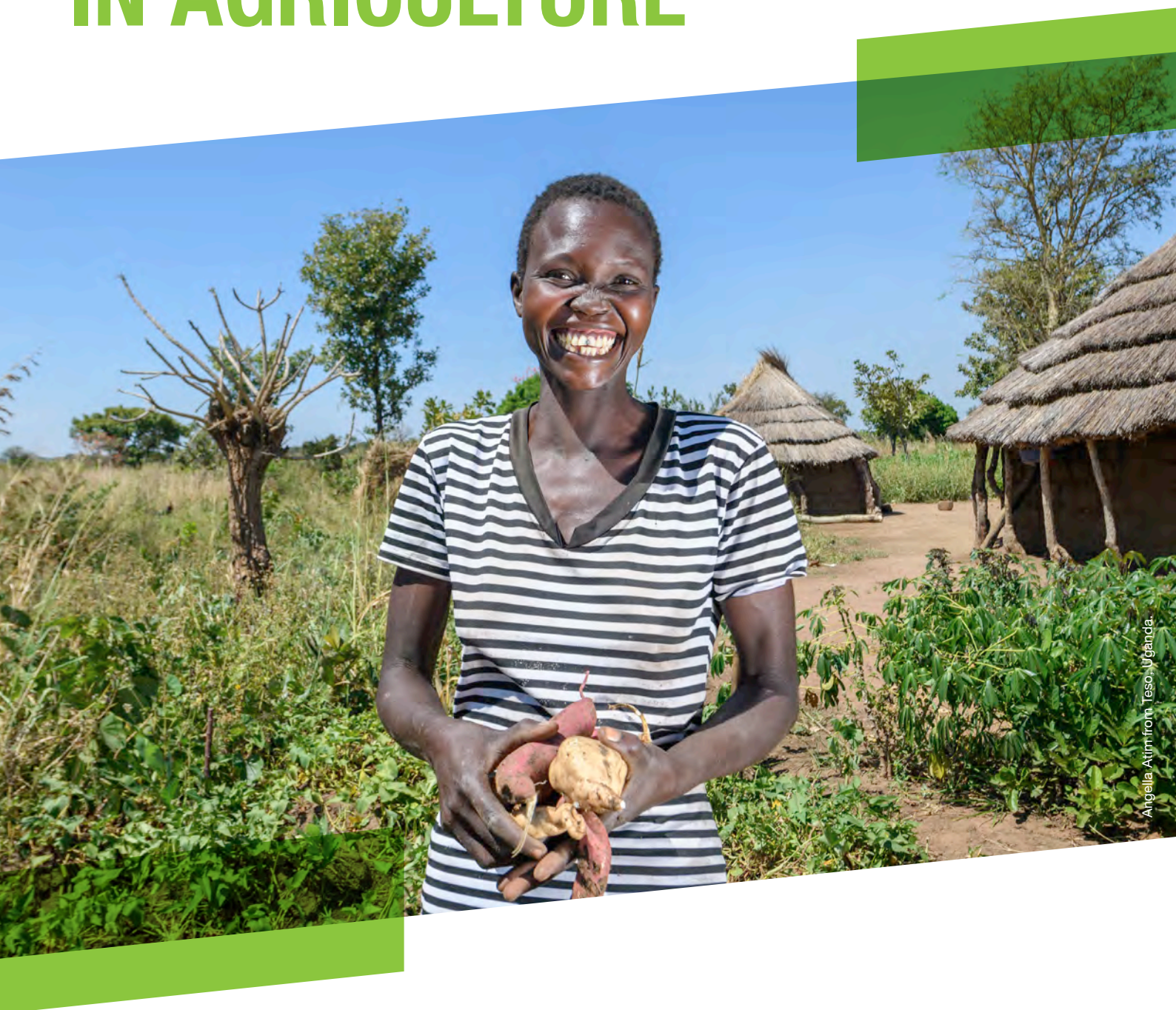




**Self Help  
Africa**

# PROMOTING RURAL YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN AGRICULTURE



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# The Challenge

The African continent is undergoing rapid population growth, with a current population 5 times greater than in 1950. This trend is set to continue throughout the 21st century, with a doubling of population predicted between 2015 and 2050, from 1.2 billion to 2.4 billion, and doubling again to 4.2 billion by the end of the century (UNICEF, 2014). In 2019, nearly 60% of the African population were under the age of 25 and over one-third were aged between 15-34 years. The continent is the youngest globally, with a median age of 19.8 years (M Ibrahim Foundation, 2019) and home to 19 of the 20 youngest countries in the world (World Economic Forum, 2019). As populations continue to grow, the number of African youths (15-24) will reach 830 million by 2050. Between 10 and 12 million African youths join the labour force each year while only 3.7 million jobs are created annually on the continent (UNDP, 2017).

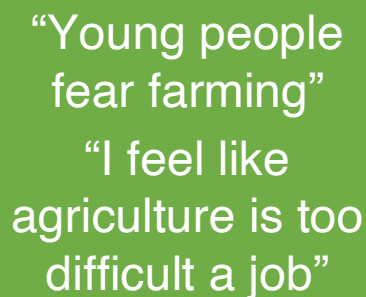
The growing number of youths in Africa are currently at risk of high rates of under and unemployment, migration and criminality. The average rate of youths not in employment, education or training (NEET) is 20.8%. There is a significant gender disparity, with young women experiencing NEET at a rate over 10% higher than their male counterparts. 94.9% of youths aged 15-25 employed in Africa are in the informal sector, most of whom have little to no education, are in rural areas and are engaged in subsistence agriculture. In 2021, 36.9% of youths in employment are in extreme poverty (earning <1.90 USD per day

PPP). A lack of decent employment and economic opportunities are the most significant issue youths in Africa face (ILO, 2020).

82% of people living in extreme poverty in Africa live in rural areas (World Bank, 2019). Population growth in rural areas coupled with a lack of economic opportunities for youths is resulting in coping strategies being employed than can have negative consequences. Rural-urban, international and temporary migration in Africa is often driven by expected greater opportunities, higher quality of life and higher wages at the destination and a lack of economic opportunities and access to productive assets, including land at the origin. High levels of rural-urban migration on the continent are resulting in urban labour markets becoming saturated which reduces wages. Rural areas with high levels of youth migration

also suffer from brain drain and a lack of agricultural labour that impacts agricultural productivity (Amare et al., 2021).

Youths faced with no economic opportunity are more inclined to turn to criminality, rebel movements and be involved in civil unrest. 40% of members of rebel movements surveyed reported a lack of jobs as their motivation to join (UN, 2013). There has been direct links between several instances of instability in African countries and youth unemployment which has a significantly negative social and economic impact on



“Young people  
fear farming”  
“I feel like  
agriculture is too  
difficult a job”



all involved, including those participating (Atta-Asamoah, 2014). Criminality has strong links to youth unemployment that not only negatively impacts the victims of crime but also the perpetrators who often turn to crime as a last resort. As youth

unemployment increases, criminality increases, and social cohesion decreases (Olukayode, 2016).



## Solutions

The growing population of youth in Africa should not be viewed as an issue of concern but as an untapped resource with vast economic, social and environmental potential. Youths are entrepreneurial, innovative and agents of change, and if allowed to reach their full potential can transform the continent. Through proper policies, investments, services and engagement, the youth can lead the continent through transformative development (UNFPA, 2014).

For young people to become engaged in agriculture and agricultural enterprises, education and training is essential in areas such as entrepreneurship, business development, increasing productivity and becoming market orientated. Young people also need to have their voices heard and be incentivised into agriculture through access to technologies, credit and markets.

Youth participation and their perspective is essential in the design, implementation and evaluation phase for programme design aimed at youths. When youths are involved in the decision-making process, it improves the effectiveness, inclusiveness and sustainability of programmes and increases youth engagement, while also facilitating capacity-building. IFAD have compiled a report relating to youth participation and appropriate mechanisms. The four main mechanisms covered are informing, consulting, collaborating and empowering.

- **Informing** involves letting young people know they are the intended beneficiaries of a programme through various means of communication.
- **Consultation** involves engagement with young people, through means such as surveys, workshops or focus groups and incorporating their feedback into programme design.
- **Collaborating** involves working with young people throughout a programme cycle, such as through youth advisory boards.
- **Empowering** can be achieved through the transfer of some decision-making power and implementation responsibility to young people and providing young people with the tools to achieve their own economic and social empowerment. This could be done through youth designed and implemented small-scale activities.

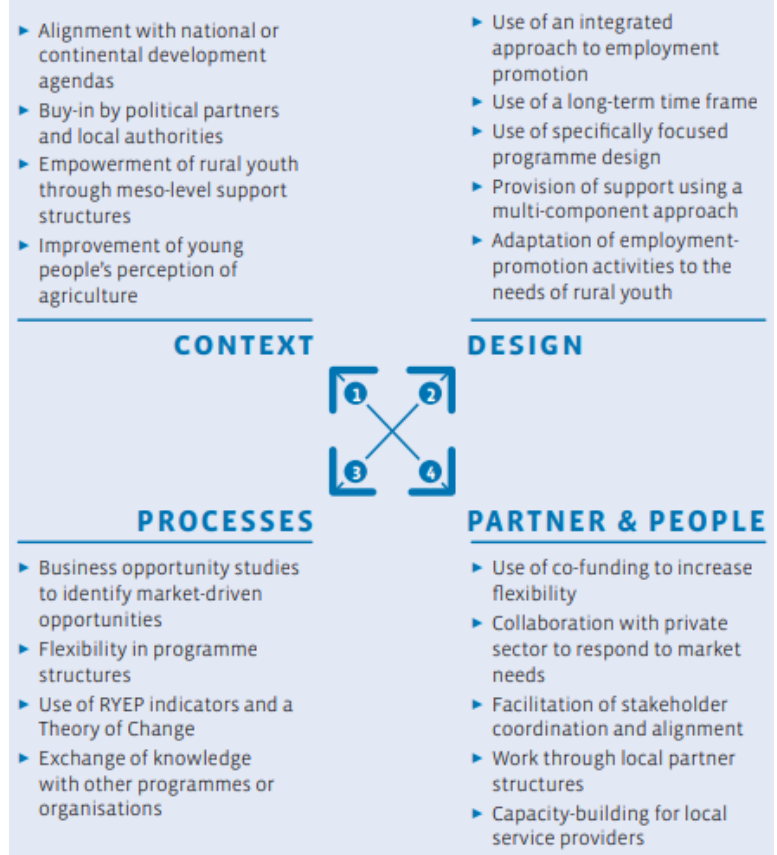
The report found two key cross-sectoral initiatives that promote the engagement of rural youth, soft skills and intergenerational partnerships.

- **Soft skills such as communication, conflict resolution, assertiveness and negotiation strategies can improve young people's ability to relate well with others, perform well and improve their ability to learn other skills.**
- **Engaging adults in horizontal collaboration schemes with youths, such as in community agencies, allows youths to have a voice and can shift social norms to allow youths to have greater responsibilities and access to productive resources.**

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) have worked extensively in rural youth employment promotion throughout Africa. From the lessons learned from passed youth programmes, the organisation has developed a good practices and lessons document. Of 18 success factors identified (Figure 1), 4 are found to be nearly universally relevant in their 11 youth programmes.

- The first is to identify suitable business models that are appropriate for youth and private sector collaboration, this is important to increase expertise and resources for scaling.
- Secondly, tailor programmes to the local employment realities and needs of youth and young women in particular to increase engagement.
- The third success factor is to improve the perception of agriculture among rural youth. This can be done by supporting innovative business and employment opportunities in both production and along the agriculture value chain.
- Lastly, collaborating closely with local and national partners and involving youth in planning and decision making improves sustainability and scale.

FIGURE 1: OVERVIEW OF 18 SUCCESS FACTORS



Training content in agriculture and enterprise, soft skills, financial literacy etc. is a major component for many successful youth programmes. This is delivered in different formats such as, in class, practical training, mentorship, coaching and vocational training. Training that is conducted in local villages with visuals, in the local language and with child-care facilities have higher rates of participation and knowledge transfer.

Other important success factors include:

- Technical and financial support for start-ups
- Using a gender transformative approach
- Promotion of business models
- Incorporating technologies
- Placement opportunities



# Youth Programmes

The following section highlights some successful youth programmes and the key activities involved. Programmes such as MAYEP and STRYDE have been highly effective in not only increasing the income, savings and resilience of beneficiaries but also in creating employers for their communities.

## Self Help Africa's MANZO Youth Empowerment Project (MAYEP)

- Youth groups established with 2 youths selected from each group to be trained as Youth Model Farmers and 2 youths as Enterprise Skill Animators
- Agricultural and enterprise training was cascaded to youth group members on enterprise learning sites
- Training covered a variety of topics including business plan development, marketing, climate-smart agriculture etc.
- Youth groups created business plans and received start-up kits to establish agri-enterprises
- 1,000 beneficiaries were chosen and sponsored for technical and vocational training
- MAYEP had a strong gender focus, using a gender-transformative approach

## International's East African Youth Inclusion Programme (EAYIP)

- Training in agriculture, enterprise development, financial literacy, group business development etc.
- Vocational training in areas such as baking
- Cascade training

## TechnoServe's Strengthening Rural Youth Development through Enterprise (STRYDE)

- Training and education provided through cascade training over 3 months in agribusiness, entrepreneurship, youth savings and business groups, personal finance, personal effectiveness etc.
- Skills training, field visits, financial clinics etc. followed for 9 months
- Mentors provided to youth business groups
- Beneficiaries created business plans to be judged in competitions and the winners received financial rewards
- Technical assistance funds were granted for business start-ups and innovations
- Gender specific strategies incorporated to encourage women's participation such as child-care facilities and engagement with husbands and parents
- Promotion of diversification
- Youth-led agricultural hubs support youth groups through technical services
- (such as access to financial institutions), training opportunities, markets links etc.
- Peer-to-peer learning in hubs
- Mentors provided
- Youth groups assisted in starting saving and loan programmes
- \$1 million allocated to a youth loan fund



### **Farm Africa's Youth Empowerment in Sustainable Agriculture Programme (YESA)**

- Youth groups created and supported to establish and manage agricultural enterprises
- Assisted in setting up and managing demonstration farms
- Trained in agricultural technologies and practices

- Instructor-led lessons on demonstration farms
- Peer-to-peer learning on farmers plots
- Trained in aggregation and quality control
- Educated in financial, business and managerial skills
- Credit schemes were established
- Youth groups linked to markets



### **GIZ's Employment Promotion Programme (EPP III)**

- 3–6-week skill development courses to increase employability and entrepreneurship
- Village savings and loan clubs established
- Technical and vocational education and training
- Farmer training in agricultural value chain development to increase production and quality
- MSME's developed through training and 6 months of on-site coaching
- Financial and technical support for MSME's
- Grants for innovative business ideas
- Unemployed youths gained labour market experience
- Trainer of trainers trained in value chain and business development

These examples have many commonalities that have been proven successful in promoting youth engagement in agriculture and significantly increasing employability and entrepreneurship.

Training and education are a core activity in all the examples and are the foundation for increasing productive engagement in agriculture.

Learning sites are a practical and cost-efficient means of training for everyone, regardless of educational levels.

Youth groups and farm/enterprise visits are an effective means of peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange.

Saving and credit schemes are a common activity to tackle the financial barriers that young people face.

Youth are a significant percentage of the African population and a large number of youth are under/unemployed. SHA needs to commit more resources to young people and prioritise them as a group. In line with SDG goals 4, 8 and 10, increased consideration needs to be given in how to remove barriers for youths and how to give them a voice and empower them. SHA's MANZO project far outperformed all targets and is an excellent blueprint for future youth interventions and programmes. The following section covers some areas where SHA can improve youth interventions moving forward.

	MANZO	YESA	STRYDE	EAYIP	EPP III
Agricultural Training	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Enterprise Training	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Other Training (e.g. financial)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ag. Value-Addition Training	✓	✓			✓
Vocational Training	✓		✓	✓	✓
Learning Sites	✓	✓		✓	
Youth Groups	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Mentors			✓	✓	✓
Peer-to-Peer Learning	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Learning Visits	✓		✓		
Work Experience	✓		✓		✓
Cascade Training	✓		✓	✓	✓
Business Plan Development	✓		✓		✓
Grants			✓		✓
Supply Technologies/Inputs	✓	✓			
Value-Chain Analysis	✓	✓			✓
Market Links	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Saving and Credit Schemes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gender Mainstreaming	✓		✓		
Empowering Mechanisms	✓			✓	
Private Sector Collaboration	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓



## Recommendations

- Increase youth inclusion by aiming to have a minimal percentage of youth beneficiaries in all SHA programmes
- Have more youth specific projects and programmes
- Develop a tool for youth empowerment in households and communities to ensure greater decision-making power and access to land and productive resources
- Establish youth boards and agricultural clubs in communities to enhance their collective voice within communities and to facilitate peer-to-peer learning
- Organise youth field visits to successful young entrepreneurs to illustrate the potential of agriculture
- Engage with youth at the design phase to tailor programmes to their needs to increase participation and effectiveness
- Consult and collaborate with young people during the implementation of programmes



- Promote agriculture through competitions such as highest yielding crop or best business plan
- Select successful farmers and entrepreneurs in communities to be mentors
- Award grants for youth with innovative business plans
- Provide child-care facilities when training/education is occurring
- Prioritise practical training such as learning sites (demonstration farms) to ensure training is inclusive to all
- Incorporating technologies such as ICT will make agriculture more appealing
- Connecting young people to markets is essential for sustainable engagement in agriculture



## Some Useful Resources

### Government Youth Policies

Ethiopia [https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Ethiopia\\_2004\\_National\\_Youth\\_Policy.pdf](https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Ethiopia_2004_National_Youth_Policy.pdf)

Kenya [https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Kenya\\_2006\\_National\\_Youth\\_Policy.pdf](https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Kenya_2006_National_Youth_Policy.pdf)

Malawi [https://youthpolicy.org/national/Malawi\\_2013\\_National\\_Youth\\_Policy.pdf](https://youthpolicy.org/national/Malawi_2013_National_Youth_Policy.pdf)

Uganda [https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Uganda\\_2001\\_National\\_Youth\\_Policy.pdf](https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Uganda_2001_National_Youth_Policy.pdf)

Zambia <https://www.parliament.gov.zm/sites/default/files/documents/articles/2015%20National%20Youth%20Policy.pdf>

Burkina Faso [https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Burkina\\_Faso\\_2008\\_National\\_Youth\\_Policy.pdf](https://www.youthpolicy.org/national/Burkina_Faso_2008_National_Youth_Policy.pdf)

### Youth Programmes

STRYDE <https://www.technoserve.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/TechnoServe-STRYDE-Lessons-Learned-Full-Report.pdf>

EPP III <https://www.giz.de/en/downloads/giz2021-en-employment-promotion-programme-skills-development.pdf>

YESA <https://www.farmafrica.org/downloads/yesa--fact-sheetfa-sm.pdf>

EAYIP <https://www.heifer.org/our-work/flagship-projects/east-africa-youth-inclusion-project.html>

## Other Useful Resources

IFAD (2019). Rural Youth Inclusion, Empowerment and Participation.

[https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/41187395/05\\_Trivelli+and+Morel\\_2019+RDR+BACKGROUND+PAPER.pdf/982ce510-b38f-017c-66e3-8f02208a8ded](https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/41187395/05_Trivelli+and+Morel_2019+RDR+BACKGROUND+PAPER.pdf/982ce510-b38f-017c-66e3-8f02208a8ded)

GIZ (2020). What Works in Rural Youth Employment Promotion?

[https://www.giz.de/en/downloads/giz2020\\_eng\\_employment\\_promotion.pdf](https://www.giz.de/en/downloads/giz2020_eng_employment_promotion.pdf)

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<https://www.africa.undp.org/content/rba/en/home/blog/2017/8/12/Promise-Or-Peril-Africa-s-830-Million-Young-People-By-2050.html>

UNFPA (2014). The Power of 18 Billion Adolescents, Youth and the Transformation of the Future, pp. 2. [online] Available at: <https://eeca.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/EN-SWOP14-FINAL-web.pdf>

UNICEF (2014). Generation 2030: Africa, pp. 7. [online] Available at: [file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/Generation-2030-Africa-19Mar2015\\_e-version\\_173.pdf](file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/Generation-2030-Africa-19Mar2015_e-version_173.pdf)

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<https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/afr/publication/accelerating-poverty-reduction-in-africa-in-five-charts>

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