

OFFICIAL FEEDBACK FORM

DIALOGUE DATE	Wednesday, 30 June 2021 14:00 GMT +02:00
DIALOGUE TITLE	African youth as drivers for decent job creation in sustainable food systems
CONVENED BY	The Thematic Working Group on Rural Youth Employment of the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD)
DIALOGUE EVENT PAGE	https://summitdialogues.org/dialogue/8081/
DIALOGUE TYPE	Independent
GEOGRAPHICAL FOCUS	No borders

The outcomes from a Food Systems Summit Dialogue will be of use in developing the pathway to sustainable food systems within the locality in which they take place. They will be a valuable contribution to the national pathways and also of interest to the different workstreams preparing for the Summit: the Action Tracks, Scientific Groups and Champions as well as for other Dialogues.

1. PARTICIPATION

TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

48

PARTICIPATION BY AGE RANGE

0-18

11

19-30

28

31-50

8

51-65

1

66-80

80+

PARTICIPATION BY GENDER

14 Male

34 Female

Prefer not to say or Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH SECTOR

3 Agriculture/crops

Fish and aquaculture

Livestock

3 Agro-forestry

2 Environment and ecology

Trade and commerce

4 Education

2 Communication

Food processing

1 Food retail, markets

2 Food industry

1 Financial Services

Health care

Nutrition

3 National or local government

Utilities

Industrial

27 Other

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS FROM EACH STAKEHOLDER GROUP

2 Small/medium enterprise/artisan

Large national business

1 Multi-national corporation

4 Small-scale farmer

Medium-scale farmer

Large-scale farmer

3 Local Non-Governmental Organization

12 International Non-Governmental Organization

Indigenous People

Science and academia

1 Workers and trade union

Member of Parliament

Local authority

2 Government and national institution

Regional economic community

13 United Nations

2 International financial institution

Private Foundation / Partnership / Alliance

1 Consumer group

6 Other

2. PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

HOW DID YOU ORGANIZE THE DIALOGUE SO THAT THE PRINCIPLES WERE INCORPORATED, REINFORCED AND ENHANCED?

The dialogue was organised into three sections, following the guidelines for the dialogues. It began with an opening session to set the stage for the topic and context of the dialogue, and to build a problem description. The second section was the main dialogue session, where three facilitators organised three different debates on the topic of food system transformation and the role of youth. The closing plenary began with a round of reports from each of the facilitators about the group discussions. There was a comprehensive focus on the way forward from the independent dialogue, towards a food system transition and towards the UNFSS. The potential to build a coalition on Rural Youth Employment for the UNFSS was brought to the table during the dialogue.

HOW DID YOUR DIALOGUE REFLECT SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF THE PRINCIPLES?

The dialogue was convened by the Thematic Working Group (TWG) on 'Rural Youth Employment' of the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD). The organisers of the event mobilized their large networks of diverse stakeholders that were invited. We worked to include youth voices both in the opening remarks and in the dialogue discussions. Also, by reaching out to specific groups and networks that we wanted to ensure were included and represented among the participants, we were able to create a dialogue with a wide array of stakeholders. Existing networks and initiatives working on rural youth employment created the foundation for the dialogue. Principles of inclusiveness both towards participants and regarding the topic of discussion were important pillars for the dialogue. The topic of the dialogue was focused on the ability to protect and improve the livelihoods of young people in food systems and empower and engage young men and women as agents of change to transform food systems. Knowledge exchange, best practice examples from country specific cases and concrete recommendations as input for the presented Game Changers were encouraged in the discussions. The complexity of food systems was incorporated by emphasising how one-size-fits-all solutions never will be sufficient in this context. The need to be context-specific and inclusive to the plurality of youth as a non-cohesive group was uplifted. Being respectful and building trust among the participants is a vital principal for encouraging a fruitful dialogue space. The Independent Dialogue opened with an encouragement to follow a set of principals which were put in place to ensure a safe and trustworthy dialogue setting. It was made clear that the discussion session would not be recorded and participation from all participants was incentivised.

DO YOU HAVE ADVICE FOR OTHER DIALOGUE CONVENORS ABOUT APPRECIATING THE PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT?

The appreciation for the principles of engagement was important for the dialogue to ensure that the voices that should be heard were included. Building trust among participants is essential to create a dialogue which can contribute with a variety of viewpoints. This can however be challenging in a virtual setting, so the advice is to prioritise principals of being respectful and inclusive to provide a safe environment for discussion.

3. METHOD

The outcomes of a Dialogue are influenced by the method that is used.

DID YOU USE THE SAME METHOD AS RECOMMENDED BY THE CONVENORS REFERENCE MANUAL?

Yes

No

4. DIALOGUE FOCUS & OUTCOMES

MAJOR FOCUS

The Independent Dialogue was centred around the urgent need of a food system transformation. The challenges of youth in the food system are on-going and the need for action is based on the contemporary situation for youth in developing areas. The dialogue was committed to the summit with a clear motivation to feed back to the FSS structure by using game changers proposed to the summit as a backdrop and framework for the dialogue. The objective was also to find potential partners for further collaborations and potential coalitions going forward with the summit structure.

The Dialogue highlighted issues affecting rural youth and gathered inputs for Game Changer solutions for decent jobs creation for rural youth in food systems. First, a round of opening statements by the TWG co-chairs, a youth representative from Malawi as well as representatives from AUC and the UNFSS, set the scene.

The event was centred around two game-changing solutions that were selected under AT1 and AT4. They were chosen based on their focus on youth and presented by representatives of the organisations that submitted the game changer propositions:

1. Launch of a coalition for youth in African Agriculture (Nourishing Africa, AT1)
2. Empowering youth as innovators and change makers for sustainable food systems (FAO, AT4)

In the following breakout groups session participants exchanged experiences, gathered best practice examples and concrete recommendations as input to the presented Game Changers focusing on the following aspects:

How to boost youth agency to actively participate and coordinate action in food systems and their governance mechanisms through partnerships & networks?

How to strengthen youth capacities and skills for inclusion in food systems development and productive activities (wage or self-employment, in and off farm)?

How to unpack the opportunities and constraints for youth in local food system models to take off and respond to local and regional food demands?

How to connect youth with opportunities in sustainable food systems by promoting more and better jobs?

ACTION TRACKS

✓	Action Track 1: Ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all
	Action Track 2: Shift to sustainable consumption patterns
	Action Track 3: Boost nature-positive production
✓	Action Track 4: Advance equitable livelihoods
	Action Track 5: Build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress

KEYWORDS

	Finance	✓	Policy
✓	Innovation	✓	Data & Evidence
	Human rights		Governance
✓	Women & Youth Empowerment		Trade-offs
			Environment and Climate

MAIN FINDINGS

The main part of the dialogue was the exchange in the discussion groups. The main findings, experiences and recommendations from the group discussions are captured below.

However, as a main conclusion all participants agreed that the participatory and inclusive coalition building process under the UNFSS is a promising step to generate the momentum for identifying and supporting initiatives to bring about the food systems transformation needed to create employment opportunities for rural youth, particularly in agri-food systems and emerging green sectors and to support the empowerment of youth to productively contribute to and benefit from sustainable rural livelihoods.

It is important to hear the voices of youth themselves in terms of what they want to happen if they are to be involved in the agri-food sector. It is important to ensure to transform Africa's rural economies to provide more and better jobs for rural youth and particularly young women. Investing in young people is key for rejuvenating and improving the performance of the agri-food sector. Therefore, it is important, also in the further process of the UNFSS, to further consolidate the game changers and solution clusters and strike out the focus on youth – not only as a crosscutting issue but as a key line of intervention.

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OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 1/3

Discussion topic: How to strengthen youth capacities and skills for inclusion in food systems development and productive activities (wage or self-employment, in and off farm)?

The open floor discussion was based on guiding questions with the following inputs gathered:

1. What works in rural skills development for sustainable food system transformation?

- Real political participation from the local to the national level, even in international processes (UNFSS, climate negotiations, international trade) instead of having side events with youth at the child table.
- Major challenge is sustainability of agriculture as a business: how to keep youth in the business and make good gains out of it, despite the ups and downs. Financial management skills are key: record and bookkeeping, profit investment, not just how to make money but also how to use it without wasting it.
- Entrepreneurial skills are also important to build strong partnerships in the system (e.g. potential clients to sell your harvest).
- Skills to access and find relevant information related to their work in the agricultural sector are also needed
- Youth want quick returns, so to encourage them to engage in agriculture we need: 1) short term varieties of crops (like vegetables that grow quickly and have higher value); 2) value addition.

2. How to expand access to quality education and vocational training and make it more effective for rural youth?

- Increase collaboration of the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Agriculture to develop to develop national curriculum.
- Including agriculture in secondary school curriculum would be effective so by the time of entering university young people have agricultural knowledge.
- Community service (internship-like) to go and work in agricultural institutions for some 3 months and would give the youth practical skills.

3. How to ensure young women have access to education and training and the opportunity to use their knowledge and skills productively in the food system?

- Prepare teachers to give good school and career advice to girls and have strong role models. Project-based learning with established women entrepreneurs as mentors. This influences motivation but also equips young women with better networks and services if they choose to venture in agriculture.
- Ensure participation quotas for women in learning opportunities (despite the larger numbers of male applicants) and empower young women champions as mentors and service providers to other youth.

4. Which capacities and skills do rural youth need to actively shape the food system transformation? (poll result)

- Business/entrepreneurial skills (e.g. business planning, marketing, financial literacy)
- Soft skills (e.g. teamwork, problem-solving)
- Technical skills (e.g. mechanical skills, cultivating)
- Green skills (e.g. recycle, energy efficient process, waste management, climate smart agriculture)
- Leadership skills (e.g. decision-making, communication/advocacy skills, knowledge of political processes)
- Digital skills (e.g. digital security, data management, online learning)
- Other (risk management)

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|---|--|
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| | Human rights | | Governance |
| ✓ | Women & Youth Empowerment | | Trade-offs |
| | | | Environment and Climate |

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 2/3

Discussion topic: How to unpack the opportunities and constraints for youth in local food system models to take off and respond to local and regional food demands?

The open floor discussion was based on guiding questions with the following inputs gathered:

1. The development of downstream activities (food processing and marketing) of the agrifood value chain is stalling in many sub-Saharan African countries. What would be the one knot that needs to be untangled to make the agro-food industry bring more value added to the economy and create decent jobs?

Although participants generally agreed that there are many relevant and context specific constraints, three constraints emerged as priorities:

1. Infrastructure and market linkages,
2. Lack of or inadequate quality standards
3. Access to financing.

The first and second constraints were jointly emphasized as challenges to possibilities for youth to link up with downstream segments and move into higher value-added production.

2. What local food market models are working well that reconcile economic, social and environmental objectives?

Participants shared various business models that were successful in their experience. These ranged from public sector support and coordination to private sector involvement, as well as multiple stakeholder approaches, namely those stressing the linkages between youth farmers and agribusinesses and the conditions necessary to enable this. Some examples:

The Sholi coffee cooperative in Rwanda:

A women-led cooperative that produces coffee for export and sells own-branded products in large retailers. This example of more direct forms of trade allows farmers to capture more value addition and higher price returns.

FAO's project on beans in Mozambique (jointly with UNIDO and IFAD):

In spite of local production and demand for local products, supermarkets were supplying imported beans. The project aimed to improve quality standards for bean producers by putting in place processing equipment in areas where youth cooperatives and organizations were active, and by facilitating the implementation of rural infrastructure.

GIZ Nigeria's Green Innovation Centers Project- Cassava chip production

The project aimed to improve productivity and employment of farmers through trainings on business and agro-entrepreneurship skills. It focused on organizing and supporting farmer groups and cooperatives and linking them to private sector actors and institutions.

SNV Push-Match-Pull Model

This model emphasizes the role of the private sector as it is crucial in providing market access and facilitating access to financial resources. It also looks at the role of the public sector as providing an enabling environment for entrepreneurship and economic development.

3. What are the key success factors? How do market models consider economic, social and environmental impact (e.g. livelihoods of producers, environmental footprint, job creation for rural youth)?

The main success factors for these models to take off include establishing rural infrastructure, enhancing storage capacities and improving technologies and processing equipment to meet quality standards of large retailers and exporters and move into higher value production.

Key to the success of these upgrading efforts was a multistakeholder approach channelling the capacities of the private sector. This consisted of:

- 1) joining up youth groups and cooperatives with agro-businesses to facilitate access to processing equipment, market linkage facilities, and loans,
- 2) linking youth to relevant business opportunities and
- 3) and develop the appropriate skillset, through private or public training, for rural youth employment.

Public sector involvement was also raised as a critical success factor, e.g. by providing an enabling regulatory environment for entrepreneurship and facilitating private sector-farmer partnerships as well as the need to organize and strengthen farmer cooperatives.

Finally, it is important to identify models that are relatively low risk, require low investment and provide quick returns, especially for those youth groups that don't have the access to financing.

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<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Environment and Climate

OUTCOMES FOR EACH DISCUSSION TOPIC - 3/3

Discussion topic: How to accelerate action for more & better jobs for rural youth?

The open floor discussion was based on guiding questions with the following inputs gathered:

1. What would be the priority actions that should be taken to promote more and better jobs?

a) In terms of knowledge generation?

The 'Job-Agri' (https://www.ilo.org/emppolicy/pubs/WCMS_762511/lang--en/index.htm) project aims for knowledge generation on the quality and quantity of labour in agriculture and agri-food value chains in sub-Saharan Africa. The ILO, FAO and IFAD have together conceptualized this initiative for bridging the knowledge gap on the precise type and quality of jobs which could be generated by various agro-food models in different type of settings.

b) In terms of policy & programming support?

- Building ownership with the governments and RECs can escalate initiatives beyond knowledge sharing and technical collaboration, to bring about programmatic change. "Decent Jobs for Youth" (<https://www.decentjobsforyouth.org/>) is an example of such an initiative.
- Putting more programmatic attention to improving conditions of waged youth workers in agri-food systems.
- More attention and investment in social dialogue to ease the challenges faced by waged workers in agri-food value chains.
- Attention to decent wage employment is important, focus on entrepreneurship is crucial to generate sufficient jobs to accommodate the scale of young people entering the market.
- Collaboration among stakeholders needs to be strengthened. The coalition building process under the UNFSS is a promising step to generate the momentum for supporting such initiatives, including Decent Jobs for Youth, to bring about the change needed.

c) In terms of capacity development?

- The Agripreneurship Alliance (<https://www.theagripreneur.org/>) has developed a training programme on entrepreneurship in agri-business, covering all the steps needed to run an agri-business.
- Youth Business International (<https://www.youthbusiness.org/>) has developed a curriculum specifically for young people starting business. Making a business case for inclusivity in supply chains can ensure the buy-in of the private sector.

2. What are the major challenges that could be encountered in advancing towards the implementation of these priorities?

- Connectivity and power cuts are two of the most severe challenges for conducting trainings in rural areas.
- Connecting the challenge of digital access with inclusivity, organizations are struggling with inclusivity of digital technology, not only in terms of how to reach people in terms of internet access, but how to make the technology itself inclusive too
- 'Human centred digitalization' in agri-food systems can help ensuring existing divides are not deepened and new divides are not created.
- Initiatives by young people are at risk of operating in silos and serving as 'small islands of brilliance'.
- Lack of 'inclusivity' is a major cross-cutting challenge and while focusing on agency and potential of young entrepreneurs, young people in waged employment need to be kept under consideration too.
- Formal education systems are unable to meet the rapidly changing, dynamic needs of the market.
- Young people are coping through pluralistic models such as extension and advisory services, that in many respects, bridge the education gap, with young people becoming both the providers and recipients of services.

3. Which stakeholders are key? What would be their role?

- Youth organizations and networks are critical but rarely engage in governance making processes, usually due to limited capacity and representation. Young people working in the sector can become lighthouses to inspire others. When a market-systems or value chain approach is adopted, it is important to observe case studies from territories, to understand the role of the youth.
- There is an increasing interest in agriculture from young people from engineering, technology and scientific backgrounds. It would be interesting to include universities providing such programmes in the ongoing discussions as that's where innovation often emanates from.

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AREAS OF DIVERGENCE

ACTION TRACKS

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