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HARNESSING THE POTENTIAL FOR RURAL YOUTH-INCLUSIVE AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS LIVELIHOODS: A LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

There is limited evidence on what works best to support and empower youth within agri-food systems, especially as related to improving their livelihood opportunities. In order to help close this evidence gap, the authors are conducting a multi-disciplinary analytic literature review to identify which agri-food system sectors are best suited to engage youth in sustainable livelihoods. Peer-reviewed empirical and analytic research relevant to the inclusion of rural youth in agri-food systems will be collected and analyzed to address two questions:

Q1. Are there youth-specific constraints to engaging in AFS in LMIC?

Q2. In LMIC, which areas of AFS are best suited to engage rural youth in the workforce and/or to improve their productive capacities as means to enhance their livelihoods?

Here we present the rationale for the study, methods and preliminary results for this study.

Key Words:

Rural youth, Agri-food systems, Economic development

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE^{1 2}

One-third of the total global population – approximately 2.3 billion people – are youth ages 15-34 ([PopulationPyramid.net, 2018](#)), who are the focus of this landscape analysis. Within this age group, rural youth have increased in absolute numbers but this group has decreased proportionally as compared to urban youth ([van der Geest, 2010](#)). And although the actual number of rural youth has increased worldwide, some regions have experienced a substantial decrease in this population as compared to other regions of the world. For example, the number of rural youth in Latin America has decreased over the past two decades as compared to Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), where the number of rural youth has significantly increase (ibid.).

At present, 80 percent of youth live in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC), where youth unemployment and under-employment is high ([ILO, 2016](#)). In SSA, 11 million new jobs will be needed annually for the next twenty years to meet the employment needs of youth ([British Council, 2014](#)). However, it is estimated that SSA’s formal job sector will generate only 25 percent of needed jobs for youth ([Kwame Yeboah, 2018](#)). As a result, it is expected that youth will continue to rely on a mix of economic activities in the informal sector and/or micro-entrepreneurship and self-employment, including on-farm, off-farm, and non-farm activities (ibid.; [Proctor, Blum & Feige, 2018a](#); [Mastercard Foundation, 2017](#)). On-farm and off-farm **agri-food systems (AFS)** currently employs the largest number of youth, and will remain a vital source of economic opportunity for young people – particularly in SSA. Importantly, AFS are under appreciated in terms of their abilities to generate youth employment and livelihoods opportunities, especially off-farm opportunities through value chains (e.g., processing, marketing, etc.). Young people are interested and engaged in AFS – particularly in “farming better and more sustainably rather than seeking a job in urban areas” ([Giuliani et al., 2017: 871](#)), but need support to succeed.

Youth engagement and empowerment is a priority for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), including the Bureau for Food Security (BFS) and Feed the Future (FTF). USAID’s policy on youth in development ([USAID, 2013](#)) includes two objectives to 1) “strengthen youth programming, participation and partnership in support of Agency development objectives” and 2) “mainstream and integrate youth issues and engage young people across Agency initiatives and operations” (ibid.). USAID’s expected outcomes from this policy are that: 1) “youth are better able to access economic and social opportunities, share in economic growth, live healthy lives, and contribute to household,

¹ This study was commissioned by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) - Bureau for Food Security (BFS).

² The primary author assumes responsibility for the contents of this research paper.

community, and national well-being”, 2) “youth fully participate in democratic and development processes, play active roles in peacebuilding and civil society, and are less involved in youth gangs, criminal networks, and insurgent organizations” and 3) “youth have a stronger voice in, and are better served by local and national institutions, with more robust and youth friendly policies” (ibid.).

Within the 2016 Global Food Security Strategy (GFSS), “youth empowerment and livelihoods” is identified as a cross-cutting intermediate result (CC IR 4). As Proctor and colleagues note, youth inclusion increases FTF outcomes by engaging “young men and women as actors in inclusive and sustainable agriculture-led economic growth (GFSS Objective I)” (Proctor, Blum & Feige, 2018a: 5), particularly given that “working-age youth are already important contributors to household livelihoods and resilience” (ibid: 6), and further supporting them will improve these outcomes (GFSS Objective II). Further, youth employment and engagement in AFS supports improved nutrition outcomes, especially of young women and children (GFSS Objective III) (ibid.; see also CFS, FAO, IFAD & WFP, 2015). These and other important FTF considerations on how to engage and empower youth in FTF programming are expanded upon in the two-volume *Project Design Guide for Youth-Inclusive Agriculture and Food Systems* (ibid.; Proctor, Blum & Feige, 2018b).

OBJECTIVE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Our objective is to conduct a landscape analysis to evaluate how best to **harness the potential for rural youth-inclusive AFS livelihoods in LMIC**. This landscape analysis will draw on the Social Ecological Model (SEM) (McLeroy, Bibeau, Steckler & Glanz, 1988; Rimer, Glanz & NCI, 2005) and New Institutional Economics (NIE) understandings about rural development (Ostrom, Schroeder & Wynne, 1993) for its analytic framework. Given the complexity of multi-level factors that impact the engagement of rural youth in AFS livelihoods, we use SEM to frame this analysis as it is well-suited for organizing and systematically analyzing data to understand complex, community-wide issues such as how to engage rural youth in AFS livelihoods. SEM includes two key concepts. First, multiple levels of influence both affect and are affected by individual behavior. Second, the social environment both shapes and is shaped by individual behavior. SEM includes five reciprocal domains of influence, including 1) individual domain, 2) interpersonal domain, 3) organizational/ institutional domain, 4) community-level domain, and 5) policy-level domain (see Table 1). We use NIE to examine the role of institutions on economic growth, infrastructure, and sustainable development in rural areas and how these – in turn – impact AFS livelihoods among rural youth in LMIC.

Table 1. Social Ecological Model and five Domains of Influence that enable or constrain rural youth-inclusive AFS livelihoods

<i>Domains</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Intrapersonal	Individual characteristics that influence behaviors that enable or constrain rural youth-inclusive AFS livelihoods (e.g., knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, practices)
Interpersonal	Interpersonal processes and primary groups that provide social identity, support, and role definition that enable or constrain rural youth-inclusive AFS livelihoods (e.g., family, friends, peers)
Organizational/ Institutional	Rules, regulations, policies, and organizational structures that enable or constrain rural youth-inclusive AFS livelihoods (e.g., religious organizations, farmer-based organizations, civic groups, credit/lending organizations, schools/educational organizations)
Community	Community and cultural norms that enable or constrain rural youth-inclusive AFS livelihoods (e.g., customary land tenure systems)
Policy	Local, regional, and national laws and policies that regulate actions that enable or constrain rural youth-inclusive AFS livelihoods (e.g., inheritance laws)

Adapted from McLeroy et al., 1988; Rimer et al., 2005.

For this landscape analysis, we will review selected informational sources related to factors that enable or constrain rural youth engagement in AFS livelihoods in LMIC. This landscape analysis is structured around the two subject areas of *opportunities* (i.e., enabling factors) and *constraints*. We will first identify *constraints* to rural youth-inclusive AFS livelihoods in LMIC. We will next identify *opportunities* for rural youth-inclusive AFS livelihoods in LMIC. The *constraints-opportunities* approach will allow us to produce a set of recommendations that harness the potential for rural youth-inclusive AFS livelihoods in LMIC. With this approach in mind, we will address the following research questions:

Q1. Are there youth-specific constraints to engaging in AFS in LMIC?

And how do those constraints differ by gender, age, socio-cultural, and enabling environment factors?

Q2. In LMIC, which areas of AFS are best suited to engage rural youth in the workforce and/or to improve their productive capacities as means to enhance their livelihoods?

And how can Feed the Future support the potential for rural youth-inclusive AFS livelihoods in LMIC?

We will analyze the results and present recommendations along with promising practices on ways to promote enabling factors and overcome constraints related to rural youth engagement in AFS livelihoods in LMIC.

METHODS

This landscape analysis will review publicly available works produced from 2008 through 2019 developed by well-known organizations that have conducted rural youth-oriented AFS interventions in LMIC. Inclusion criteria for informational sources, search strategy and key terms, timeframe, and geographic scope are discussed in detail below. In this landscape analysis, we define “rural youth-oriented AFS interventions in LMIC” as strategies that build upon the premise that young human capital in rural areas of LMIC is underdeveloped and thus lagging compared to young human capital in urban areas. These interventions aim at strengthening AFS locally and developing capacities among youth as means to improve their capacity to enhance their livelihoods. Examples include but are not limited to, *youth engagement in agricultural value chain* in multiple FTF sponsored countries, this is a series of interventions supported by USAID (USAID, 2016); the *rural youth mobility project in Tunisia and Ethiopia* supported by FAO (2018), and *youth agropastoral entrepreneurship promotion program in Cameroon* led by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD, 2014).

Geographic Scope

The countries selected for this landscape analysis are classified as either low-income or lower middle-income economies following the guidelines set forth by the World Bank, for which “low-income economies are defined as those with a GNI [gross national income] per capita, calculated using the World Bank Atlas method, of \$995 or less in 2017; lower middle-income economies are those with a GNI per capita between \$996 and \$3,895 (World Bank, 2019). In addition, each country included in our list has a 40 percent or larger rural population as of 2017, per World Bank indicators (World Bank, 2018). Our final list includes 66 countries from five global regions: Sub-Saharan Africa, East Asia and the Pacific, South Asia and the Middle East, Europe and Central Asia, and Latin American and the Caribbean.

Table 2. Country classification into **Sub-Saharan Africa** region by percent of rural population and by income category (N = 36)

Country	% Rural Population*	Economy**
Benin	53.23	Low-income economy
Burkina Faso	71.25	Low-income economy
Burundi	87.29	Low-income economy
Cameroon	44.22	Lower middle-income economy
Central African Republic	59.02	Low-income economy
Chad	77.14	Low-income economy
Comoros	71.21	Low-income economy
Congo, Dem. Rep.	56.12	Low-income economy
Cote d'Ivoire	49.67	Lower middle-income economy
Eritrea	77.81	Low-income economy
Ethiopia	79.69	Low-income economy

Ghana	44.59	Lower middle-income economy
Guinea	64.21	Low-income economy
Guinea-Bissau	57.05	Low-income economy
Kenya	73.44	Lower middle-income economy
Lesotho	72.27	Lower middle-income economy
Liberia	49.3	Low-income economy
Madagascar	63.48	Low-income economy
Malawi	83.29	Low-income economy
Mali	58.43	Low-income economy
Mauritania	47.18	Lower middle-income economy
Mozambique	64.54	Low-income economy
Niger	83.65	Low-income economy
Nigeria	50.48	Lower middle-income economy
Rwanda	82.88	Low-income economy
Senegal	53.26	Low-income economy
Sierra Leone	58.36	Low-income economy
Somalia	55.61	Low-income economy
South Sudan	80.65	Low-income economy
Sudan	65.63	Lower middle-income economy
Swaziland	78.68	Lower middle-income economy
Tanzania	66.95	Low-income economy
Togo	58.84	Low-income economy
Uganda	76.8	Low-income economy
Zambia	57.02	Lower middle-income economy
Zimbabwe	67.76	Low-income economy

(*) Source: World Bank. (2018). Rural Population Estimates. Available at

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS>

(**) Source: World Bank. (2019). World Bank Country and Lending Groups. Available at

<https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519>

The region of Sub-Saharan Africa includes 36 countries, of which 26 are classified as low-income economies and the remaining ten are classified as lower middle-income economies (see Table 2). The region of East Asia and the Pacific includes 11 countries, all of which are classified as lower middle-income economies (see Table 3). The region of South Asia and the Middle East includes ten countries, of which four are classified as low-income economies and the remaining six are classified as lower middle-income economies (see Table 4). The region of Europe and Central Asia includes six countries, of which one (Tajikistan) is classified as a low-income economy and the remaining five are classified as lower middle-income economies (see Table 5). The region of Latin American and the Caribbean includes three countries, of which one (Haiti) is classified as a low-income economy and the remaining two are classified as lower middle-income economies (see Table 6).

Table 3. Country classification into **East Asia and the Pacific** region by percent of rural population and by income category (N = 11)

Country	% Rural Population*	Economy**
Cambodia	77.02	Lower middle-income economy
Indonesia	45.34	Lower middle-income economy
Kiribati	46.74	Lower middle-income economy
Lao PDR	65.63	Lower middle-income economy
Micronesia, Fed. Sts.	77.39	Lower middle-income economy
Myanmar	69.68	Lower middle-income economy

Papua New Guinea	86.9	Lower middle-income economy
Philippines	53.32	Lower middle-income economy
Solomon Islands	76.71	Lower middle-income economy
Vanuatu	74.84	Lower middle-income economy
Vietnam	64.79	Lower middle-income economy

(*) Source: World Bank. (2018). Rural Population Estimates. Available at

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS>

(**) Source: World Bank. (2019). World Bank Country and Lending Groups. Available at

<https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519>

Table 4. Country classification into **South Asia and the Middle East** region by percent of rural population and by income category (N = 10)

Country	% Rural Population*	Economy**
Afghanistan	74.75	Low-income economy
Bangladesh	64.14	Lower middle-income economy
Bhutan	59.83	Lower middle-income economy
Egypt, Arab Rep.	57.29	Lower middle-income economy
India	66.4	Lower middle-income economy
Nepal	80.66	Low-income economy
Pakistan	63.56	Lower middle-income economy
Sri Lanka	81.62	Lower middle-income economy
Syrian Arab Republic	46.5	Low-income economy
Yemen, Rep.	63.98	Low-income economy

(*) Source: World Bank. (2018). Rural Population Estimates. Available at

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS>

(**) Source: World Bank. (2019). World Bank Country and Lending Groups. Available at

<https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519>

Table 5. Country classification into **Europe and Central Asia** region by percent of rural population and by income category (N = 6)

Country	% Rural Population*	Economy**
Georgia	41.77	Lower middle-income economy
Kosovo	61.8	Lower middle-income economy
Kyrgyz Republic	63.87	Lower middle-income economy
Moldova	57.44	Lower middle-income economy
Tajikistan	73.02	Low-income economy
Uzbekistan	49.45	Lower middle-income economy

(*) Source: World Bank. (2018). Rural Population Estimates. Available at

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS>

(**) Source: World Bank. (2019). World Bank Country and Lending Groups. Available at

<https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519>

Table 6. Country classification into **Latin America and the Caribbean** region by percent of rural population and by income category (N = 3)

Country	% Rural Population*	Economy**
Haiti	45.65	Low-income economy
Honduras	43.54	Lower middle-income economy
Nicaragua	41.7	Lower middle-income economy

(*) Source: World Bank. (2018). Rural Population Estimates. Available at

<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS>

(**) Source: World Bank. (2019). World Bank Country and Lending Groups. Available at

<https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519>

Informational Sources

Informational sources included in this landscape analysis will be English-language sources gathered by searching electronic databases and/or data repositories of the leading organizations, think tanks, and agencies working in the area of rural youth-inclusive AFS development. These primary and secondary sources will be evaluated for inclusion following guidelines set forth by University of California, Berkeley (2019). Sources may include grey literature, governmental publications, peer-reviewed journal articles, and trade literature and websites focused on rural youth in agriculture development. Due to the extensive nature of the literature found in this area of research and development, the sources on which the findings from this systematic review is based will seek to be comprehensive in scope (i.e., drawn from a variety of high quality and reputable sources) but does not claim to be exhaustive.

The list of sources we will initially explore for inclusion in the landscape analysis include:

ACDI/VOCA, Agrilinks, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), BRAC, CGIAR, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Chemonics, Columbia International Affairs Online (CIAO), Committee on World Food Security (CFS), DAI, Education Development Center (EDC), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), FHI 360, International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT), International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), International Development Research Centre (IDRC), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Palladium, PYXERA Global, RTI International, Save the Children, United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD), USAID/FTF, WorldFish, World Bank (WB), World Food Programme (WFP), World Vision International, and YouthPower/USAID.

Search Strategy and Key Terms

The search will include the following subject heading terms and keywords: “youth and agri-food systems” OR “youth in agriculture” OR “youth development in agriculture” OR “youth involvement in agriculture” AND “labor among rural youth” OR “rural youth labor” AND “rural youth” OR “youth in rural areas” AND “low- and middle-income countries” OR “developing countries” AND “rural youth in low- and middle-income countries” OR “rural youth in developing countries” OR “rural youth in the global south” OR “rural youth labor in the global south.”

Time Frame

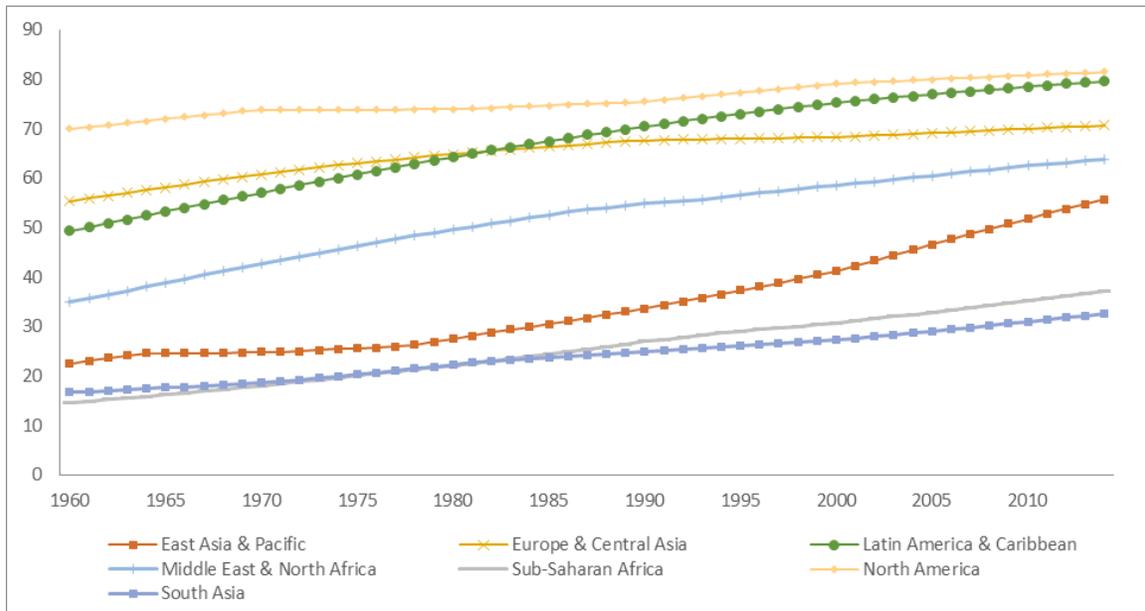
Given significant changes that occurred in AFS because of the 2008 world food price crisis, 2008 became a watershed moment to analyze the constraints and opportunities for rural youth livelihoods in AFS. Therefore, this landscape analysis will include works publicly available from 2008 through 2019, a period when changes in the global dynamics of food security, population, and agricultural productivity have become significant drivers of change in AFS that affect rural youth livelihoods.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

The relatively recent wave of urbanization, particularly in western countries forced significant changes in the pattern of social life that affected not only urban areas but the rural “hinterland” as well (Davis, 1955). The movement of populations to cities, combined with the exponential increases in per-unit agricultural labor output, has effectively changed the overall structure of rural areas as the place for the development of AFS. Nowadays, rural areas are places for the production of agricultural goods not only for local consumption but also for distribution in global markets. This change has important effects for rural youth. Among those, youth have fewer incentives to stay in the countryside as jobs are scarcer, salaries are potentially lower, and the provision of public infrastructure focuses more on the development of agriculture and less in the development of rural human capital (FAO, 2018).

Since 1960, significant world population growth was accompanied with a similarly important change in the urban-rural population ratio. Figure 2 shows that urban areas have accounted for the majority of total population in North America, Latin America and Europe since 1960 with rural-to-urban migration being most pronounced in Latin America. Similarly, aggregate data at national level shows that high-income countries are heavily urban and low-income countries are heavily rural (figure 3). Indeed, in low-income countries an important portion of the labor force is in agriculture with relatively low wages. In addition, the need to increase productivity in agriculture has promoted models that are less human-labor intensive leading rural populations to migrate to cities, thereby increasing poverty levels in urban areas of non-wealthy countries. As industrialization expanded and secondary and tertiary sectors became the major source of economic wealth, rural areas faced two alternatives: to implement technological developments in agriculture to increase output and wealth (highly concentrated) or to remain poor (Rico Mendez, 2017).

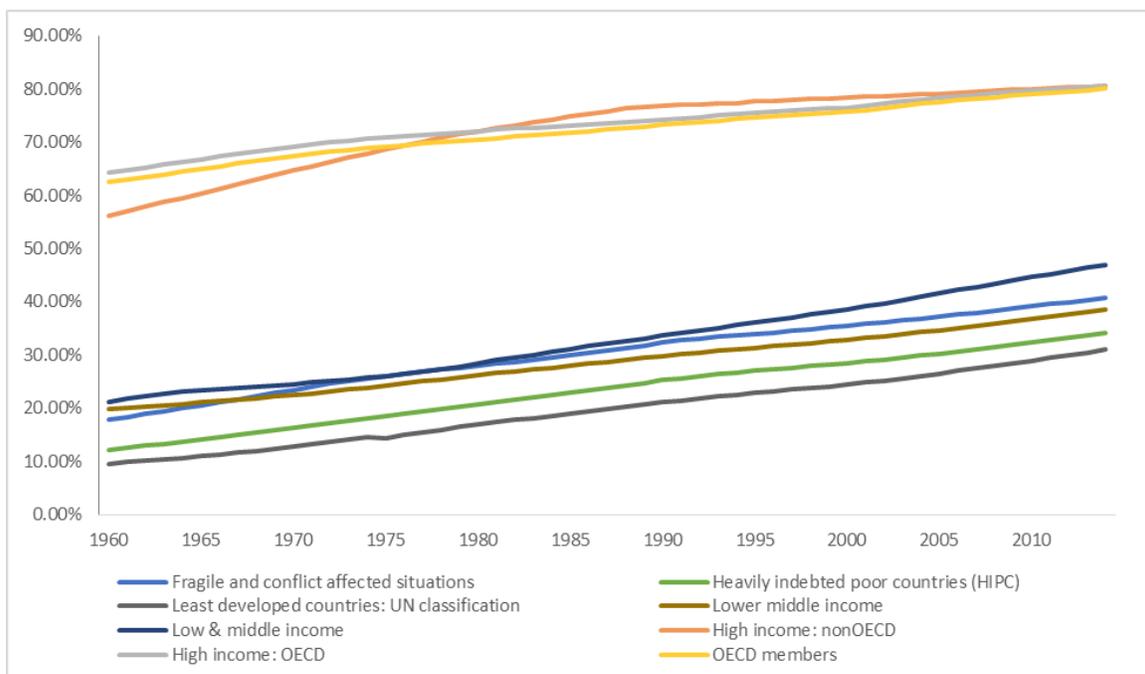
Figure 1. Percentage of urban population by region 1960 – 2014 (*)



(*) “Urban population refers to people living in urban areas as defined by national statistical offices. It is calculated using World Bank population estimates and urban ratios from the United Nations World Urbanization Prospects.” (World Bank, 2015)

Source: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS>

Figure 2. Percentage of urban population by income level and 1960 – 2014 (*)



Source: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.URB.TOTL.IN.ZS>

Given this changing context, national governments, development agencies and NGOs there has been multiple rural youth-oriented AFS initiatives in LMICs, as strategies that build upon the premise that young human capital in rural areas of LMIC is underdeveloped and thus lagging compared to young human capital in urban areas. These interventions aim at strengthening AFS locally and developing capacities among youth as means to improve their capacity to enhance their livelihoods.

The USAID-FTF initiative has sponsored initiatives for *youth engagement in agricultural value chain* in multiple FTF sponsored countries (USAID, 2016). A 2016 report of this program presents in depth results for Uganda - Adaptive Program Models; Guatemala – Engaging Rural Youth through Experiential Education; Liberia – Building Youth Resilience in Weak Market Systems; and Nepal – Household Approach to Reaching Youth. Findings from this report indicate that the engagement of youth into the FTF programs is unintentional because “the number and percentage of youth engaged in FTF programs is unknown as most programs are not designed for them or do not provide specific support for them. This gap demonstrates the need for better awareness of youth engagement” (p. 10). In addition, “improved production, post-harvest handling, and marketing programs at the farmer level can be heavily populated by youth” (p. 2). That is the case because entry requirements are not extremely strict and time commitment is low. Despite land and capital barriers, the inclusion of young people in these programs generally produces positive outcomes such as the acquisition of assets and increased technical and organizational knowledge, which can be used to produce higher income and therefore improve livelihoods.

In addition, “in all cases, programs that benefit youth participants are made more challenging by national youth definitions and a lack of capacity or commitment to manage gender issues” (p.2). This is a significant challenge the programs face considering the need to generate opportunities for equal participation and positive outcomes for both young men and women. Another challenge programs face relates to the limited capacity to involve vulnerable young people in the programs. Regarding this issued, there seems to be a need for more time for effective planning the specific needs of potential program participants. In this and other issues, the report recommends “reinforcing the Enabling Environment and Channeling Youth Voice” (USAID, 2016, p. 3), as means to allow young men and women to participate in the development of creative solutions to improve their own livelihoods. Another recommendation focuses on the need to include “Youth Issues in the FTF Research Strategy, CDCS³s, and FTF Country Strategies”, strategies must detail intermediate results for young men and women.

On the other hand, there is a generalized sentiment that youth are no longer interested in agriculture

³ Country Development Cooperation Strategy

and that they prefer white-collar, better-paid, and technology-based jobs located in cities. However, according to the report, “these assumptions about youth in agriculture are damaging” (p. 3). The report suggest there is a need for a nuanced and localized understanding of the origin of these assumptions, as well as proposed efforts towards rural youth, should also consider the need to promote the expansion of technology usage in agriculturally productive settings, as means to engage young people in agricultural activities.

Other recommendations include: “Developing the Capacity for Informed Solicitations and Proposal Review” (USAID, 2016, p. 4) Proposals should be based on evidence or pilot projects that identify the vulnerabilities and barriers that young people face, complemented by activities to mitigate it. USAID Missions’ staff should maintain an open and reflective culture that reflects into positive actions for young people. Tracking Performance disaggregated by gender and age, looking for changes in the use of time, income and financial control.

The *rural youth mobility project in Tunisia and Ethiopia* supported by FAO (2018) aims at addressing the drivers of rural migration, by: generating knowledge and increase awareness on rural migration; promoting innovative mechanisms for rural employment opportunities and enhancing the positive impact of rural migration on areas of origin; and building capacity and promoting policy coherence between migration and rural development. This is the first FAO project of this type and includes five activity axes:

1. *Knowledge generation on drivers and impacts of rural migration.* Main challenges faced by the program include “Lack of data on migration determinants, patterns, and impact on areas of origin, is one of the main challenge to sound and evidence-based policies on migration and rural development. Major data gaps regards in particular migration from rural areas and internal and seasonal migration.” (FAO, 2018, p. 5) To address these gaps, FAO collaborated with university and research institutions to develop methodologies to gather data on these issues. As a result, the project conceptualized and raised awareness about the connections between migration and rural development.
2. *Capacity building on migration and rural development.* Despite the discussions about migrations and rural development, it “remains an area mostly neglected by stakeholders” which in turn affects policy coherence on those matters (FAO, 2018, p. 5). Given this issue, the project implemented activities such a needs assessment of capacity to address problems of migration and rural development; stakeholder workshops and manuals to improve capacity building.
3. *Piloting of innovative mechanisms for employment as an alternative to rural outmigration for youth.* “Rural youth unemployment is one of the main drivers of migration.” (FAO, 2018, p. 6)

Similarly, there are other issues that affect the capacity of youth to improve their productive potential; those issues include limited access to land, finance, equipment, information and skills. Thus, interventions in Tunisia and Ethiopia include activities that address these limitations.

4. *Enhancing the contribution of the diaspora.* Significant challenges in this axis include the fact that rural populations are disperse rather than concentrated, physical access is usually difficult, institutional collaborations around rural development are limited. To address these challenges in Tunisia the project piloted “an innovative mechanism for the engagement of the diaspora to enhance its positive contribution to rural areas of origin”, as a result, more than 50 per cent of the agricultural enterprises supported by the project benefitted from a financial and technical support (initial target set was 30 per cent) (FAO, 2018, p. 10).
5. *Contributing to policy coherence between migration and rural development.* This axis is the results of policy incoherence between these two factors and this represents a significant implementation challenge. One of the project activities to overcome this include support for the accreditation of the profession of agricultural coaches in Tunisia, and empowering them agents of change in rural migration contexts. In Ethiopia, the project enabled “new partnerships between the decentralized governments and ministries of agriculture, training institutions and communities, which have contributed to a sense of ownership and engagement to sustain the creation of agricultural enterprises for rural jobs creation” (FAO, 2018, p. 11)

DISCUSSION

There is limited evidence on what works best to support and empower youth within agri-food systems, especially as related to improving their livelihood opportunities. In order to help close this evidence gap, the authors are conducting a multi-disciplinary analytic literature review to identify which agri-food system sectors are best suited to engage youth in sustainable livelihoods. Once completed, the analysis will allow to respond these two questions:

Q1. Are there youth-specific constraints to engaging in AFS in LMIC?

Q2. In LMIC, which areas of AFS are best suited to engage rural youth in the workforce and/or to improve their productive capacities as means to enhance their livelihoods?

Here we presented the rationale for the study, methods, and preliminary results. Preliminary review suggest there are multiple challenges facing young people in rural areas of LMIC, especially those related to limited opportunities for livelihood improvement, versus incentives that exist in urban areas for better jobs and potentially more opportunities for access to public goods. These are, thus far, the main constraints youth face in rural areas. However, AFS offer opportunities for improving livelihoods. For instance, agricultural value-chains offer significant opportunities to engage youth in rural areas, similarly,

the presence of innovative solutions that involve not only rural youth, but stakeholders in the awareness of rural out-migration patterns can contribute to improve rural development strategies towards youth. This is just a preliminary review of this ongoing project. It is expected, that the full landscape analysis allow us to precise challenges and opportunities, allowing the team to produce a series of valuable recommendations for improving rural youth-oriented AFS interventions in LMIC.

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