
Youth in Landscapes: Taking action on recurring issues

YPARD | E-discussions Report, Global Landscapes Forum's Youth Session 2013



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Youth are sometimes asked to provide their inputs into the big issues in the landscapes sector - including agriculture, forestry, fisheries, conservation, development, industry and climate change. However this input often stays on the side-lines and rarely influences the 'real' decisions that are being made.

We have trawled through youth communiqués from past events to find recurring themes which are not being addressed. Four recurring **themes were identified as important to build a youth-supportive environment** within the landscapes sector: **access to finance for youth, negative perception of agriculture/landscapes, reform of the education system and access to capacity development for young professionals.**

To kick off the GLFCOP19 Youth discussions, and based on our findings above, young people were invited to share their suggestions [online](#), for possible ACTION to tackle these challenges. We wanted to hear concrete examples, remedies, and what young people were doing to overcome their hurdles.

79 contributions were provided by 18 members, mainly from Africa but also from Asia, Europe and the Caribbean.

The discussions brought an additional aspect to the communiqués' review, to explain the limitations young people in agricultural development face: Agriculture is seen as a sector of last resort, both by the government and citizens, with a severe lack of recognition for farmers. Also, there is a gap between the parents' and youth's generations, in knowledge and the recognition of youth's role in the sector. Rural migration was also stressed due to the lack of the government support through pro-youth policies.

7 key solutions were identified:

1. Generating more advocacy and awareness about agricultural, landscapes and youth issues, among young people and other stakeholders.
2. Creating more opportunities in agriculture/landscapes approaches as the best way to promote the sector, among the youth.
3. Promoting entrepreneurship to boost opportunities in the sector.
4. Creating youth-tailored financing mechanisms.
5. Using the power of ICTs to inform about opportunities, build capacities and promote agriculture/landscapes approaches.
6. Breathing Agriculture/landscapes approaches as a personal, community and inter-generational value and culture.
7. Professionalizing agricultural/landscapes education at early ages.

The e-discussion outputs were brought into the GLFCOP19 youth session to nurture the discussions onsite and bring the input of those members who were not able to attend the conference. It enabled us to give a voice to a wider representation of young people. Moreover, these discussions on crucial youth issues are building the ground for further discussions and programs, with the aim to work towards long-lasting solutions to these challenges.



Youth are sometimes asked to provide their inputs into the big issues in the landscapes sector - including agriculture, forestry, fisheries, conservation, development, industry and climate change. However this input often stays on the side-lines and rarely influences the 'real' decisions that are being made.

We changed this by providing a platform to bring the youth voice to the [Global Landscapes Forum 2013](#) and by getting these insights concretely reflected in the conference's outcomes - see [CIFOR](#) and [YPARD's](#) event [here](#).

We trawled through youth communiqués from past events to find recurring themes. This was our chance to start from where we ended so many times before, and move into concrete plans and commitments. We took an action-oriented approach together and focused on building a youth supportive environment within the landscapes sector. We wanted to hear youth's opinion, experience, and suggestions for moving forward.

We identified four themes important to build a youth-supportive environment within the landscapes sector: **access to finance for youth, negative perception of agriculture/landscapes, reform of the education system, access to capacity development for young professionals.**

We now need effective strategies, including advocating for the policy support to create a place where they can happen.

To kick off the GLF Youth discussions, young people were invited to share their suggestions [online](#). Through the discussions, we wanted ACTION, and requested concrete examples, remedies, and what young people were doing to overcome their hurdles on the four **themes we identified as important to building a youth-supportive environment** within the landscapes sector.

79 contributions were provided by 18 members, mainly from Africa but also from Asia, Europe and the Caribbean.

The e-discussion outputs were brought into the youth session to nurture the discussions onsite and bring input of members who were not able to attend the conference, giving a voice to a wider group of young people.

Previous youth communiqués consulted include:

- *YPARD pre-conference youth session at GCARD2, 2012.*
- *A Call for Stronger Support for Youth Involvement in Agriculture and ICT (Communiqué) by CTA, 2011.*
- *"Youth in extension: are we making the most of our young assets?" Outcomes of YPARD and GFRAS e-discussions, 2011.*
- *"Factoring young voices to address critical challenges" YPARD's representatives' perspective on the CGIAR Science Forum, 2011.*



Big thanks to the contributors:

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The four **themes identified as important to build a youth-supportive environment** within the landscapes sector were:

1. Access to finance for youth. Youth are being told to create their own opportunities through entrepreneurship in these tough financial times, yet are often unable to obtain loans for start-up activities. Youth are unable to access finance without collateral or specific government initiatives to support them. Previous discussions have identified that a shift in policy is required and needs the support of governments and financial institutions.

2. Negative perception of agriculture/landscapes. Agriculture is too often seen as a poor and unattractive employment of last resort. Making agriculture modern and sexy has consistently come up in youth centred discussions. Suggestions include a stronger integration of ICTs, working on more attractive and potentially lucrative organic agriculture links, promoting farming as an income-generator, or broadening perspectives on agriculture as a wide range of jobs that do not exclusively involve getting your hands dirty. Showcase of success stories and role models, spotlights on existing funding and job opportunities in agriculture and having “Youth in Ag” social media rock stars are some of the **concrete initiatives** started towards fighting the negative picture of agriculture.

3. Reform of the education system. Parents often invest in education to get their children out of rural livelihoods and agriculture, and the education system does not provide strong coverage of the scope of the landscapes sector, with all the opportunities available. Recent studies report that tertiary and vocational institutions are not providing the skills and competencies necessary for young people to be a dynamic part of the landscapes sector. Curriculum reform is required, including inputs from a wide range of stakeholders. This also leads to the importance of internship opportunities.

4. Access to capacity development for young professionals. Young professionals feel they need more opportunities to build up their skill sets, largely in the ‘soft skills’. There is also a need for better integration of ICTs into the field. Mentorship, internships, capacity building trainings, and negotiating with employers and other organizations to give more chance to young people, were identified as ways to fill this gap.

Some questions for discussion were:

#1 How can we take concrete actions to improve youth access to finance?

#2 What actions can we put in place to tackle negative perceptions of youth working in agriculture or landscapes or to scale up what already exists -i.e. show-case-? Get creative with your ideas!

#3 How do we start to reform the agricultural education curriculum? What can you do to help improve it in your country?

Outcomes of the discussions

WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS?

The discussions brought some additional insights to the communiqué's review, to explain the limitations faced by young people in agricultural development.

Agriculture is seen as a sector of last resort, both by the government and citizens. There is little government investment in agriculture and a lack of definition and recognition of farmers' status. Furthermore, rural areas suffer rural youth exodus to cities. There is a lack of excitement about agriculture. Sometimes youth know how to farm but they don't have a passion for it because of their education and parents' desire for them to focus on other professions.

There is a gap between the parents' and youth's generations: a lack of balance between new technology and local knowledge, and obsolete information and techniques. A change is needed in curricula, to address the lack of information and improve access to basic tools for farmers to be innovative and to 'experiment'. Information is also required on practical agricultural applications so that children are better familiarized with the newest farming practices.

Furthermore, there is little involvement of youth in decision-making processes and agricultural initiatives which reduces any sense of ownership in the sector.

Reaching rural youth and ensuring their access to finance is a big issue and one that not many countries have managed effectively. There isn't enough help from the government for youth-led projects: governments do not support new projects and only support existing projects with collateral conditions. There are few established national youth policies to identify youth priorities and even fewer that understand and address their financial needs. A youth policy is an important start, in at least creating the political will, which could then be followed by specific programming and implementation.

Young people need to be more aware of available funding opportunities.

WHAT ARE THE SOLUTIONS?

#1 | Generating Advocacy and Awareness

Top awareness areas

1. Carry on strong "Agvocracy": only when people will be aware of the **(agricultural, landscapes and youth) problems** will they be able to work on solutions.

2. **Promote agriculture/landscapes approaches** among the youth.

3. Stress and build awareness about **youth issues** among stakeholders.

4. Share **concrete solutions** to youth issues in the sector to inform and empower people

5. Find ways to advocate for more **youth policies**, a first step to ensure that youth-oriented actions are implemented.

"Governments must first look at policies that lure the teenagers to love Agriculture, help them practice what they have loved." – Omoheim

6. Sensitize **local and national actors to give more space to youth's ideas and initiatives.**

"Responsible departments in organizations should be activated for supporting local youth ideas and initiatives. We should incite them for recognizing indigenous youth." – Wilson

"One of the best ways to solve a lot of these recurring issues is through agvocracy and promotion of agriculture as well as the problems that occur if they are not addressed. Many people including youth are simply unaware of the problems. Some may have solutions. Therefore, items such as the youth session and this blog post should continue to be written and shared so that the knowledge of the issue is present in the minds of all." – Keron, Trinidad and Tobago

Priority Actions

- Continuing to create awareness about the challenges youth face in the sector through youth sessions and blog posts/articles.

- Organizing youth as a stakeholders group, like YPARD, to get a voice, address their needs and take responsibility for their actions.

- Advocate for strong youth policies. - "They (youth) can mobilise themselves, find out whom to contact and start writing letters, emails and making appointments with members of the parliament. A mechanism for doing so would be useful.

"Youth Affairs ministries should be more transformational, more innovative and more proactive with the increasing global youth unemployment." – Gbadebo, Nigeria

"Young professionals need to represent an effective innovation platform just like YPARD in order for members to contribute with their expertise towards solving these problems." – Gbadebo, Nigeria

"Young Professionals have to work together by organizing themselves into cooperatives societies or small and medium enterprises." – Nestor, Cameroon

"We have YPARD and could see a good policy advocate organisation to partner with FANRPAN in Africa and others." – Courtney, Italy

Remaining questions

Who should undertake these actions and who would be the target group(s)?

Through which process(es) should these be conducted? Any concrete ideas?

How to up-scale these?

"We may raise a global campaign through YPARD's world-wide networks to call for an action of advocating for strong or/and new youth policies everywhere!" – Ariel, Benin

"Young people must be in permanent relation with their parliamentarians for the policy definition for the youth participation in the public affair and the development." – Prince, Congo

"Young people should create partnerships with several networks that can support their causes at the high level." – Ariel, Benin

Outcomes of the discussions

#2 | Creating more opportunities in agriculture

- **Recognise farmers' status.**

"Farmer" must be considered as a profession with its own deontology. – Nestor

- **Direct cooperation among stakeholders in the value chain.**

"Value-chain must be better organized." – Nestor

"We need to mobilize youth organizations, identify youth issues in the value chain, and where capacities could have a positive impact in order to train and encourage them to network with other young people." – Peter

- **Get young people involved in the design of initiatives and decision making which represent more interesting activities and ensure their full involvement.** Help young people present their own ideas as youth in their countries.

- **Give more land, investment and access to advisory services to youth and women.**

"The best way to improve agricultural productivity is to invest more in the sector and in those (youth and women) who produce more than 70% of food production as they have no means to invest in their own agri-business."

– Nestor

- **Invest more in the agricultural sector.**

"With more investment, people will know that the agricultural sector offer more business and employment opportunities and that will get them more involved."

– Nestor

See discussions 1, 2, 3, annex 1, for more input.

#3 | Promoting entrepreneurship

- **Mobilize stakeholders to create awareness on the possibilities related to start-ups.**

"Thanks to the actions of various networks and different NGOs on the ground, there is a sort of rise in conscience among youth which is now willing to transform their ideas in concrete start-ups," – Ariel

"It's necessary to know how to create start-ups for young people in order to give them a possibility to generate benefits." – Sokhna

- **Create youth units to strengthen their strategic plans and Business Plans.**

"It is important for us young people to unite us around platform through which we will present the strategic plans and clear business plan and measurable to mobilize funding better, but for this we need the support and training necessary" – Blondel

- **Encourage public-private partnerships.**

"Some projects in Cameroon are both managed by private micro finance and public institutions. The mission is to train young professionals in the agribusiness model and prepare a good agri-project for funding." – Nestor

"It is high time for governments, private sectors and other stakeholders to pool energies and resources together to establish a one-stop centre for youth development and access to finance." – Gbadebo

See discussion 4, annex 1, for more input.

"The responsible department tells the youth to get involved into entrepreneurial activities while knowing that young people themselves lack capital for initiating their activities. Set up policies from financial institutions according to the country." – Raheem, Tanzania

#4 | Creating youth-tailored financing mechanism

- **Create micro financing systems for youth.**

"Agricultural banks are often not accessible to young people. It is then necessary to create micro credit bank for youth." – Sokhna

"Existing successful micro financing schemes should be tailored to the peculiar needs and constraints of youth, and piloted as agricultural and rural financing schemes" – Gbadebo

- **Address financial issues through policy adjustment** that shall permit youth groups to access the capital from financial institutions without collateral conditions of two years business operation.

"The responsible organization either national or international is the one that should resolve this through fund provision for those start-up youth projects." – Raheem

See discussions 5&6, annex 1, for more input.

"We need to enable youth financially to motivate and increase their outputs and returns so that they can appreciate agriculture the more." – Peter

#5 | Using the power of ICTs

- **Capacity building in ICTs for improved information and accessing opportunities in agriculture/landscapes approaches.**

"We need to improve the use of ICTs and get updates about funding opportunities." – Ariel

"Innovative financing options via the adoption of ICTs (e.g. Mobile Money Transfer and Google Farmer) should be promoted, particularly, initiatives that enhance the youth access to financial services." – Gbadebo

- **Showcase models through ICTs and Extension Services** that would incite the youth to participate into agricultural /landscapes initiatives.

"Trying to get these messages heard on a much wider and mainstream level is what we need, as well as working across different areas of expertise will help us strengthen this; implementing ICT it is very important for youth to be widely connected with all stakeholders" – Courtney

"We must show youth that there are opportunities in agriculture by highlighting success stories of young people in agriculture, as it can be a click for many young people" – Sokhna

"ICT should be used as a powerful tool by the graduates to enlighten the rural youth about opportunities in agriculture. 'Youth influencing Youth.' I feel this as the one best way" – John

- **More information dissemination through websites and social media, on competitions, fellowships and grants, in several languages, is a must.**

See discussions 7 & 8, annex 1, for more input.

"YPARD and other youth platforms must make sure of a good linguistic accessibility first and should provide services optimized at least in French and Spanish in addition to English." – Sokhna, Senegal

Outcomes of the discussions

#6 Agriculture: a personal, community and inter-generational value and culture

- **Involve young people in ag from primary school.**

“Train them to cultivate since they are little so that they will come up with interesting ideas when they will be already teenagers” – Ariel.

“Reform should start at basic level even in primary school. Young pupils have to know that agriculture is the key sector of economy, that agriculture is the only sector able to feed the whole population.” – Nestor.

- **Youth and adults work together to cultivate the inheritance of sustainable management practices.**

“My work’s challenge is how to prepare and strengthen youth to inherit from adults a sustainable forest management (Community forest). Now my project helps to create a space for youth groups as target to share and learn together” – Ariel.

“Today youth are active in different spheres of the national life, have skills and energy to bring the change in partnership with elder people for the change that they wish to see in the community” – Prince.

- **Create ties between young people and their communities.**

“Teach them not only about agriculture, but also about natural resources, social and local knowledge in order to create ties between young people and their communities.” – Ariel.

“Through different activities youth can be involved in natural resources sector, vocational training, community work, biodiversity conservation field, environmental conservation and tree planting activities.” – Prince.

#7 Professionalizing agricultural education at early ages

- **Involve stakeholders in the education sector.**

“Involve all the stakeholders (students, farmers, agro-dealers, researchers and policy makers) in the education sector to help come up with a curriculum/syllabus” – Christine.

“NGO’s that work with educating children and people living in rural areas have to work together in approaching the multinationals and roping them into action” – Swapna.

- **Curricula change for more practical experience and at an early age.**

“The subjects that are taught should focus on practical applications rather than mere theoretical concepts. Children should be taught about solar energy, water conservation, eco-friendly concepts and entrepreneurship as subjects (part of extra-curricular activities) and in rural areas where agriculture is the main occupation children should be made aware of better farming practices.” – Prince.

- **Free education for rural youth.**

“In some less developed areas, private schools should make it a point to at least include a few children from rural areas and provide them free education.” – Swapna.

- **Capacity development beyond schools.**

“We should give youth access to demonstration venues for the activities of their own interest.” – Roger.

- **Support young farmers in their current activities, by teaching/showing them how to increase their income notably through farming extension services.**

“For professionals already in the field, radical extension approach is required. Let’s tell the teenage population about the beauty of Agriculture and landscape sciences.” – Omosehin.

See discussions 9, 10, 11, annex 1, for more input.
Read the 5 case studies presented in annex 2

Annex 1: Discussions

DISCUSSION 1:

Raheem McMalemba’s case, Tanzania

Facilitator (YPARD): Thanks Raheem. How can we influence organizations for them to bring support to the youth? Why don’t they propose this currently and what incentives would we have to incite them to get started?

Raheem: The truth is that young people, especially the locals, lack the opportunity to present their ideas and initiatives. The organization is still working with official departments. I am advising that the organization should go to the grassroots’ levels to work with marginal youth through their groups. I refer to youth who have no space to talk and present their issues but who are innovative. I will give an example of my country. Some equipped companies are working with few youth despite they know it is not enough as the country is made up of more than 50% of young people. My emphasis is on influencing organizations to create the program that shall fish out local youth ideas and initiatives. It is very difficult to penetrate and present what I think on youth landscape concerns to the responsible departments in the country due to bureaucracy.

A platform like yours can be the incentive of stipulating the youth ideas and initiatives to present them to responsible organizations. This shall incite them to get started with local youth. I shall work on it and provide the success story of my project.

F.: Our weakness at YPARD, for example, being that all our representatives at local and national levels are volunteers with limited resources, narrows our power of action on local and national level - but we are working on it. The points you raise in these discussions would perhaps help us solicit more help from possible partners.

Raheem: I would be grateful if you could connect our initiative to the potential partners to bring Youth Landscape inspiration and action one step forward.

F.: One of the objectives of this kind of events is definitely about connecting people and initiatives in order to join forces and work together. We do hope concrete actions will come out from it and your contributions to these e-discussions is one of the first steps, by giving awareness about what you do, your insights and your needs to reach your objectives! Keep it up!



DISCUSSION 2:

Peter m Okoya, Uganda

Peter: Not all young people are down in their perceptions; a lot more has to be done in regards to access to modern agricultural inputs and mechanisms. Youth in Northern Uganda work so hard and make it a point to get what they need by sweating for it. They do attend agricultural conferences and workshops. We need to enable them financially to motivate and increase their outputs and returns so that they can appreciate agriculture more.

Facilitator (YPARD): Thanks for your input, Peter. That's very true: there are many young people passionate and involved in agriculture. They only need more resources. It has indeed been much emphasized in the past that they need access to finance, particularly. 'We need to enable them financially', you say. Who is the 'we'? What can 'we' do concretely for this to happen? What can you do towards this, and with the support of whom? Thanks a lot!

Peter: The problem is in the speeches of decision makers. We don't know who is supposed to take action. The question is also how. In Senegal, financing for agricultural development is made in partnership with the government. Even if young people are taken into account in the agreements, reality on field is different. Young people don't have access to information on existing funding opportunities. Also, they don't trust governments. In order to support the youth through concrete agricultural initiatives, we must dialog with youth directly and give them the financial dispositive they need.

We should mobilize youth organizations; identify youth issues in the value chain, and where capacities could have a positive impact. Train them, get them responsible and encourage them to network with other young people. Ensure good information dissemination. Trust the youth and enable them to build a career in agriculture. For this, cooperation must be direct.

DISCUSSION 3:

Supaporn, Indonesia

Facilitator: So, do young people actually enjoy working in organic farming?

Supaporn: Sure, because they can get income and stay at home with family. More happy and take their life with self-sufficient. I will mention one case from MaeTha community in Chiang Mai, Northern of Thailand. Five MaeTha youth leaders tried to do organic farming same with their parents but they tried to find a different way to market. They used CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) direct customer in Chiang Mai city. My point is about developing agriculture, integrating knowledge and finding alternative ways. And when I asked MaeTha community leader what do you think about 'sustainability'? He said sustainability for him means preparing the next generation to inherit a better world.

F: That's great to know! We hear so much of the opposite - young people always wanting more and more.

Supaporn: To tackle negative perception, more investment should be oriented towards the agricultural sector. But also, all governments should define the main status of farmers. 'Farmer' must be considered as profession with its deontology. Value-chain must be better organized with operational inter-professionals organization. If all these are done, people will know that agricultural sector offer more business and employment opportunities. These can let them more involve.

DISCUSSION 4:

Sokhna Gaye, Senegal

Sokhna: It's necessary to know how to create start-ups for young people in order to give them a possibility to generate benefits. Indeed, young people are afraid because they do not know where they should start or which funds they should get.

In order to support youth within their engagement in agriculture it's necessary to address young people directly and make available to them the necessary financial resources.

Facilitator (YPARD): Who exactly should be addressing young people? In the same way, who should help them to empower themselves and how? Who should make sure of the good flow of information and how? Who will help them to create start-ups? Who will help them gain confidence and know where to start from? Let's try to identify who is 'we'.

Sokhna: I'm thinking about donors, financial institutions and policymakers. In fact, young people who have had success in agriculture are those who should be on the spotlight for 2 reasons. 1 Show policymakers, donors, etc., that they can have confidence in the willingness of young people and their commitment and dedication to ensure agricultural development. 2. Contact young people and show them that it is possible to succeed in agric. For start-ups: youth leaders, policy makers, financial institutions. Through social networking, competitions, fellowships and grants. For the smooth flow of information, youth platforms e.g. YPARD must make sure of a good linguistic accessibility first.

F: +1! I'm not sure I see the concrete approach to educate financial institutions, funders, etc., though. How can we open a dialogue with them and make sure they take action? I've got the impression that many potential supporters are okay with the idea that young people need support, but they do not take commitment so far. How to ensure concrete actions on their part?

Yes, you're absolutely right. YPARD and other platforms should provide services optimized at least in French and Spanish in addition to English. Lack of resources (human and financial) is a brake.

Sokhna: I think it is imperative that young leaders take the first step. To open the dialogue, we young people must have the tact and intelligence to bring us closer to these donors and encourage to propose concrete actions and follow up on these contacts. Young leaders have to be proactive!

Besides, you say that 'lack of human resources is an obstacle in that.' How to fill this gap?

F: Totally agree with you! 'Tact and intelligence.' - what about this? Is this something that young people demonstrate or are these soft skills they need to develop? And how?

Ah, very good question. Volunteering, internships are one thing but I think for own coordination of large groups, it takes full-time, and when said full-time probably means finance. So we go back to the research funding that is either a tough work."

Sokhna: "Just by the same way as Marina, 'there are many young people passionate and involved in agriculture.' I say yes, but not enough! So, what can we (the youth already involved in agriculture, in this case) do to show to youth that there are opportunities in agriculture? Those who have not a current employment tell that 'We want to act in agriculture but we don't know how and we have not any resources for starting up.' We must highlight success stories of young people in agric. It's very important and it can be the 'click' for many young people.



And we need to understand where the needs of young people are heavier and need to be taken seriously! And we must raise our voices and be heard and understood by donors and agricultural stakeholders. Donors have to work directly with young people without governments. We need to get donors to work closely with young people but they will need to be convinced by young people as well, then we have to be the voices of youth.

Agricultural banks are often not accessible to young people. It is then necessary to create a micro credit bank for youth.

Facilitator: Thumbs up! Any idea on innovate or impactful ways to go beyond our current 'showcase of success stories'? Any idea on how we can raise our voice with more effective impact? How can we influence the creation of micro credit tailored for the youth?

Courtney: Also agree, Sokhna! Trying to get these messages heard on a much wider and mainstream level is what we need. This is where we need some young communications experts to give us additional insights! Working across different areas of expertise will help us strengthen this. Any communicators out there with additional suggestions?

DISCUSSION 5:

Nestor Nguouambé, Cameroon

Nestor: Concerning the point of **financial institutions**, most of them are private institutions operating under a capitalistic economic model, meaning that profit comes before social issue. All stakeholders must be involved, as you mentioned, by bringing some facilities that could lead young people to meet the main conditions imposed by these institutions.

To do so, public-private partnership must be encouraged as it was successfully done in Cameroon. Here, some projects are both managed by private micro finance institutions (i.e. la Mutuelle Communautaire de Croissance) and public governmental institutions like the Youth ministry, the Agriculture ministry, the Youth Employment Fund, etc.

The mission is to train young professionals for **agribusiness model** and prepare a good agri-project for funding. Youth with similar projects are sometimes a group within a common initiative group, cooperative society or small business enterprise. So relevant projects are selected by government agencies and presented to financial institutions with which they have already signed a MoU or convention for immediate funding. The main responsibilities of financial institutions are to respect the terms of partnership and send one of their personnel during the of agri-project's conception phase to better explain how funds will be reimbursed.

Those projects give more young people the opportunity to be involved in agricultural sector in spite of the fact that there are some threats like embezzlement, favoritism, etc.

DISCUSSION 6:

Gbadebo Odularu, Ghana/Nigeria

Some strong ideas on concrete mechanisms to support the youth financially - Are the different stakeholders ready to move ahead with these? What needs to be done for these excellent ideas to be exploited and put in practice? What can we do, as young professionals for this to happen?

Gbadebo: During the [FARA 6th AASW](#), some of the recommendations that were articulated during the "**promoting access to rural finance for enhanced agricultural productivity in Africa**" side event were:

1. Innovative financing options via the adoption of ICTs (e.g. Mobile Money Transfer and Google Farmer) should be promoted, particularly, initiatives that enhance the youth access to financial services.
2. Existing successful micro financing schemes should be tailored to the peculiar needs and constraints of youth, and piloted as agricultural and rural financing schemes.

It is high time that this finance issue is held head-on, rather than as a passer's by challenge. If industrialization is difficult to achieve, countries should establish 'Bank of Industry - BOI'; if commerce appears problematic, a Bank of Commerce should be established instead; if residential units are in short supply, a mortgage bank should be established; if agricultural backwardness is being experienced, then an agricultural development bank should be created; and this goes also for other sectors like petroleum or energy, ICTs, infrastructures (road, marine, air, etc.).

Rather than adopting a piece-meal approach in solving the problem, that is, rather than having youth/agric finance departments or committees within other programmes or initiatives, it is high time for governments, private sectors and other stakeholders to pool energies and resources together to establish a one-stop centre

for youth development and access to finance. This centre should cater for the total needs of the youth but the capacity strengthening as well as the access to finance components should be addressed very critically. Though some Youth Affairs ministries could have been doing this, I think they have to be more transformational, more innovative and more proactive with this responsibility, especially with the increasing global youth unemployment which could be a blessing if well utilized, or cursed if it is abused.

I think the different stakeholders are willing and ready to put these ideas into action. More importantly, these ideas or policy advices would be workable and achievable through the concerted efforts of all the stakeholders. In addition, young professionals need to represent an effective innovation platform just like YPARD in order for members to contribute their expertise towards solving these problems. This is the first step in the right direction towards solving the problems.

**DISCUSSION 7:****John, India**

John: Promoting ICT among rural youth through final year agriculture under graduates students. In Indian State Agriculture Universities during the final year of course work, we undergo the village stay program (RAWEP-Rural Awareness Work Experience Programme). During this programme, ICT should be used as a powerful tool by the graduates to enlighten the rural youth on opportunities in agriculture. 'Youth influencing Youth.' I feel this as the one best way.

Facilitator (YPARD): Thanks John! My fear sometimes is that by promoting "too much" ICTs among the youth they strictly focus on ICTs-related careers and forget about all the other cool aspects of the ag. sector. Land management, science and research, policy debates and strategies, etc. What is your feeling about this? Would that be possible that promoting ICTs have their pros and cons in line of promoting agriculture and its broad diversity of jobs/activities? In addition, do you think efforts on promoting agriculture should be rather delivered through local/national activities or global activities; or both on a 50-50 share?

DISCUSSION 8:**Ariel Djomakon, Benin**

Ariel: Improve the use of ICTs and get updates about funding opportunities. One area of my project tried to do local curriculum with community leaders and schools. The lesson learned was that a project must work with youth since they are very little because when they grow up and become teenagers they have many interesting ideas to contribute with. So, definitely, they should start cultivating since they are young.

My work's challenge is how to prepare and strengthen youth to inherit from adults a sustainable forest management (Community forest). Now my project helps to create a space for youth groups as target to share and learn together.

Facilitator: So, your point would be that agriculture should be taught at early stages to children. Is that correct? This came up a lot on previous discussions as well. Does it ensure that young people migrate less to cities, I wonder? They may know how to farm, but do they like it more? On your third point, do you face inter-generational challenges? Which kind of challenges do you face exactly? Is it that parents don't want or don't have the time to prepare the youth? Or else?

Ariel: By learning not only on agriculture but also on natural resources, social and local knowledge, young people would know themselves and their community better. Of course, some of them will move to the cities, we can't take all of them and make them stay in the community. But we can prepare some knowledge for them and create ties with the community.

F.: For third point I mean they want some technical support/methods/process to work with youth because there is a gap between parents' and youth's generations. So how we prepare them to take meaningful responsibility in their communities and balance technology and local knowledge?

DISCUSSION 9:**Swapna, India**

Swapna: The current education system in India appears to have failed in its ability to reform human behaviour and failed to achieve its objective. Literacy levels have increased but still there are so many people in India that cannot read and write. They are exploited and underpaid and live a hand to mouth existence. On the other hand, those who can manage to get their children educated have turned them into competitive machines that need to produce grades. The focus now is on quantity and not quality.

There has to be a fundamental change in the way educators and parents perceive education. The focus should be to install healthy competition and concentrate on quality rather than quantity. The subjects that are taught should focus on practical applications rather than mere theoretical concepts. Children should be taught about solar energy, water conservation, eco-friendly concepts and entrepreneurship as subjects (part of extra-curricular activities) and in rural areas where agriculture is the main occupation children should be made aware of better farming practices.

The governments concept on that every child under the age of 14 should get free education has remained only a concept, cause in reality there are no proper schools, teachers, basic amenities like toilets, school books and free meal a day scheme that put this concept to practice and attract children to school. Hence, they end up in the hands of people who mend money out of it.

The government's with all their rot have failed. All the corporates should come together and allocate a few days in a month to this kind of development activities where each employ can pick his area of interest from a set of assigned activities and educate an identified group so that at least these groups learn to read and write. Private schools should make it a point to at least include a few children from rural areas and provide them free education. We will have to make a beginning somewhere.



F.: How can we - young people - make this change in terms of perception on education, content of curricula and support from different stakeholders? How do we bring forward the number of ideas discussed here in these e-discussions into concrete actions?

Swapna: From the corporates point of view the NGO's that work with educating children and people living in rural areas have to work together in approaching the multinationals and roping them into action. Similarly from the schools point of view the study boards should be roped in to make it mandatory for all private schools to adopt a few kids and provide free schooling. There are many groups working independently in a small way but if somehow we can bring these groups together to work together as a team in collaboration then at least we can make a beginning. It is easier said than done but not impossible.

DISCUSSION 10:

Omosehin Olamilekan (Nigeria), Nestor, Raheem

Omosehin: So sad, in the West African region where we have great Agricultural potential and wonderful youth strength, an ever growing market for food. Unbelievable, we still have an education curriculum teaching our teenagers. Lack of inadequacy? No. Governments must first look at policies that lure the teenagers to love Agriculture, help them practice what they have loved. I tell you, knowledge will increase. For professionals already in the field, radical extension approach is required. Let's tell the teenage population about the beauty of Agriculture and landscape sciences.

Facilitator (YPARD): Hi Omosehin, thanks for your input. How can we (you, me, us, particularly young people themselves) can influence these activities you raise as solution for better involvement of young people in natural resources sector? Any concrete idea?

Nestor: Change in curricula must begin at primary school; young children must deal with agricultural reality as far as they grow. Youth of today will be the leaders of tomorrow and at that moment they can be able to propose good agri policy that meets the basic need of its population.

F.: Hi Ngouambé, thanks for your input. Please don't forget to mention the issue you are referring to and suggest some hints on how this can be put in place (who to take part, how etc.). Thanks!

Nestor: Enhancing youth voice's in Agricultural Research for development in Cameroon. Last June the 29th, Young Cameroonian decided to meet in national youth Council bureau to reflect on two issues: Are we making most for youth issue in Agricultural Research for Development for Cameroon emergence by 2035? And are youths involved within the strategic policy for agriculture and rural development? This consultation

DISCUSSION 11:

Christine Uluma

was facilitated by YPARD-Cameroon team. Read more here: <http://agrotic4dev.blogspot.com>

Raheem: Incredible. I suggest to partner with me or our Organization to conduct in my previous University of Agriculture in Tanzania after finishing in Cameroon.

Nestor: OK Raheem, I have no objection to partner with you. I am just waiting for you when you will be ready.

Christine: "Involve all the stakeholders (students, farmers, agro-dealers, researchers and policy makers) in the education sector to help come up with a curriculum/syllabus. Include them all through workshops, seminars, conferences and other interactive sessions so that all are on the same platform for real change to be experienced in the agricultural sector.

Facilitator: Good point, Christina. Do you know any workshop, seminars, conference etc. already existing towards this purpose? Any example? At which level should we operate on this? Are you familiar with these debates and activities for curricula changes? Maybe someone could be interested in this course: www.recoftc.org/site/resources/Call-for-Applications-Practitioners-Training-on-Strategic-Planning-Approaches-for-Good-Natural-Resource-Governance.php

Annex 2: Case studies



CASE 1:

Prince Wabilima, Democratic Republic of Congo

Case Studies, at the difference of “discussions” do not address a specific theme. They bring a bigger picture on a situation.

Prince: Jeunes Volontaires de Grands Lacs pour l'Environnement is working with indigenous youth for Biodiversity conservation, environmental management. You can play a key role in natural resources sector if politics engage them through training, finance support and policies that promote the youth participation in the national life.

Facilitator: Thanks Prince. Let me quote you: 'You can play a key role in natural resources sector if politics would engage them through training, finance support and policies that promote youth participation in the national life.' Agree. How do we solicit politics to offer these opportunities you mention to the youth?

Prince: Marina, thank you for quote. We must consider the notion of accountability in the process. Youth are the important pillar of the society, and then young people have the right for education for their development. We must organize and unite as one person to claim our rights and contribute to the implementation of some policies in advantage of the youth. Youth can lead some projects, contact the local representatives who are at the parliament and who interact with politics also they are editing laws and policies that can impact on youth development. Young people must interact and collaborate with parliamentarians to influence politics.

Young people must be corporate in 'press ion group' to influence their participation in local policy and development. To create partnership with several networks that can support their causes at the high level. Today youth are active in different spheres of the national life, have skills and energy to bring the change in partnership with elders for the change that they wish to see in the community. This is my contribution for the topic.

F: Thanks, Prince, and it is a very good one! :) Is what you describe here i.e. youth liaising with parliament,

what is happening in your country? Thanks, that's very inspiring and down-to-earth!

Prince: Particularly in Democratic Republic of Congo, young people are a component for local elections, for accountability for their votes; young people must be in permanent relation with their parliamentarians for the policy definition for the youth participation in the public affair and the development.

F.: Thank Prince for this good example. I agree that youth must organize themselves and work together with parliament.

Prince: What we observed in our Continent is not good to say concerning the management of our parliamentarians. In my country, each parliament has a total annual budget of 10,000 USD to sponsor local projects in its locality. But after 5 years, we count no project implemented among the many one submitted as proposals. To me, I think the best thing to do is to be autonomous, because today within the government, politic blind policy.

Through different activities youth can be involved in natural resources sector, vocational training, community work, biodiversity conservation field, environmental conservation and tree planting activities. You can see the activities that we are leading in Democratic Republic of Congo to involve young people in natural resources sector.

CASE 2:

Prince Wabilima, Democratic Republic of Congo.

Prince: In the mining areas of the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the soils are of volcanic origin for the most part, also found in forest areas, which are fertile and the rest of agriculture is practiced and contributing enormously to the national GDP.

However, it is quite clear that the youth is not interested in this feeding activity of the community, young people engage in activities that only they CONSIDER profitable, including itinerant trading or various products from China has the illegal mining operation, which makes the low productivity agriculture.

The trend today in the mining areas of Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo is the vitamin for some children, and low food productivity, in the sense that agriculture is abandoned.

It is the duty of young people in these different disturbances to awaken and take control of the agricultural sector and into more lucrative activity than the exploitation of minerals, but also agriculture nourishes the community.

Also, it is a signal that it is important to raise awareness, educate and train young people to get them to abandon the informal mining sector to the agricultural sector, which is now the entire planet faces the problems of food insecurity and climate disturbances.

I think the young Congolese are catalysts for change and can bring their knowledge, strength to boost the national and global local agricultural sector.

Personally, I am trying to prepare a project for young people practicing artisanal mining to return to the community then they fit in the agricultural sector and this will require the access to credits to start with the best of cooperative young farmers, this comes after

our project on the involvement of the youth in the fight against climate change. This project is already a success and we were able to train young indigenous pygmies on the establishment of nurseries, agroforestry and climate change. Every young person has been able to establish an agroforestry field for improvement agricultural production and food security.

It is time that the youth is involved in agricultural issues at this time of global food crisis and climate derangement, our future is in jeopardy and everyone knows that today the world is that the younger' was in the past centuries and the future depends on what we do for its durability. The politics should involve more youth in this critical issue of the moment. I know youth is already something for sustainable agriculture, and must be supported in this view.

Annex 2: Case studies

CASE 3:

Kasaija Rogers, Uganda.

Kasaija: I talk from the viewpoint of rural youth in Uganda, where I was born, bred, raised and now practice agriculture from. 86.7% of Ugandans are rural, as per 2010 projections. I see my age mates who remained in the village. They are now married and/or have kids and have to fend for themselves. They did not get much with school, having dropped out mainly at Primary school level. They barely speak English and their use of mobile phones is mainly limited to phone calls and sending simple messages in the local languages.

They have no perception of internet, apps or web based social media. Their main source of information is the FM radio. Their entertainment is football at the village playground and watching foreign football leagues at the village cinema/video/Digital TV hall. They treasure the village market days as the opportunity to carry out petty trade and meet more people, as well as drink their savings from the subsistence agriculture they practice. That is rural Uganda for me, you and whoever cares to listen. It is the reality, not fantasy.

Positive: These youth practice some economic activity; agriculture (above 90%), in one form or the other. They may not do it by choice, but it is what is available. The previous generation was generous enough to leave some land for the current youth to inherit, let alone buy. In some cases, landless youth rent land for subsistence agriculture. In order to help them, we have to work with what they already do, and have acquired substantial experience in. They are more willing to accept improvement to what they do, than accept an entirely new economic activity with all associated risks, if such exist.

Illustration: My brother Tonny has grown maize on the 3 hectares his father allocated him, since he dropped out of school at age 18. He is now 30, with a wife and

four children. His average yield per hectare (same as the Ugandan average), is 1.8Tonnes. At Uganda Shilling 500 to the kilo, he earns Shs. 900,000 per season, total Shs. 1,800,000 for the two seasons in Uganda (USD720 per year, USD60 per month) to look after his six member family (USD 0.30 per family member per day).

In contrast, average yield per hectare for maize in the developed world is 8.5 Tonnes per hectare. If we could provide my brother Tonny with the skills and inputs to raise his maize production from 1.8tonnes to 6 tonnes per hectare (just 75% of what it is in the developed world), we would have increased his household income five times from USD60 per month to USD 300 per month). Such would be by far a bigger dream than he has ever had.

Way Forward: The rural youth involved in agriculture do not necessarily know that they can do what they do and do it better, using the same available space, but with better efficiency. This is a skill they can best learn by seeing. 'What I see... I remember'. We should give youth access to demonstration venues for the activities of their own interest.

If a youth is engaged in maize growing, then we should take this youth to a maize farm that has best farming practice. If a youth has interest in vegetable growing, we should take the youth to a vegetable grower. In this way, the youth simply improves on what is already in existence. Thereafter, we provide the requisite material items, where the individual is financially incapable of providing, to ensure that best practice acquired is put into use.

CASE 4:

Ariel Djomakon, Benin.

Ariel: Few years ago, we were talking about the way to involve youth in different sectors of development in the broad sense, but especially in agriculture. I have to say that thanks to the actions of various networks and different NGOs on the ground, there is a sort of rise in conscience among youth which is now willing to transform their ideas in concrete start-ups!

According to my personal experience and what I see in my area, we need to improve our use of ICTs and get updates about funding opportunities, and then check which of them are suitable for us or are consistent with our vision and goals. Having said this, this is not the first key to be explored.

The marginalized youth is largely the rural youth, including youth of rural exodus, which for instance cannot access easily to ICTs because of the lack in their areas and/or the incapacity of use when it is available. My predecessors in their comments mention the need to call upon international organizations and Governments in some cases, but that is where the debate is! How will a Government facilitate youth access to finance, knowing that it has not even established a national youth policy in order to identify its priorities?

I think that there is an urgent need to advocate for this policy issue at national level. And while waiting the ins and outs of this matter, we should simultaneously ensure young people to strengthen their capacities in use of ICTs

Annex 2: Case studies



CASE 5:

Nestor Ngouambé, Cameroon.

Emphasis on practical example carried out in Cameroon to answer the three questions.

Nestor: 1. Youth and women are those whose benefit less from some key rural services that could lead to the improvement of their potential in agricultural sector. They lack access to land, finance, extension and advisory services). The best way to improve agricultural productivity is to invest more in the sector and in those (youth and women) who produce more than 70% of food production as they have no means to invest in their own agri-business.

So I think that in order to facilitate financial investment, partnership (private-private) among young professionals must be encouraged. They have to work together by organizing themselves into cooperatives societies or small and medium enterprises. Sustainable and valuable projects must be elaborated. Finally public policy must consider all these aspects.

2. For example in Cameroon, the Youth ministry has various projects which give some facilitation to young people to access finance for their activities. We can count for example the «Projet d'appui aux jeunes exploitants ruraux et urbains-PAJER-U» (Project supporting young farmers in rural and urban areas). In this project, both educated and non-educated youth are trained to small agri-business enterprises. After 3-6 months of training, all are asked to present a business plan of their project for funding. In most cases, all those who are trained got access to finance. National employment funds with other micro finance institutions are responsible for funding.

We can also present the "Projet d'insertion et d'Appui aux jeunes agriculteurs -PIAJA (Project for insertion and support to young farmers) carried out by the Ministry of Agriculture. Where all young farmers who have at least land properties or properties certificates can submit their projects for funding. In the same vision, this ministerial department also has the "Projet

de développement de la microfinance rural -PADMIR (Project for the development of rural micro-finance) that supports small micro-finance institutions working with young farmers in rural areas.

3. Due to changing contexts (climate change, food insecurity, poverty, etc.) coupled with transformation of agriculture, there is not a good adequacy between the actual curricula and the basic needs for economic growth. Reform should start at basic level even in primary school. Young pupils have to know that agriculture is the key sector of economy, that agriculture is the only sector able to feed the whole population."

In Cameroon there are specific schools which train young people of primary school on agriculture production. At the end of their training, they hold living certificate, baccalaureate in agriculture, agro-forestry, etc. Some private institutions like Soughtout Cameroon trained pupil from primary school to food security strategy and biogas production with household waste.

A program for renovation of agriculture professional training (AFOP) experienced since two years new agriculture skills for rural extension and advisory services. So this year the first batch of agro pastoral advisor and agro pastoral technician was setting up. All the three students I supervised are now operates as project manager in medium agriculture enterprise in Cameroon.

This kind of renovation and change in curricula needs a lot of time and financial means to be reality. Cameroon thanks this performance to the French Development Agency (AFD).

Facilitator: Thanks, Ngouambe for all these very relevant and positive examples that show that things do happen for supporting the youth - and can be

replicated. Do you have some key challenges to raise, on which the youth (and possible supporters) should carry on working, for more empowerment and capacity?

Nestor: I think there are some challenges we should work on. Youth curricula at basic level, land reform are not always benefiting the youth. Some have their own projects but lack land to put their ideas into concrete actions. Implementing ICT is another major challenge for rural youth, because lack of infrastructure does not facilitate their access to this milestone technology. It is not easy for them to be widely connected with all stakeholders (investors, traders, consumers, etc.). If we can get concrete solutions to these challenges, young professionals will express their full potential for food security, poverty alleviation, in brief, transforming Agriculture in Africa.

F.: Now the question is what can be the concrete solutions to tackle these challenges; what can we do?

Nestor: Young farmers must first organize ourselves. Networking and information sharing can let our voice risen up. It is easy for financial institutions for example to trust a group instead of an individual. It is the same for policy-makers; it is possible for them to take more into account similar problems of an organized person than an individual. In the end, if a group of young people has the same need for example in capacity building, decision makers can easily revise the academic curricula on the agricultural sector. This is why I appreciate for example the Agripreneur project implemented in Botswana college of Agriculture for the students of the 4th year where they can get funds to finance their business plans' elaboration as their graduation project."

