional alterations, conflicts all influence and shape dynamics of rural areas. In order to better respond to these challenges, a territorial approach based on human rights is needed: an approach that can enable local communities to protect their rights and livelihood systems, and to enter into the policy dialogue and decision-making processes.

In the framework of FAO Somalia Resilience Strategy, beginning of October 2013 has been developed the FAO Somalia Land Initiative that calls for immediate action in Somaliland and South-Central Somalia (in particular Gedo Region).

The key objective of Land Initiative is to increase sustainable, inclusive and gender-equitable access to land and other natural resources in order to facilitate productive investments as well as facilitate the country's social and economic development. This objective will be achieved through a number of outputs including: an in-depth assessment of territorial rights and conflict dynamics, the reinforcement of legal and policy framework related to territorial aspects, the reinforcement of institutional and community capacities to engage in land governance.

### 2.1 Field intervention in Somaliland

Somaliland seceded from Somalia and declared independence in 1991. It held municipal elections on November 28th 2012. That was the first poll for local councils since 2002. The election panel listed nearly 2400 candidates for 353 council seats. The preliminary results show that out of 172 women candidates, 10 were elected as local councillors.

The table below shows the proportion of women's representation in government.



Region/ Body	Total positions	Women	Percentage
Ministers	26	1	4%
Parliament	66	2	3%
House of Male Elders	n/a	0	0%
District	250	44	17.2%

Source: UNDP Somalia. January 2013. *Gender in Somalia*

The Ministry of National Planning and Development (MoNPD) has developed, for the first time, a five year National Development Plan (2012-2016), which includes the need to mainstream women's empowerment in all sectors of development; and promote women's equal access to participation and decision making in social, economic and political life of the nation<sup>1</sup>.

FAO Somalia Land Initiative clearly is totally in line with these principles and is focusing on addressing inequality in productive activities, assets and access to natural resources such as land and water. Most significantly, FAO aims to help reinforce government measures to make women's concerns an integral dimension in the design of all policies related to territorial aspects.

To address the manifest gender imbalances and respond to the huge challenges faced by Somali women in dealing with land issues, FAO Somalia reiterates that gender equity is a *conditio sine qua non* for inclusive and democratic sustainable development able to guarantee the stabilization of the country. Therefore it is necessary to work toward the structural integration of a gender dimension into projects, programs and field initiatives as a way to mainstream diversity into territorial development.

A concrete example of this is the Somaliland Land Policy revision process that will be initiated next year (2014) and will be technically supported by FAO in close collaboration with key counterparts such as local NGOs, CSOs, Customary and Government representatives. Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Environment in close collaboration with local NGOs, drafted in 2008 the Somaliland Land Tenure

<sup>1</sup> UNDP Somalia. January 2013. *Gender in Somalia*

Policy that can be considered a first effort and a relevant starting point. On the basis of this draft, the idea is to stimulate a series of round tables and validation workshops among key actors in order to jointly create a progressive policy inclusive of fundamental values such as social justice and gender equity. The Land Policy should incorporate the following key components: provision of security of tenure for both women and men, improvement of women's access to credit, land titling, the resolution of issues relating to customary tenures, special attention to provision of land for ethnic minorities and women, and measures to prevent land speculation and land disputes. A solid land rights framework is an element of structural change, environmental protection and sustainable management of NR. Significantly, it demonstrates that the needs and interests of most marginalized groups such as rural women have been taken into account and are being catered for.

In view of this process, FAO is currently promoting several preliminary activities in order to empower weaker actors and put them in the position to negotiate and claim for their land rights. In Somaliland a number of trainings on land rights and land governance issues have been conducted in collaboration with PENHA (Pastoral and Environmental Network in the Horn of Africa). The training materials have been developed *ad hoc* on the basis of other FAO field initiatives and participatory methodologies such as the Improving Gender Equity in Territorial Issues (IGETI) guidelines and Participatory and Negotiated Territorial Development approach PNTD approach (picture 1)<sup>2</sup>.

The aim is to support and to empower women organizations (such as SWORAG -Somali Women Research and Action Group, SWRA – Sanaag Women Rehabilitation Association, WEHEEA – Women Human Rights Environmental and Education Association) and pastoralist and agro pastoralist associations to secure sustainable livelihoods and influence institutions to be responsive to their rights and to promote stronger

<sup>2</sup> *Improving Gender Equality in Territorial Issues (IGETI)*  
<http://www.fao.org/docrep/016/me282e/me282e.pdf>  
*Participatory and Negotiated Territorial Development approach (PNTD)*  
[http://www.fao.org/sd/dim\\_pe2/docs/pe2\\_050402d1\\_en.pdf](http://www.fao.org/sd/dim_pe2/docs/pe2_050402d1_en.pdf)

shared understanding to pastoral development approaches. In terms of pastoralist groups, FAO is actively involved in the training for the Somaliland Pastoralist Forum (SOLPAF) which is a local non-profit organization created in 2006 with a mandate to assist pastoralists and agro-pastoralists to secure sustainable livelihoods to enable them to influence institutions to be responsive to their rights and to promote stronger shared understanding of different approaches to pastoral community development.

There is an clear lack of investment in basic services adapted to the pastoralist, nomadic way of living. Their movement across countries threatens their recognition as citizens with rights to public services. The purpose is to promote the rights of pastoralists and agro-pastoralists through field intervention such as trainings on land rights; round tables to improve the mechanism of land conflict resolution, among farmers, foresters, herders, other natural resource users, and traditional chiefs; advocacy activities to reinforce pastoral networks to set up forums which will help them to engage more effectively to enter into policy dialogue.

As the territorial development is a serious issue with pastoralists and agro-pastoralists communities, SOLPAF and other organizations involved in the trainings can play a vital role on the lobbying and advocacy part with FAO and PENHA coaching them to develop the needed skill to engage with different stakeholders.

The training course wishes to offer to the participants a way to come closer to the principles of territorial negotiation in the participatory approaches , as from their vision and experiences. The aim is to build the methodological bases together, so that the PNTD/IGETI "will be born and be practiced within the participants", and it won't be seen as an external suggestion.

Several field cases are introduced in order to understand that core principles such as negotiation, participation, territoriality and others, are not confined to agriculture nor to the less developed countries, they apply irrespective of the sector or the scale of the problem (national, local). During the presentation of the field cases, some photographs and video are projected to contextualize the intervention and the areas of geographic interest.

A number of role play and open discussions are promoted and many sensitive issues outline, such as: importance of Somali customary system (*xeer*) in dealing with land issues, clan dynamics, women restricted access to land and to local markets, importance of land ownership, women's empowerment in pastoralist areas , etc.

Land still remains a complex and emotive issue, furthermore it is a crucial key to economic development and the distribution of natural resources is assumed to alter correlated factors such as educational, institutional and financial.

There are numerous challenges related to land that still need to be faced. This article tries to give a general overview on various issues and dynamics, demonstrating the complexity of the topic.

The reality is that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to development of policies, rights and institutions. It is a huge undertaking involving cultural, policy and institutional changes.

Although much progress has been made to ensure legal protection of human rights as fundamental freedoms, many barriers are still present.

Particularly in the rural areas, several rights are still affected by management/use/access to land, including the rights to food, water and work, even if general principles of international law guarantee protection related to management/use/access to land, such as equality and nondiscrimination in ownership and inheritance.

Major efforts need to be undertaken to support role of individuals - all of them, men and women without any exclusion - in shaping their human growth and the human development of societies. In this sense, FAO can play an important role as mediator in the process of reinforcing institutions and local communities capacities dealing with land issues.

Development interventions have to remain in the hands of the Somalis themselves. The willingness to reconstruct their country and their society is the one thing that brings together Somalis across all ideologies, geographical areas, and clans. Initiatives built to respect that willingness will ensure that human rights are placed at the centre of intervention efforts.

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Security Council resolution 1325

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Picture 1. Training in Hargeisa, September 2013

## Links

### Youth and the African Union Commission (AUC)

The Youth Division under the Department of Human Resource Science & Technology (HRST) is the division responsible for Africa's Youth Agenda in the African Union Commission (AUC). The Division is in charge of addressing issues concerning:-

- Youth policy development, participation and capacity building;
- Legal framework development: African Youth Charter;
- Institutional framework: African Youth Decade Plan of Action (2009–2018);
- Implementing Youth Programs: African Union Youth Volunteers Corps (AU-YVC);
- Partnerships and Resource Mobilization;
- Organizing Youth Forums and Celebrating the African Youth Day;

### Regular Reports and Publications

- Status of Youth Report - Biennial;
- Statistical Database on African Youth;
- Good Practice on Youth Development Report;
- Mapping of Youth-Led NGOs and Networks in Africa;
- Progress assessment on the African Youth Charter;

*Culled from: African Union Commission (AUC) website <http://www.africa-youth.org/youth>*

### Become an African Union Youth Volunteer !

Deciding to become an African Union Youth Volunteer (AU-YV) is a life changing decision opening opportunities to serve in a community other than your own and assisting in the local development efforts. Africa needs countless skilled labor each year in all fields and professional sectors. Youth Volunteerism has contributed significantly to the development of most advanced economies and contributes a substantively to annual GDP. In Africa, Youth Volunteerism would not only contribute directly to the development of the continent, but is also a means of direct and meaningful youth participation and empowerment.

For further information contact the African Union Youth Volunteer Corps (AUYVC)

Tel: +251 115 51 7700 ; Fax: +251 115 18 2072 ;

Email: [youth@africa-union.org](mailto:youth@africa-union.org)

*Culled from: <http://www.africa-youth.org/be-auyv>*

### Africa a youthful continent!

About 65% of the total population of Africa are below the age of 35 years, and over 35% are between the ages of 15 and 35 years - making Africa the most youth full continent. By 2020, it is projected that out of 4 people, 3 will be on average 20 years old. About 10 million young African youth arrive each year on the labor market...

To read more visit: <http://www.africa-youth.org/>

*Culled from the Youth Division of African Union Commission website: <http://www.africa-youth.org/>*

### “Transforming Gender Relations in Agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa”

is the title of a book that distills lessons learned about integrating gender equality into agricultural development initiatives in Africa. It provides case studies from Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nicaragua and Zambia. These case studies highlight efforts at all levels, from households to national government. The authors start from the premise that empowered women and men are better, more successful farmers who can make the most of the opportunities around them.

To access online click on: <https://dgroups.org/?c3y0spwr> The authors are: Cathy Farnworth, Melinda Fones Sundell, Akinyi Nzioki, Violet Shivutse, and Marion Davis. Year: 2013

*Culled from: The Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) <http://www.seiinternational.org/publications?pid=2380>*

### EARTH University Costa Rica: a distinguished example of practical experience and a reputable student entrepreneurial programme

EARTH University in Costa Rica is a well-known example of practical experience and an active and well established student entrepreneurial programme. It provides practical opportunities throughout the degree for exposure that helps to develop soft skills, commitment and entrepreneurship. It provides for internships within the surrounding rural community, the establishment of student projects as well as internships with private companies and civil society organisations as part of its curriculum.

*For further information visit: [www.earth.ac.cr](http://www.earth.ac.cr)*



## NEWS

### A continent-wide strategic framework for management of invasive alien plants in Africa holds promise for youth employment

Gualbert Gbehounou<sup>1</sup> and Joyce Mulila-Mitti<sup>2</sup>

Invasive Alien Plants (IAP) are non-native plants which impact adversely upon biodiversity, eliminating native species through competition, disruption of local ecosystems and ecosystem functions, or transmission of pathogens. IAPs exacerbate poverty and threaten development of Africa, through their negative impact on agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

Notorious IAPs currently jeopardizing Africa's development include *Eichhornia crassipes* (water hyacinth Figure 1), *Parthenium hysterophorus* (Parthenium) and *Solanum elaeagnifolium* (Silverleaf nightshade) to name but a few.



Figure 1. *Eichhornia crassipes* (water hyacinth),

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Water hyacinth is a major invasive aquatic weed in Africa. It makes waterways un-navigable, reduces fish availability and capture, reduces the generating capacity of hydro-electric stations and contributes to water shortages. In East-Africa *Parthenium hysterophorus* invasion takes land and people out of agricultural production (Figure 2). *Solanum elaeagnifolium* (Silverleaf nightshade) is a terrestrial invasive plant taking land out of agricultural production in Northern and Southern Africa (Figure 3). Moreover, Silverleaf nightshade is toxic to livestock.



Figure 2. *Parthenium hysterophorus* invasion in East-Africa



Figure 3. *Solanum elaeagnifolium* (Silverleaf nightshade)

On 29 and 30<sup>th</sup> October 2013, a team of experts met at Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' (FAO) Regional Office for Africa in Accra to discuss and finalize a Continent-Wide strategy for management of Invasive Alien Plants in the continent. The meeting noted that invasive alien plants (IAP) are already causing major losses to

agriculture, degrading the natural environment and hindering development.

In fact, IAPs have a negative impact on the three sustainability dimensions of agricultural production. They negatively impact on (1) Agro-ecological Sustainability by reducing biodiversity (2) Economic Sustainability by reducing efficiency of production, and access to market (3) Socio-territorial Sustainability by reducing employment opportunities.

The impacts of IAP are often disproportionately felt by the poor and women, who are least able to cope with the problems IAP cause. Youth will be particularly affected by reduced employment opportunities as a consequence of the negative impact of IAPs on the aforementioned three dimensions of sustainability.

The Continent-Wide strategy for addressing the IAP problem in Africa discussed during the workshop comprises five areas:

1. Coordination and leadership in solving the IAP problem at continental, sub-regional and national levels;
2. Policies, laws and regulatory frameworks for prevention and management of IAP;
3. Research and capacity development for IAP prevention and management;
4. Implementation of solutions for preventing and reducing the impact of IAPs;
5. Communication, awareness and information.

The three areas on research and capacity development, implementation of solutions, and communication hold potential for employment opportunities for young Africans.

An example of employment opportunities offered to youth by management of invasive alien plants is the “Working for Water” programme in South-Africa. The Department for Water and Forestry in South-Africa realized the negative impact of IAPs on water supply and runoff from catchments. The “Working for Water” programme was then launched having as major objectives:

- Ensuring sustainable water runoff from water catchment areas;
- Conservation of biodiversity;
- Empowerment of local communities through job creation, training and capacity building;
- Economic empowerment of emerging contractors from disadvantaged communities;
- Effective eradication of invasive alien species.

Although, the Continent-Wide strategy under development for management of IAPs in Africa does not have a strategic objective on youth employment, it holds promise for creating employment opportunities for youth during the implementation phase at Country level. In addition, management of IAPs will improve sustainability of agricultural production systems making them more attractive to youth for investment.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Food Security and Nutrition (FSN) Forum in West Africa launches survey on youth in agriculture

Renata Mirulla<sup>1</sup>

**D**ebating burning issues on Food Security and Nutrition, sharing knowledge and learning from others online: this is what FAO's Global Forum on Food Security and Nutrition (FSN Forum) has been offering since 2007 to an expanding network of over 5,000 experts and practitioners worldwide. Over the years, the FSN Forum has proven its relevance to the global food security and nutrition discourse; its activities have contributed at improving understanding and multi-sectorial approaches on food security and nutrition, supported food security policy and drafting processes, which have allowed a broad range of stakeholders to actively take part and voice their views and concerns.

The FSN Forum has developed a regional strategy with the aim of facilitating networks and providing a platform to engage with food security and nutrition priorities at regional level.

The FSN Forum in West Africa is one of such platforms. In November 2013, a workshop at FAO's Regional Office for Africa gathered 16 participants from the sub-region to discuss ways to make the Forum in West Africa a success. Participants agreed that the regional network should focus on supporting policy processes and discussed ways to involve grassroots stakeholders in that process. Following the workshop, a strategy and a concrete working plan were developed for 2014.

The FSN Forum in West Africa "is an online network for advancing food security and nutrition dialogues in West Africa, inclusive of a wide range of stakeholders and supporting outreach and effectiveness of policy initiatives" explains Mauricio Rosales, the Forum Coordinator. The effectiveness of such efforts can be increased by increasing the range of types of stakeholders actively engaged in the Forum and by improving knowledge sharing and flow of information among them. Ultimately, a higher-level of awareness and engagement of stakeholders can increase accountability of governments and decision-makers.

During the discussions held at the workshop, the topic "youth in agriculture" was emphasized as one of the greatest challenges encountered in the region. In an effort to make jobs in agriculture more appealing to younger generations, the FSN Forum in West Africa launched a survey in partnership with the Young Professionals in Agricultural Research for Development (Ypard). As recommended by workshop's participants, the FSN Forum in West Africa allows interested participants to respond to the survey via SMS in order to facilitate access and participation of grassroots communities. The survey closes on 31 January 2014 and a report of the result will be posted March 2014 at <http://www.fao.org/fsnforum/west-africa/>

Many other activities are planned for 2014 and all FSN experts and practitioners are invited to join the network.

The focal point for the FSN Forum in West Africa in FAO Regional Office for Africa is Justin Chisenga, [Justin.Chisemga@fao.org](mailto:Justin.Chisemga@fao.org)

For more information, go to: [FSN Forum in West Africa](#) or send email to: [FSN-moderator@fao.org](mailto:FSN-moderator@fao.org)

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## Theme and Deadline for Next Issue

The next edition of *Nature & Faune* magazine will feature short articles that address the broad theme of "Sustainable Natural Resources Management in Africa's Urban Food and Nutrition Equation". This is consistent with the magazine's mission of improving communication, information and knowledge exchange on issues related to safeguarding Africa's natural resource management and utilization for sustained supply of products and services to the continent's populations. The theme reflects the complementary rather than central place of natural resources in urban food and nutrition security with farming remaining at the core.

Fourteen of the 54 African countries saw riots in the cities following abrupt spikes in food prices in 2007-2008<sup>1</sup>. This among other factors triggered a more focused thinking and drew immediate attention to urban food security in Africa and the world at large. Is the high concentration of human population in the urban areas part of the problem? An analysis of the demographics shows that between 2011 and 2050, global population is expected to increase from 7 billion to over 9 billion. The fraction of the world's population living in cities is expected to continue to grow from over 50% in 2010 to almost 70% by 2050, representing an increase of over 2.5 billion people. Much of this increase will take place in developing countries, most notably in rapidly growing cities of East Asia, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa<sup>2</sup>. According to the UN Population Fund "the fastest urbanizing region is Africa with a current urban growth rate of 3.2 percent per annum. Africa, although least urbanized today, will be home to 1.2 billion urban dwellers by 2050, more than half of the population living in urban areas..."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.csae.ox.ac.uk/conferences/2011-EdiA/papers/711-Berazneva.pdf>. Also Julia Berazneva and David R. Lee 2011. *Explaining the African Food Riots of 2007-2008: An Empirical Analysis* Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management Cornell University, Ithaca, New York

<sup>2</sup> [http://communitascoalition.org/pdf/Zero\\_Draft\\_Linkages\\_Rural\\_Deve\\_Forster.pdf](http://communitascoalition.org/pdf/Zero_Draft_Linkages_Rural_Deve_Forster.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/FCIT/PDF/FoodAgriCities\\_Oct2011.pdf](http://www.fao.org/fileadmin/templates/FCIT/PDF/FoodAgriCities_Oct2011.pdf) See also: UNFPA, 2007. *State of the world population*. (<http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2007/>)

This is a challenge not only for urban areas but also for rural areas, because many people, especially the young, are expected to migrate from rural areas to urban areas over this period. It is a fact that far from the original role of urban areas being prosperous centres attracting people because they offer hope, a significant part of African urban drift is towards cities that are also poor and offer only desperate livelihoods. It is in this light that one sees clandestine charcoal and fuelwood value chains existing. Policy change and incentives can make them thrive. When addressing urbanization challenges, rural and territorial development are also directly or indirectly addressed. What does Africa have to do to ensure its urban population's access to good nutrition? What does Africa have to do to produce enough food for its urban dwellers? What infrastructure is required for food production systems suitable to contemporary African cities? How can cities preserve the services of the surrounding ecosystems, while ensuring sustained provision of food and other consumable products to their burgeoning populations? All hands have to be on the deck to address these issues from various perspectives. All stakeholders need to work together at regional, national and local levels, to advocate for and implement projects and activities to raising awareness on challenges and opportunities inherent in urbanization and food security in the continent.

The editorial board is inviting authors to contribute articles that address/examine the challenges that continuing urbanization brings to food and nutrition security in Africa's urban centres in the context of sustainable natural resources management and utilization. Authors can look at this very broad but tangible topic from varying perspectives including: increasing demand on natural resources in urban and peri-urban areas and implications for sustainable natural resources management; integrated urban and peri-urban forestry planning for food production, nutrition, food security and environmental protection; tenure, governance, agricultural production systems, agribusiness models, inclusive green growth, climate change impacts and challenges, and the contribution of urban forestry to the mitigation of the wood-energy crisis in urban and peri-urban areas. There is also a real hunger out there for information on REDD+ : how it works, what are its advantages for Africa's inner city food and nutrition security.

**Deadline for submitting manuscripts for the next issue of *Nature & Faune* is 1 June 2014.**



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