

CoP Youth Agripreneurship

Youth Consultation Meeting:

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

The Market Access Working Group

On May 23, the CoP Youth Agripreneurship Working Group focusing on market access brought together a diverse group of youth agripreneurs and advocates in a hybrid youth consultation event, with the aims to map local institutions and decision-making processes critical for better market access, identify challenges, and define the roles of different actors in addressing these challenges.

In preparation for the online event, the working group members GAIN, VSO & EAFF organised youth pre-sessions both online and in-person at their country offices in Kenya (Makueni & Nairobi county) and Tanzania. These pre-sessions gave youth champions the space to exchange lessons on collaborating with local institutions such as county governments, private-sector associations, and cooperatives. Based on this collaborative brainstorm the event sought to identify recommendations to effectively link with existing social and political structures in order to bring these forward towards representatives from local institutions in the next CoP Learning Session.

Relevant Local Institutions for Youth Agripreneurs & Key Barriers

The discussion underscored a variety of local institutions that play a critical role in supporting youth agripreneurs, offering diverse services that should cater to their unique needs in accessing markets. Key institutions include government departments, business agencies, cooperatives, civil society organisations (CSOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), research and learning institutions, and financial institutions.



Government departments: Examples such as Tanzania's Food and Drug Authority (TFDA), Business Registration and Licensing Agency (BRELA), Revenue Authority (TRA), Kenya Industrial Research Development Institute, and Kenya Coconut Development Authority were highlighted. These entities provide crucial services like extension services, regulatory frameworks, and business support. However, they face challenges such as fragmented processes, information gaps, and policy gaps, hindering efficient support for youth agripreneurs.

Business agencies and commercial entities: The discussion cited examples like East African Breweries Limited (EABL), Cereal Growers Association, NCPB, Sunculture, and Warehouse Receipts Systems Council Biogas International Limited. These entities offer market linkages and support for commercialising agricultural products. Challenges include market entry barriers, infrastructure deficiencies, and limited funding, which can hinder youth participation in value chains.

Cooperatives and associations: Farmer cooperatives like Kenya National Farmers Federation and associations such as Kenya Tea Development Authority facilitate collective bargaining, provide market information, and offer shared resources. Challenges include difficulties in achieving consensus, lack of professional management, and limited access to finance and investment.

Community-based organisations (CBOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs): Examples such as Jacob's Ladder Africa, NARRIK, One Acre Fund, Ecogreen Initiatives, and Hand in Hand were discussed. These organisations focus on sustainable development, capacity building, and creating linkages for youth groups. Challenges involve limited financial and human resources, as well as ensuring active and inclusive participation.

Research and learning institutions: Research institutions like KALRO and KEFRI contribute through innovation and the development of new agricultural practices. Challenges include limited collaboration with youth-led enterprises and difficulties in disseminating research findings effectively.

Financial institutions: Local financial institutions such as KCB Foundation, Equity Afya, and microfinance institutions offer financial products tailored to the unique needs of young agripreneurs. Challenges include high interest rates, stringent collateral requirements, and limited youth-focused financial products, which can exclude many youth from accessing credit facilities.



Challenges Faced by Youth in Market Access and Collaboration with Local Institutions

Youth agripreneurs encounter a myriad of challenges when accessing markets and working with local institutions. Youth often face barriers to market entry due to the dominance of middlemen and lack of competitive local markets, which reduce the profitability of agricultural ventures. Additionally, the limited availability and inefficiency of farmer cooperatives, due to management and consensus-building issues, mean that youth miss out on the benefits of collective bargaining and market access. Additionally, poor governance and policy gaps, especially in terms of implementation, communication and information dissemination, leave many young agripreneurs without the support they need. Technological barriers, such as limited access to digital tools and platforms, also impede their ability to compete in modern agricultural markets.

6 Recommendations to improve market access for young agripreneurs

1. Enhance institutional collaboration by forming youth associations to facilitate collective advocacy, ensuring their voices are heard in policy and decision-making processes.
2. Enhance coordination and sustainable collaboration among local government bodies, NGOs, and cooperatives to ensure continuous support and market access for young farmers.
3. Establish strong partnerships with financial institutions to enhance access to tailored financing options, including loans with flexible repayment terms.
4. Leverage digital platforms for marketing and advocacy, providing youth with modern tools to reach broader markets.
5. Create affordable licensing systems to facilitate easier market entry.
6. Improve communication and information dissemination through centralised systems and one-stop centres, ensuring youth have access to relevant and timely information.

Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach involving capacity-building, improved coordination and information dissemination, and robust stakeholder engagement. Together with the youth representatives, the CoP will formulate targeted recommendations for key local public and private sector institutions and discuss them in a follow up meeting.

Are there any recommendations that we missed? Please add your recommendations in the comments below.

For the comprehensive list of local institutions and recommendations that are critical in improving market access and youth inclusion for young agripreneurs, please have a look at the session reports:



- [VSO Makueni County](#)
- [VSO Nairobi County](#)
- [EAFF](#)
- [GAIN Tanzania](#)