

Community of Practice: Youth Agripreneurship

2nd Hybrid Dialogue Session Report

Working with Local Institutions to Improve Youth Inclusion and Market Access for Agripreneurs

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Promoting better market access for youth agripreneurs, requires local government and private sector agencies to focus on easing channels of information and communication for and with youth groups.

After a successful first youth consultation meeting, the working group on market access of the **CoP Youth Agripreneurship** convened again for another hybrid dialogue session, organised with **VSO Kenya, CABI** and **GAIN Tanzania** and online with many other youth from Eastern Africa.

This second round featured three independently organised in-person working group sessions in Dar es Salaam, Nairobi and Makueni County. Before uniting forces online, each working group conducted a dialogue with local representatives of national and local government departments and agricultural sector associations to discuss the challenges and recommendations put forth by youth champions. The goal of these dialogues was to foster collaboration and identify concrete follow-up actions to support youth in enhancing their businesses, particularly in addressing issues related to access to market information, raising awareness about registration and meeting export requirements, and youth participation in decision making.

Although each group discussed issues relevant to their own context, the subsequent online session hosting all three working groups served to identify common demands towards agricultural sector institutions to create a youth-enabling environment. Increasing efforts to spread relevant information, about export requirements, licensing and ensuring quality and quantity of production, turned out to be the overarching theme of this discussion.

The online session started with the youth champions bringing forth the shared challenges encountered by young farmers in the three different regions. These include the lack of information about market demand, quantity, and quality, as well as the need for skills and knowledge in

agricultural production. Market barriers such as corruption and unfriendly policies for young farmers were identified as obstacles in securing tenders and accessing markets.

Youth champion, Elijah Bakari (Head of Research - Policy Action Initiative), gave a concrete example of how information asymmetries regarding Africa-EU trade requirements leads to challenges in accessing European markets and incurring additional costs. Because pesticides that are being exported to Africa are banned in the EU, crops that have been treated with them are not allowed to be imported, which forces uninformed traders from the Global South to destroy the banned products. The speaker called for a review of laws and policies in both Europe and developing nations to mitigate the impact of banned pesticides on agricultural trade.

After a reflection round by Michael Masasila (Policy Officer, Agricultural Council of Tanzania), Mbwana Chazua (Regional Senior Agriculture Officer, Dar es Salaam), Boniface Mutinga (Makueni County Youth Director from the Department of Gender, Children, Youth, Sports and Social Service, Kenya), Jackiline Kioko (KEITT Exporters, Kenya), Linda Chepkwony (Youth Committee Member - Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry), the meeting identified key recommendations to support youth in agriculture:

- ***Develop centralised systems and one-stop centres to ease registration, licensing export certification,***
- ***Ease access for youth in sector associations by allowing for membership of youth groups and reducing membership fees,***
- ***Promote the use of digital platforms for information dissemination around quality and quantity assurance in production and processing.***

These recommendations are aimed at creating an enabling environment for youth and connecting different youth groups to participate in national and county policy making. The need for digital platforms like xSpaces, Zoom webinars, and Facebook to disseminate crucial information was highlighted, and active youth involvement in policy formulation was recommended to ensure their interests are represented.

The meeting concluded with NFP's appreciation for the diverse representation and emphasising the commitment of the CoP Youth Agripreneurship to fostering dialogue and learning and continuing to

work on facilitating future exchanges on improving entrepreneurship opportunities for youth in agriculture.

If you have any additional ideas and concrete recommendations on how relevant actors in your region can improve access to information for youth agripreneurs, leave a comment below or drop us an email.