

Community of Practice: Youth Agripreneurship

1st Session Report

Title: STRATEGIES TO SERVE DIFFERENT YOUTH GROUPS

Date: Jul 11, 2023 ; Time: 10:30-12:00 CEST

This week's learning event marked the kick-off of the new [Community of Practice \(CoP\) on Youth Agripreneurship](#), organised by the Netherlands Food Partnership (NFP). The interactive session focused on *Using an integrated systems approach and adapting programmatic approaches to effectively serve different youth groups - from subsistence farmers to successful entrepreneurs.*

Session Summary

The session was organised around two case illustrations that served to share best practices and develop a shared understanding of common challenges around strategies to serve different youth groups.

Jean Muthamia-Mwenda [SNV - Global Lead Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship] presented about using an integrated approach that combines supply- and demand-side programmatic activities with matching interventions that create market linkages to effectively serve marginalised youth groups. Moreover, she shared lessons from adapting SNV's [YEE framework approach](#) to enable high-potential youth agripreneurs to develop and scale their agri-business in order to create employment opportunities in the long-run. SNV's case presentation was supplemented by programme alumnae Vimbay Kaitano sharing her personal success story. Vimbai shared how extensive business mentorship and receiving support for a business expansion have accelerated her capabilities to act as a role model for other aspiring agripreneurs, and she highlighted the importance of creating sustainable business ecosystems.

Olivier Muvandimwe [Rwanda Youth in Agribusiness Forum (RYAF) - Programme Manager] shared strategies and RYAF's approach to include different groups, like rural youth and youth with disabilities, throughout the programme from the perspective of a youth network. RYAF hosts and represents more than 4000 young people on their platform working in crop production, livestock, agro-processing and other agro-services as well as ICT for agriculture in Rwanda. With a mandate from the Ministry of Agriculture in Rwanda they advise the government and multilateral organisations how to engage with young people to promote farming amongst

youth. While sharing how to engage with rural youth, he shared their challenges in targeting marginalised groups to reach their inclusion targets.

The two case presentations were followed by an interactive discussion in breakout groups with the participant on how they can adapt their current frameworks, guides and tools to the needs of different groups.

Group 1: How to reach disabled and rural youth and meet programme targets on social inclusion

The breakout session facilitated by Olivier Muvandime focused on inclusion of marginalised youth groups. RYAF and Challenge Fund for Youth Employment shared strategies to include youth with disabilities, by providing accessible training facilities and working directly with companies that can hire disabled youth. Rural Youth Alliance chair James Kellon shared approaches to ensure the voices and needs of rural youth are acknowledged and included in policy initiatives and programmes. He recommended starting at the grassroots level and bringing the voices from the village to higher platforms at district, regional, national and international level.

Group 2: Discussion around creating opportunities beyond skills development and access to markets

During the breakout session, the group facilitated by Jean Muthamia-Mwenda shared lessons around opting for a mentorship approach to aid aspiring agripreneurs that are “market-ready” to further develop their business, with the support of immediate access to funding and access to a thriving community of like-minded agripreneurs, so that they can become a business mentor for other youth as well. Further, the group reported about opportunities in the creation of market linkages between urban youth, who are typically more interested in value-addition through processing, while rural youth predominantly engage in agri-food production. To create a sustainable ecosystem in the long-run, this requires a comprehensive market scan, a database of youth farming associations and an active network of agripreneurs .

Learnings Check-List

The interactive session generated 6 lessons about effectively serving the needs of different youth groups:

- ☐ *There is no one size that fits all approach. Programmes* need to be tailored to the profile and ambitions of youth and should also take into account the economic opportunities in a particular context.
 - ➔ A good tool to effectively identify the profile of different youth groups is the matrix model, integrating their social background and their employment profile

- ☐ *Focusing on the supply side is not enough - go beyond training and connect youth to economic opportunities simultaneously*
- ☐ *Work more closely with market ready youth and consider long term investment to youth development, e.g. through mentoring and coaching and related business development services*
 - 30% of the youth that enroll in agripreneurship programmes are intrinsic entrepreneurs with the ability to develop scalable business models that could provide employment to other youth. Give this group extra support to achieve their full potential by connecting with other ecosystem players that can provide follow up BDS services, institutionalised finance and access to diversified markets.
 - Use innovative coaching and mentoring approaches to create peer-to-peer learning , e.g. youth farmers champions model
- ☐ *Ask input and advice from local youth with different backgrounds to contextualise your global theory of change and tools.*
 - To integrate the voice of rural youth in (inter)national programmes and policy fora, start at the grassroots level and bring the voices from village level up to the district, province and national levels.
- ☐ *Create synergy between the rural and urban youths through linking primary production and processing activities and building an ecosystem of youth farming associations and active entrepreneurs.*
- ☐ To serve disabled youth, identify inclusive training opportunities and work directly with companies that can provide the facilities support and employ people with disabilities.

Going forward

As the learning session was the first in a series of three, all focusing on exchanging lessons and best practices, we gathered input about the most relevant topic for the next session. Suggested topics for follow up learning included a practical exchange on effective youth engagement strategies at project design and policy level, and improvement of business models and projects during implementation. Moreover, there was a specific interest in reaching rural youth in the research and creation stage of a project.