

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT ON TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION IN AFRICA (YETAA) REPORT



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CONTINENTAL YOUTH WORKSHOP REPORT

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Group Photo of the Continental Agriyouth Engagement Workshop

Photo by Nawsheen Hosenally

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About FARA

The Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) is the apex continental organisation responsible for coordinating and advocating for agricultural research-for-development. (AR4D). It serves as the entry point for agricultural research initiatives designed to have a continental reach or a sub-continental reach spanning more than one sub-region.

FARA serves as the technical arm of the African Union Commission (AUC) on matters concerning agricultural science, technology and innovation. FARA has provided a continental forum for stakeholders in AR4D to shape the vision and agenda for the sub-sector and to mobilise themselves to respond to key continent-wide development frameworks, notably the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).

FARA's vision is to "Reduced poverty in Africa as a result of sustainable broad-based agricultural growth and improved livelihoods, particularly of smallholder and pastoral enterprises" its mission is the "Creation of broad-based improvements in agricultural productivity, competitiveness and markets by strengthening the capacity for agricultural innovation at the continental-level"; its Value Proposition is the "Strengthening Africa's capacity for innovation and transformation by visioning its strategic direction, integrating its capacities for change and creating an enabling policy environment for implementation". FARA's strategic direction is derived from and aligned to the Science Agenda for Agriculture in Africa (S3A), which is in turn designed to support the realization of the CAADP vision.

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Abbreviations

AFAAS	Africa Forum for Agricultural Advisory Services
ASARECA	Association for Strengthening Agricultural Research in Eastern and Central Africa
CCARDESA	Centre for Coordination of Agricultural Research and Development for Southern Africa
CDTO	Capacity Development and Technology Outreach
CORAF	West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRI	Director for Research and Innovations
ED	Executive Director
ENABLE-TAAT	Empowering Novel Agri-Business-Led Employment Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation
FARA	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
GMO	Genetically modified Organisms
GODAN	Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition
ICT	Information communication technology
IITA	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
IP	Innovation Platform
STI	Science Technology and Innovations
TAAT	Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation
YPARD	Young Professionals in Agricultural Research and Development

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The YETAA Report and the continental youth workshop is a product of the efforts, contributions and support of many people and organizations. The report was prepared by FARA's Capacity Development and Agri-preneurship (CDA) Cluster, led by the Agribusiness Expert TAAT; Mrs. Munoko Karen Nguru. The report represents a collaborative effort and reflects the input and contributions of youth participants through their blog on the Young Professionals in Agricultural Research and Development (YPARD) Africa platform. The CDA cluster would like to extend special thanks to the workshop's contributing photographer (Nawsheen Hosenally), tweeters and bloggers, including ENABLE TAAT (Odunoye Oluyemi) program and YPARD (Acquaye Kofi). Constructive feedback from colleagues within and outside the CDA cluster, also benefited the report. A special thank you is extended to all the young people that submitted essays for the experience capitalization case studies. These case studies and photos have been invaluable in bringing this publication to life. Finally, thank you is extended to Dr. Abdulrazak Ibrahim and Mr. Benjamin Abugri, who patiently reviewed and edited the report. Some of the photos in the report are provided courtesy of participant's tweets and blogs.

Introduction

This document represents the proceedings of a Continental Youth Workshop convened by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) at its secretariat in Accra, Ghana from 2 to 4 May 2019, as the Capacity Development and Technology Outreach Enabler Compact of the Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT). The workshop was convened to initiate the process of developing a set of guidelines on strategic engagement and capacity development of youth, focused on agri-preneurship and scaling of technologies for increased productivity.

The continental youth engagement workshop was a great platform for active participation of young people in their realities. The idea behind this was that the participants should take ownership of the deliberations and recommendations to make their life better, solve the problems around them and respond to their needs (within their possible scope of action and influence) instead of waiting for somebody to do it for them. During the workshop, the participants identified some youth initiatives within their countries which are directly linked with local community life and are gender responsive but some of them concern regional, national or trans-national issues. Actively engaging youth gives them the power of influencing the world around them and allows them to use their creativity in working on common tasks and finding solutions to common problems.

Specifically, the workshop set out to achieve the following objectives;

1. To increase capacity of youth to actively engage on gender responsive agri-preneurship development for TAAT technologies in the context of innovation platforms;
2. To illustrate guidelines and tools for capturing experiences from cases of youth engagement and document key lessons and good practices.
3. To validate existing frameworks for agri-preneurship capacity development interventions among youth, (within TAAT value chains) informed by youth network representatives.

The workshop was held in collaboration with African Development Bank (AfDB's) Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation, Capacity Development and Technology Outreach (TAAT CDTO), ENABLE-TAAT compact managed by IITA, YPARD Africa, CORAF, ASARECA and CCARDESA as key institutions on youth engagement in Africa. It was attended by 58 participants from 20 African countries.

The proceedings provide a record of the main highlights of the workshop, including:

1. The opening session
2. The various informative sessions:
 - Introduction to the process of experience capitalisation
 - Open Data as a resource in agricultural development
3. The various interactive sessions:
 - Mapping out youth engagement initiatives on the continent;
 - Peer review of cases of experience capitalisation among youth participants
 - Identification of opportunities along agricultural value chains

Summary of Outcomes

With the aim of facilitating the processes to drafting a set of guidelines on strategic youth engagement and capacity development, the workshop led to the following:

1. Components of a framework for youth engagement in Africa were outlined...
2. Thematics for youth engagement were organised under four clusters:
 - Application of science;
 - Development of individual agri-preneurship skills
 - Development of collective agri-preneurship skills
 - Youth-led youth engagement initiatives

3. Youth equipped with knowledge on unique proposition to information platforms to better embed them within the IPs as they further develop their skills.

These outcomes are within the context of agri-preneurship and the scaling of technologies for increased productivity.

Opening Session

In opening the workshop, Dr. Irene Annor-Frempong; the Director of Research and Innovations (DRI) at FARA, on behalf of the Executive Director (ED) highlighted the significant role of youth in development and scaling up of proven technologies, indicating that for agriculture to take a leap in development, youth must be effectively engaged in agriculture. The DRI described the youth as the energy storehouse for agricultural transformation and indicated that TAAT offers an opportunity for youth to connect innovation-based response to the recognized need for scaling agricultural technologies across Africa. TAAT aims to boost productivity and promote agri-preneurship across Africa.

She pointed out that the success of many developed countries is owed to their collective competencies and thus how the different age groups collaborate to achieve development and agricultural transformation- for that matter.

Urging the youth to make the best of the opportunities the workshop offered, she said, "I believe we all came with dreams of the future we want for our continent but as we all know, the difference between dreams and reality is having a plan of action and executing the plan. We, therefore, encourage you to think outside the box on how we can work together to operationalize technology deployment in Africa."

Setting the Scene

Following the opening session, FARA's TAAT Coordinator; Mr Krishan Bheenick gave an overview of FARA and TAAT highlighting FARA's role in coordinating and advocating for agricultural research for development, with the various stakeholders, at regional, sub regional and country levels. He further explained the basis for TAAT initiative as spearheaded by the African Development Bank (AfDB), to modernize and transform African agriculture to improve productivity. FARA is charged with the coordination of Capacity Development and Technology Outreach (CDTO)- an Enabler Compact within TAAT. The Innovation Platform (IP) approach is the institutional model to implement the TAAT Technology Outreach function.

The 4 (four) thematic focus for Capacity Development and technology outreach for TAAT were introduced as:

1. Support the development of learning & training resources for Outreach;
2. Build capacity of local facilitators of Innovation Platforms to accompany scaling of technology;
3. Development Agri-preneurship, promote Incubation & mentorship of Agribusiness start-ups and
4. Train youth, women and knowledge management networks to capture insights, change around the implementation of TAAT CDTO.

He further outlined the key issues to be discussed in the workshop as:

- Agri-business/enterprise development
- Scaling up proven technology
- Experience capitalisation
- Youth engagement
- Open data

Workshop Highlights and Main Areas of Exchange

Mapping out Africa’s Youth Engagement Initiatives

Focus: How the African youth are already participating in different initiatives (document a brief about the initiatives), what the impact of the initiatives were so far and how we can build up on what’s existing

The lead facilitator; Ms. Hlamalani Ngwenya of International Delv. Consultant, oriented the participants to team up in groups of seven and identify youth engagement initiatives that they had previously been involved in or were aware of in Africa. The identified initiatives were associated with 12 countries namely, Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, Togo, Sierra Leone, Cameroon, Nigeria, South Africa, Benin, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Senegal. Generally, the initiatives identified by the youth participants were described as strategic in empowering and developing the youth’s capacity within the agricultural sector. Detailed list of the initiatives are highlighted in Table 1.

The discussion was done along the lines of the thematic focus of the initiatives; the geographic coverage and; participants' perception of the gender sensitivity of the initiatives.

The themes of these initiatives were:

- ☐ Information Communication Technology
- ☐ Tourism
- ☐ Research
- ☐ Agricultural Communications
- ☐ Sustainable Development

Under these themes, the approaches of the initiatives were through:

- ☐ Incubation
- ☐ Development of soft skills
- ☐ Competitions
- ☐ Training and advisory services
- ☐ Market access enhancement
- ☐ Job creation
- ☐ Field trips
- ☐ Provision of grants

The geographical scopes of the initiatives were defined as regional (continental), sub-regional, national and district specific. From the mapping outlined, it was clear that participants perceived these initiatives within the context of representation of women as: underrepresented, balanced or actively promoted.

As can be seen in the table 1, the identified initiatives were limited to the countries represented and is not a representation of the whole continent. Youth Initiatives are a great tool for active participation of young people in their realities. The discussions held during the identification of youth

initiatives were that the youth need to co-operate together in carrying out their common idea, which on the one hand reflects their own interests and on the other has ‘local impact’.

Following the identification of the initiatives, the deliberations were on whether the main focus of the interventions of the youth initiative:

- involved both male and female participants (is gender sensitive)
- were nation-wide, or regional and whether some youth were marginalized based on their localities e.g rural, urban and peri-urban
- involved youth who have limited access to opportunities

Table 1: Identified List of Youth Agricultural Initiatives within the Continent

Country	Initiative	Focus	Coverage	Gender Focus
Ghana	Kosmos Innovation Center	-Engage youth to leverage on ICT to promote agricultural development. -Provide funding up to USD 50000R -Run an incubator competition	National	Male but females Encouraged
	National Youth Agricultural Program	Build the youth to be able to create jobs and wealth	National and District Level	Encourages woman sponsored program

Uganda	Uganda grain source ltd	Youth Combat Season variability by providing cereals, storing cereals and providing seed capital	National	Male and female
	Youth Champions Initiative	Mentor other youths	National	Both male and female
	East African Youth in Agriculture Platform	Empower young farmers in the region across borders and provide collaboration	National	Promote gender equality through their projects
	Uganda National Young farmers Association (Agro-Tourism)	Use of tourism to enhance youth engagement in Ag.	National-Uganda	Gender inclusive

Kenya	African Inception for Agribusiness Research (Business Development Service providers)	Incubation for youth in agriculture training, advisory services and networking	National	Male and female
	National Youth Source	Youth Empowerment and development	National	Encourages gender balance
	(KALRO) Kenya Agricultural Livestock Research Organization	Research on youth as actors along crop and livestock value Chains	National	Male and female
	East African Youth in Agriculture Platform	Empower young farmers in the region across borders and promote collaboration	National	Promotes gender equality through their projects
	International Center for Evaluation and Development (ICED YOUNG)	Youth Empowerment in Agribusiness Engaging youths in sharing agribusiness content	National	Gender balanced
	Youth Ag Summit	Empowering young people on elements on sustainable development-How to feed a hungry planet?	Global (Kenya)	Gender inclusive

Togo	APABio-Togo	Support with Organic farming Enhance market access product certification Market development	National	Male and female
Sierra Leone	Youth in Agriculture Initiative	Engage youth in agricultural production, processing and marketing	National/ International	Male and female
Cameroon	Pajer-4	Create salaried jobs for youth Fund micro enterprises	National/ District	Sponsor female group micro projects
Nigeria	FEED II Program	Zero hunger and building capacity	local	Encourage women-oriented training
	Open Forum for Agricultural Biotechnology	Field trips for farmers where GMO's are grown	National	Gender inclusive
	Communication for Science initiative	Communication with rural farmers. General on all farmers. Packaging and delivering STI information among the youth for sustainable agriculture	Operating online in Abuja-Nigeria	
	IITA Youth Agripreneurs Program	Build Business and technical skills of youth in agriculture	Nigeria, DRC, Kenya, Zambia, Uganda, Tanzania	equal male to female participation

South Africa	Professional Development Project of Agric Research Council	Select youth graduates from disadvantaged areas Empower youth with post graduate scholarship, Professional development and links to organisations for employment	National	Encourage female participation
Benin	Youth Entrepreneurship Promotion Project With Partnership From Songhai Centre	Train youth in all value chains, provide inputs and seed capital up to USD 50000	National	30-40% Female Participation
Zimbabwe	Youth and women Loans Initiative	link youth with access to funding in Agric	national	Youth and women
Zimbabwe	Value addition of biofortified staple foods to promote nutrition	Food processing with the aim of promoting nutrition through biofortified products.	National	Youth and Women
Botswana	Permaculture initiative	Dryland and irrigation Focus on Women (Young women in gardening)	National	Women
Senegal	Yeesal Agrihub	Focused on ICT, Youth, agricultural, partnership and training of the youth	Local	

Reflection and Discussion on Enterprise Development within TAAT Value Chains

Focus: Validate the existing draft framework on what the African youth feel will be more effective in building capacity for agri-preneurship development within TAAT value chains, as well as key areas to focus on, when developing the Africa youth agri-preneurship strategy.

Ahead of the development of the Africa youth agri-preneurship strategy, FARA in collaboration with the sub regional organizations, had identified the need to develop inclusive agribusiness opportunity among young people and drive agri-preneurship through technology. This was highlighted in the workshop. which revealed how young people could tap into and develop viable businesses in agriculture and agribusiness. This then highlighted on substantial opportunities for employment creation across agri-food systems.

As contributed by Mr. John Agboola in his blog that was published under YPARD Africa, in this session, participants were introduced to the TAAT value chains and enterprise development within the value chains. The session was facilitated by TAAT CDTO's Agribusiness expert; Ms Karen Munoko Nguru. Following a presentation on 'Job and Business Opportunities for Youth within TAAT Crop Value Chains', eight opportunities for engagement of youth along the value chains were identified within the agricultural sector:

- 1. Market information specialists:** In this node of the value chain, the specialist gathers, analyzes and disseminates information about seed varieties, prices, market trends and other relevant information to farmers, agro-traders, processors and other stakeholders in agro-industry and food supply chains.
- 2. Seed production specialists:** This value chain node depicts the requirement of agri-preneurs to produce high-quality seeds and seedlings for farmers. Given the trends in advocating for improved seeds that are related to the consumption patterns of the various consumers, producing high-quality-relevant seeds which have a major impact on potential crop yield is crucial. This is no doubt a potential value chain node young people can tap into.
- 3. Livestock and animal breeders:** Just as producing seeds and seedlings for farmers, livestock farmers need good and quality animal breeds to boost their production. Hence, this value chain node presents an opportunity for young people- particularly in the business of breeding livestock such as chicken, cattle, goats etc. This will be to enhance quality growth rate, and quality products such as eggs, meat and milk for farmers.

4. **Agro-input specialists:** The agro-input node has untapped potential which can be maximized by young people. In this enterprise, the youth could set-up a process of distribution of inputs to farmers through an efficient distribution channel with agro-dealers and other input suppliers.
5. **Primary production specialists:** This node deals with the primary production of agricultural commodities such as maize, rice, cassava and other related TAAT crops and animals. Here, it is important to identify crops or enterprises which have growing demand and existing market opportunity before primary production begins.
6. **Post-harvest logistics specialists:** The current population growth and the trends in post-harvest losses present opportunities for young people to set-up a post-harvest handling and food supply chain businesses that address the movement of agro-products to the market through innovative logistics and transportation system.
7. **Value addition specialists:** It is often advised that young people should invest in the top of the pyramid where value addition is creating more jobs for youth in agriculture. An individual can set-up a value addition enterprise by enhancing and re-packaging raw agricultural commodities into variety of products for the market. For instance, transforming raw plantain into well packaged plantain chips is considered a value-added enterprise.
8. **Market specialists:** This entails sourcing for markets either open, high-end and institutional markets for farmers to sell their products. Young people can leverage on this value chain and create an agreement with farmers where an agreed commission is given upon securing markets for farmers' produce.

In her further explanation, the Agribusiness expert highlighted why developing innovative and creative agri-preneurs requires a comprehensive agri-preneurship's framework which is classified into four phases as:

Phase 1: Mindset change through capacity development and agripreneurship simulation trainings;

Phase 2: Business implementation through innovation to impact partnership and systems;

Phase 3: Meeting the industry through knowledge management and decision support;

Phase 4: Social support through leadership for research management and program development.

Group Discussions

Focus: A practical and realistic action plan on strengthening youth initiatives (e.g YPARD) for technology deployment.

Interactive sessions among participants were held in 7 groups of 5 members. Discussions encompassed the following topics:

- Value Chain Opportunities for the youth
- Existing Skills, Competencies and Resources seized to maximize this opportunity
- Other skills, Competencies and Resources required.

Below is a summary of the deliberations:

Table 2: Discussion Points on Value Chain Opportunities for Youth

Value chain	Opportunity	Skills, competencies and resources available	Skills, competencies and resources required
Maize Sweet potatoes Bean	Seed/Cultivar production <i>Requirements</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adapt to climate change effect• Meet the farmer's needs (high yield, resistance to pest and diseases)	Agricultural research/ scientist <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Genetics and breeding• Crop production• Climate-smart agriculture Agribusiness and project management	Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hydroponics• Access to finance

Fish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inputs supplier (fingerlings) Production Processing (Smoked fish) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditional production and processing skills Small business management skills <p>Social media marketing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finance management skills Improved technologies Market information <p>Feed production techniques</p>
Small livestock Broiler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inputs, livestock and animal breeds, value addition, market information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agricultural economist specialising in Broiler production Community mobilisation and engagement Data analytics 	<p>Agronomist, Animal Scientist, meat processing specialist</p> <p>Research specialist,</p> <p>Access to capitals</p>
Cassava post-harvest and value addition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> product storage design and branding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Machine fabrication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Market Networks
Soybean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processing into several products (i.e. soya milk, animal feed products) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> crop processing using simple machines Packaging products to attract wide patronage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business proposal writing Leadership training for agribusiness management Build collaboration to leverage partnerships Value addition to expand to international markets in the long term Pitching/ grant application skill

Overview of Open Data Initiatives

Focus: Identified opportunities for youth employment and youth and women-led enterprise development within the TAAT value chains through innovation platforms.

Mr. Kiringai Kamau; GODAN Africa Lead, Programme for Capacity Development in Africa (P4CDA Africa) Africa made a presentation on *Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition Thinking in Youth Agripreneurship Capacity Development*. He pointed out that data supports any line of engagement including research, economic performance, social discourse, and process performance. Stating that data is the foundation of all wisdom, he explained that it provides the foundation of what processes can do to create information.

Information when synthesized creates knowledge which is basis of the Knowledge Management and Decision-Making basis behind what has made experience capitalization necessary. The Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN), is a network of global efforts for Public and Private Sector Support to promote limitless data availability, and access, for agriculture and nutrition

Introduction to Experience Capitalization

Focus: How youth can package and sell their stories as well as exploit existing opportunities and information within innovation platforms.

Mr. Gorgui Alioune Mbow; our resource person introduced experience capitalization to the participants as a methodological process in which an experience is identifies, analyses and documents lessons learnt or shared to generate change. He outlined the benefits of the process of experience capitalization recognizing it as an appropriate approach for advocacy and policy information. The process effectively builds teams and facilitates networks around practices to generate change, prevents the loss of knowledge and also increases learning.

Exposure to FARA DataInformS; Observatory for Africa Agriculture

Focus: Positioning participants to access and utilize the resources/services available through the FARA data-informs

Mr Benjamin Abugri, the Knowledge Management Officer of FARA spoke on the approach for technology outreach introduced the FARA DataInforms as the Innovation Platform Agribusiness Portal (www.ipab.org), detailing technologies database and a database of farmers as well as other value chain actors. This platform supports the development of innovative extension approaches together with AFAAS and partners. He added that it facilitates the development of value chain specific and country focused networks as Communities of Practice. FARA seeks to promote local capacity to generate and share knowledge and peer-to-peer learning with this platform, including translation of information into local languages to support advocacy for policy adherence and/or reform.

Mr. Abugri equipped participants on IPs with the following information:

- The IP is a forum for group of relevant actors selected along the value chain of specific commodity or system of production.
- The actors include farmers, researchers, extension agents, traders, processors, financial institutions, policy makers, regulators, output market operators, consumers and others.
- They interact to jointly identify problems, investigate solutions leading to generation of innovations and its accompanying socio-economic benefits.
- The IP essentially works in a commercial mode as it facilitates the public and private sector partnership,
- Essentially, activities on the IP is guided by a well-articulated business plan.

Opportunity was given for members to access the platform and update their profile to enhance their interaction.

Exposition to ENABLE TAAT

Ms. Ogunwole Omotola; Agribusiness Liaison Officer at ENABLE TAAT speaking on ENABLE-TAAT approach for youth engagement in Agriculture outlined the activities in various countries and the incubation model. The experiential learning methodology in agribusiness which enhances youth business skills and provides stronger case for business plan development

was highlighted as the niche of this approach. She shared key lessons learnt by IITA in implementing successful youth agribusiness incubation programs;

- (a) Support to youths must go beyond training to include start up resources.
- (b) There must be careful selection of youths with interest in Agribusiness
- (c) Impact based training should be prioritized over ambitious targets
- (d) Youth empowerment strategies must be tailored to different categories of youth

Packaging Yourself for Opportunities

During the workshop, the youth were challenged and inspired to package themselves for opportunities. One youth participant; Mr. Abdullahi Tsaani, took up the challenge and packaged himself as a science writer whose aim is to connect science to agriculture through scientific communication. He therefore wrote several blogs during the workshop which were published in various platforms. Figure 4 is an illustration of one of Mr. Tsaani's published blogs



Figure 1: Mr. Tsaani's Published blog

FARA: Leveraging technology for inclusive agripreneurship development in Africa

10 May 2019 by Abdullahi Tsanni Nuhu



About 60 youths from across Africa gathered in Accra, Ghana, last week, for a 3-day agricultural engagement workshop themed: "Strategic Engagements and Capacity Development of Youth in Agri-preneurship for Technology Adoption," aimed at leveraging shared experiences of youths to develop a framework for youth engagement with a focus on inclusive agripreneurship development.

According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), over 800 million people across the world are undernourished, with Africa accounting for more than 25% of the figures. Africa's population currently stands at 1.1 billion with youths constituting more than 50% of the continent's total population, which is projected to rise to about 2.4 billion by 2050. Although young people constitute majority of the continent's population, most young Africans are either unemployed or underemployed and seldom consider agriculture as a means of livelihood.

Agriculture holds enormous potential for jobs creation among Africa's burgeoning young population and consequently transforming the continent's economy. However, African youths are yet to realize the profitable opportunities agriculture offers, as a source of earning

sustainable livelihoods, hence the low-level of youth involvement in agriculture. Hence, the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) – the AU’s body responsible for coordinating and advocating for agricultural research for development (AR4D) – aims to bridge existing gap in the involvement of youths in agriculture through the implementation of youth engagement programmes focused on addressing issues of employment and agri-preneurship in Africa.

On this basis, about 60 select young professionals in agriculture from across 26 African countries gathered in Accra, Ghana for a 3-day continental youth engagement workshop on the theme: “Strategic Engagements and Capacity Development of Youth in Agri-preneurship for Technology Adoption.” It was hosted by FARA jointly with Young Professionals in Agricultural Research for Development (YPARD), in partnership with African Development Bank (AfDB); the West and Central Africa Council for Agricultural Research and Development (WECARD); as well as the AfDB-funded Technologies for African Agricultural Transformation (TAAT) programme, amongst others.

“We [FARA] are here to support in terms of capacity development and technology outreach through the development of agri-preneurship so this workshop is about the process of agri-preneurship development,” said Bheenick. “There was an essay competition amongst youths in Africa, last year. In specific terms, the YPARD network asked them to describe their experiences on youth engagement in agriculture. The idea [was] to identify what works best for youths in Africa. We therefore selected 35 initiatives [based on the essays] and we are here to utilize those initiatives that have been used to engage the youths.”

The Young Professionals for Agricultural Research Development (YPARD), a network of about 30, 000 youth members spread around the globe, is being hosted by the Global Forum on Agricultural Research and Innovation (GFAR) at the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) headquarters in Rome, Italy. It was launched in 2006 as a movement by the youths and for the youths to contribute towards innovative agricultural development.

“We are working to ensure that young people identify and seize opportunities across various agricultural value chains. TAAT is one of such opportunities for youths to exploit and we will capitalize on the experiences of the youths to develop strategies for engaging institutions to mainstream youths in agriculture,” says Sokhna Gaye Rokhaya, YPARD’s country representative in Senegal.

Pius Lutakome, a young Ugandan agricultural researcher, was one of the participants in the 3-day youth in agricultural entrepreneurship regional

workshop. While working at the Gates Foundation-funded East Africa Dairy Development (EADD) program – designed to boost the milk yields and incomes of small-scale farmers in Africa (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania) so they can lift their communities out of hunger and poverty.

“I observed that many young people in Uganda were unemployed and they’re not directly involved in agriculture. So, I came up with an idea to train youths in agricultural service provision. Last year, I wrote an essay describing my experiences, it was titled: Equipping youths with skills to start service provision enterprises (SPE’s) along the dairy value chain,” says Lutakome.

While speaking about his experience at the FARA workshop, Lutakome said they had been taken through “the process of experience capitalization and framing. I have learnt how to frame my experience in terms of being clear and precise so that other young Africans can model my experience and embrace agriculture as a cool career because it is where the future lies for us.”

In 2014, Annet Nannono, another participant from Uganda, started vegetable farming on an acre of her family’s land. After two consecutive farming seasons, she failed to make any profit from her agribusiness, partly due to lack of adequate knowledge of business management, pests and insects control. Following a failed attempt to secure funding for her business, Nannono joined the Uganda National Young Farmers Association (UNYFA), a youth-based capacity building platform on entrepreneurship and agribusiness which proved a turning point in her life.

“Being here has helped me to understand the critical importance of data in agriculture. As a technology savvy youth, I am interested in using ICT for agriculture but data has been a huge challenge for me. I don’t have enough data to be able to improve my work. So, being here is a big plus for me because I have learnt about data and I will commit myself to partnering with relevant organizations that will help me get the data I need,” says Nannono who works as operations officer at EZYAgric, an ICT-for-agriculture firm based out of Kampala, Uganda.

“This workshop has changed my perception about youth participation in agriculture. I [now] understand that sharing my experience can motivate many other young people to embrace agriculture. So, I am going to capitalize on and share my experience when I go back home,” added Nannono.

Achieving food and nutrition security in Africa as envisioned by the 2030 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) must necessarily involve the deployment of science, technology, and innovations (STI)

in agriculture. FARA's engagement with youths involved in agricultural entrepreneurship is definitely a right step in the right direction, as a strategy for encouraging young Africans to embrace agriculture and leverage modern agricultural technologies for enhanced food productivity on the continent.

Photo credit: [Nawsheen Hosenally](#)

This article was originally posted at [African Newspage](#)

Discussion

As contributed by Mr. Eric Terver Nyikwagh through the YPARD blog, he noted that agriculture in Africa has a massive social and economic footprint to improve livelihoods and grow the economy. More than 60 percent of the population of sub-Saharan Africa are smallholder farmers, with over 50 percent of the continent's population falling below age 30. Also, about 23 percent of sub-Saharan Africa's GDP comes from agriculture. Yet, Africa's full agricultural potential remains hugely untapped. Research reports from McKinsey & Company in 2017 revealed that Africa could be three times more productive if intensified actions are implemented to achieve higher agricultural productivity through sustainable engagement of youth and women as vital stakeholders across the value chains in the sector.

This workshop created the avenue to develop a framework for engagement of youth in Africa, with a focus on inclusive agri-preneurship development and technology adoption. This was based on shared experiences of the participants. Their views were then harmonized into an action plan that will inform FARA's strategic plan covering the next ten years. The information gathered will guide FARA and its constituents better on how to effectively engage with and feature youth and women in agriculture in the context of implementing FARA's new strategy. With this, a set of guidelines on strategic engagement and capacity development of youth will be developed. These guidelines will focus on agri-preneurship and scaling of technologies for increased productivity and profitability to help actualize the "Vision 2063: The Africa we want."

Major highlights of the workshop were the training of these young professionals on how to capitalize their experiences in agricultural engagements or projects so as to inspire and guide others who would be eager to learn from their work. This could facilitate the replication of similar results in their enterprises through peer learning. Participants of the workshop were exposed educated on the approach of "Experience capitalization" as a process through which an agriculturally related

experience could be identified, validated and documented. This process leads to learning and identification of good practices which can then be adapted, improved, adopted by others and upscaled. This could eventually lead to a greater impact in efficiency, productivity and capacity in the agriculture and food sectors. Thus, the participants leveraged on the Capitalization process to reframe their experiences in their essays within the context of specific agrarian projects or programmes that they had been involved in. They described, analyzed and identified lessons to share with the sole purpose of upscaling technology adoption and improving best practices in farming and agribusiness sectors.

One key presentation at the workshop was on the development and utilization of agribusiness opportunities along the value chains by:

- leveraging our comparative advantage of our environments,
- deploying our skill sets,
- developing a positive mindset and
- fostering partnerships to build small and medium enterprises with the potential for expansion in the medium and long term.

Identifying successful projects and initiatives to strengthen entrepreneurs' networks, so that they can gain business lessons or mentorship assistance are necessary building steps, but a strategic focus on strengthening the overall value chain specific to youth enterprises is very important in Africa.

Ms. Emmie Wachira, the Global Communications Manager and Mr. Kofi Kisiedu Acquaye, the YPARD Africa Coordinator highlighted the benefits and achievements of the YPARD network. With their mission to empower young agricultural leaders, the network aims at positioning youth as champions to build sustainable food systems through collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

Most of the participants agreed with the fact that agriculture is one of the critical pathways to move Africa out of poverty, create employment opportunities for young people and thus curbing illegal migration. Accelerating the involvement of African youth in agriculture and agribusiness will also help meet development goals, like those put forth by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)- including ending extreme poverty; addressing zero hunger; and ensuring gender equality. Talking about the important role that the youth can play in achieving the #SDG 2030 agenda, these young people would require some effort. Among these interventions to help youth actualize their full potential and contribute meaningfully to achieve the Agenda 2063 vision tagged "the Africa we want" are: funding,

practical knowledge, access to lands and market penetration, expert training, technology, innovation and agro-allied.

Clearly, opportunities abound for directing youth in Africa toward agribusiness if done in an integrated manner, to offer enormous societal and economic advantages. Many mechanisms toward this goal should align several research, development and investment interests to drive true prosperity. One of the participants, Paul Atsu wrapped up his closing remarks in these words, "The next critical step is to develop a holistic program that unites widespread commitment and partnership. Combining these approaches in an effective way will deliver cost-effective opportunities to youth for profitable agribusiness development across Africa".

Workshop Evaluation

An evaluation was carried out to assess the delivery approach for the workshop and to inform actions to be taken to increase the impact of the TAAT initiatives. This will also inform the inputs for subsequent workshops;

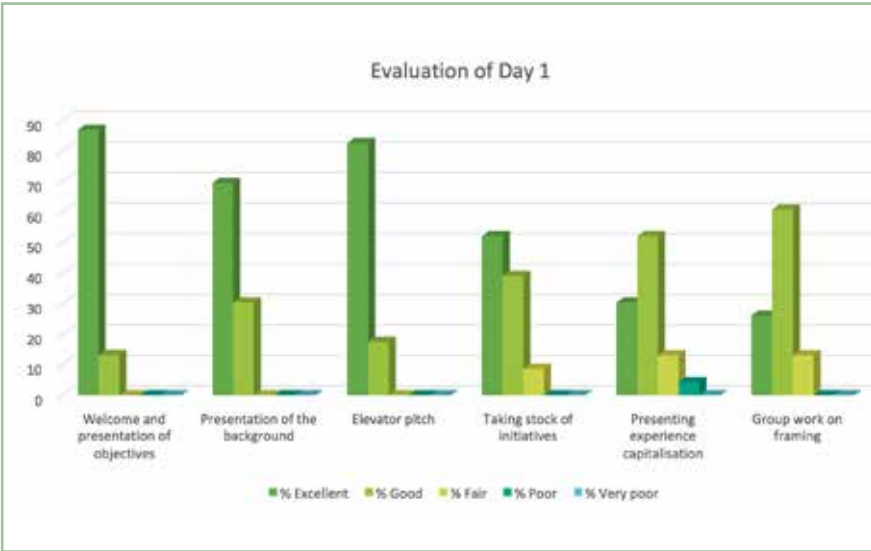


Figure 2: Day One Evaluation Results

Eighty seven percent of the participants rated *excellent* for the *Welcome and Presentation of Objectives* while the 13% rated the same as *good*. Majority (70%) of the participants rated the *Presentation of the background* of the workshop as *excellent* while the rest rated it as *good*. There was a 90 second elevator pitch of who participants are, where they come from and their areas of focus on youth engagement. This session was rated *excellent* by 83% of the participants. The rest of the 17% rated this as *good*.

The session set aside to map out and take stock of all the youth engagement initiatives that participants had been involved in was rated *excellent* by majority (52%). Only thirty nine percent and 9% rated this as *good* and *fair* respectively.

Thirty percent of the participants rated the introduction to Experience Capitalization as *good*. Majority (52%) rated this session as *good*. Only 13% and 4% rated this session as *fair* and *poor* respectively. The session for framing the experiences of participants in youth engagement initiatives

was rated *good* by majority of the participants (61%). Twenty six percent of them rated this session as *excellent* and 13% rated this as *fair*.

General comments from participants after Day 1

When asked what is their take-home, some participants acknowledged that it is their responsibility to collaborate with other young people, to bring transformation in youth engagement in agriculture. They said they had learnt how to document their own experiences in youth engagement initiatives as well as to capitalize and share key experiences to expand on the good practices from their networks.

Participant's feedback;

1. "We need to harness partnerships across sectors for agri-youth engagement"
2. "The experience capitalization was too heavy a topic and came off as abstract in some parts. I would suggest it be broken down further (simplified) and taught over a longer period during morning hours. It was more theoretical than practical."
3. "I suggest organization team to copy us key documents by the end of the workshop."

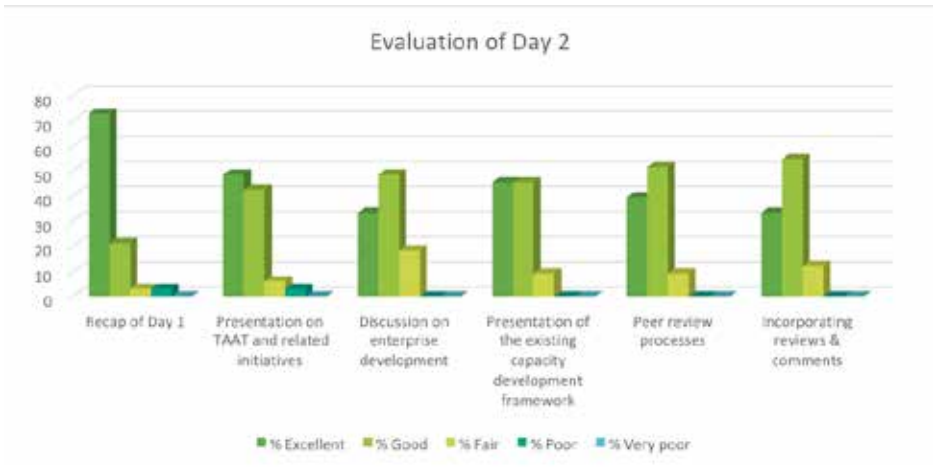


Figure 3: Day Two Evaluation Results

The Presentation on TAAT, Innovation Platform and FARA Data-Informs / Knowledge Management was rated *excellent* by 48% while 42% rated it as *good*. 6% of the participants rated the session as *fair* and 3% rated this as *poor*. The session to facilitate participants reflection and discussion on enterprise development within TAAT value chains was rated *good* by 48% of the participants. Thirty three percent rated this as *excellent* and the rest (18%) rated this as *fair*. The session on the presentation of the existing capacity development frameworks (Linking to the GFRAS learning and other existing material such as YPARD, ENABLE Youth etc.) was rated as *excellent* by 45% of the participants. Forty five percent of the participants also rated this as *good* while 10% rated *fair*.

Majority (52%) of the participants rated the session for the peer review processes and drafting of experiences to be capitalized as *good*, 39% of them rated the session as *excellent*, and 9% of them rated this as *fair*. The session for incorporating reviews and comments towards finalizing the cases for capitalization was rated *good* by majority 55%, 33% and 12% of them rated the session as *excellent* and *fair* respectively.

General comments from participants after Day 2

Among the knowledge amassed by participants as mentioned after Day 2 was the identification of existing opportunities along the agricultural value chains and the importance of integrating data management into the identified opportunity. Some participants pointed out that engaging with other youth made them realize that they can leverage on their collective

skills to create an enabling platform for development and make the agricultural space more attractive for youth and employ many.

Some also expressed eagerness to have Enable TAAT present in their countries of origin.

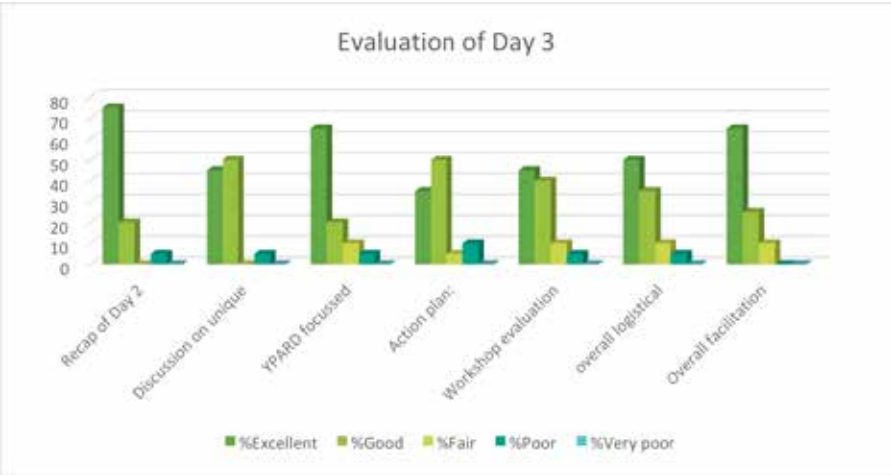


Figure 4: Day Three Evaluation Results

The discussion on how youth can tap into ongoing activities was rated *excellent* by 45% of the participants, while 50% rated this as *good* and only 5% of them rated this as *poor* as they expected a full entrepreneurship training. This session focussed on how the youth should sell themselves. There were practical exercises on how to package and sell their story as well as exploit existing opportunities/information. The YPARD focused discussion was rated *excellent* by majority (65%), 20% rated this as *good* while 10% rated it as *fair* and only 5% rated it as *poor*, since they expected funding that was not forthcoming.

The session on the next steps and action plan for sharing and use of cases for experience capitalisation was rated *excellent* by 35% of the participants, while 50% of them rated this as *good* and 5% rated it as *fair*. The overall facilitation arrangement for the workshop was rated as *excellent* by 65% of the participants. 25% of them rated this as *good* while 10% rated this as *fair*.

General comments and suggestions from participants after Day 3

According to participants, Day 3 offered the opportunity to think critically about value proposition as entrepreneurs, individual enterprises, and as a network. Participants suggested that the number of days for this workshop be subsequently increased to include a field study and also to further enhance the experience capitalization process and training on enterprise development and financing.

Conclusion

Deliberations at the workshop encompassed the various value chains, TAAT, several youth initiatives, experience capitalization, FARA data informs and agri-preneurship capacity framework among others. Based on these discussions, opportunities for youth to tap into; the requisite skills, competencies and resources that they already have to seize these opportunities; and other skills, competences, resources they would require to maximize their potential in these value chains were outlined. It was also agreed that the YPARD network needs to be strengthened and all youth initiatives to collaborate so as to ensure the rural youth, peri urban and urban youth are not marginalized.

To effectively engage youth, it is crucial to note that youth initiatives requires young people's actions, undertaken by them to bring something new to, or change something in, their close surroundings. An aspect which the youth participants emphasized on is the link between self-development and developments in local community. As some mentioned in discussions, they indicated that the workshop had empowered them to go back home and make a difference to other youth within their communities. Some attested to have been challenged to not be passive but to take problems and challenges and find solutions instead of blaming it on others.

It was recommended that the YPARD activities to involve designing strategies and projects that are both local and regional. These are projects in cooperation between youth from various counties and will encourage collaboration with international partners who have similar needs or interests in order to share and learn from each other. One of the added value of the continental youth engagement workshop is that the youth were able to learn how to participate at continental level, and thus develop intercultural competences, to experience communication at international level, to learn how to work and take decisions within international teams, to discuss and debate with people from other countries. This helped in building self-confidence to take an active stance in agri-preneurship and adoption of technologies.

Annexes

Annex 1: The Program Outline

Day 1: Thursday 2nd May 2019

Session	Activity	By who
8h30-9h00	Opening and Welcome	FARA Executive Director
9h00-10h30	Setting the scene - Participants introductions and perspectives	Hlami (International Dev Consultant)
10h30-11h00	Health Break & Group Picture	
11h00-12h00	Map out other Youth engagement initiatives in the room and beyond	Hlami/ ENABLE TAAT
12h00-13h00	Brainstorming on ideas for a continental Youth Engagement Strategy <i>Q & A and Discussion</i>	CORAF
13h00-14h00	Lunch and networking	
14h00-15h30	-Introduction to capitalisation of experiences -Identification and Framing of an experience	Alioune/Busani/Loise
15h30-16h00	Health Break and Networking	
16h00-17h00	Writing up the first draft of a case of experience capitalisation & approaches to review	Alioune/Busani/Loise
	End of day 1	

Day 2: Friday, 3rd May 2019

Session	Activity	By who
8h30- 9h00	Recap of day 1	Hlami
9h00- 9h45	Introduction to TAAT value chains, Innovation Platforms and Knowledge management	Benjamin (FARA)
9h45- 10h30	Participants reflection and discussion on enterprise development within TAAT value chains	Karen (FARA)
10h30- 11h00	Health Break	
11h00- 13h00	Agri-preneurship capacity development framework and Mindset change simulation	Julienne (CORAF)
13h00- 14h00	Lunch and networking	
14h00- 14h30	Open Data Initiatives	Kiringai Kamau (GODAN)
14h30- 15h30	Capitalization of Experiences Peer review process and review	Alioune/Busani/Loise
15h30- 16h00	Health Break and Networking	
16h00- 17h00	Preparing for knowledge sharing	Alioune/Busani/Loise
	End of day 2	

Day 3: Saturday, 4th May 2019

Session	Activity	By who
8h30- 9h00	Recap of day 2	Hlami
9h00-10h30	Strengthening the role of Youth in the Innovation Platforms	Enable TAAT
10h30-11h00	Health Break	
11h00-12h00	Reflections and group discussions	Kofi/Emmie
12h00-13h00	Getting organized for action	Alioune/Busani/Loise
13h00-14h00	Lunch and networking	
14h00-15h30	Final reflections Workshop evaluation	Krishan
	End of day 3	

Annex 2: List of Workshop Participants

Name	Country
Annet Dianah Nannono	Uganda
Lukman Abubakari	Ghana
Tabby Karanja-Lumumba	Kenya
Ntui Ebob Ojong Michelline	Cameroon
Etany Solomon	Uganda
ADAMS SAPEHO	Uganda
Winston Ndebele	Zimbabwe
Pius Lutakome	Uganda
Shitote Philip Cliff	Kenya
George Mimano	Kenya
Simbeko Sadi	DRC
John Agboola	Nigeria
Gcina Petros Dlamini	Eswatini
Dinneya Jonadab Chinonso	Nigeria
OCHIENG OBUNGA	Kenya
Diphoso Gadaffi Maitiyo	Botswana
CLIVE TAKUDZWA GAHADZA	Zimbabwe
Lavhelesani Rodney Managa	South Africa
Winnie Williams	Kenya
Abdullahi Tsani	Nigeria

Name	Country
TENE TAYO Paul Martial	Cameroun
Aliou Fousseni	Benin
Mvuenga Eden	RDC
NUNDA ERICK	RDC
DIYANI Sinandja Issifou	Togo
Henri TOTIN	Benin
Aimé KAZIKA	RDC
EFOUA ABA'A Borice Evard	Gabon
Sègla Bienvenue Toviwazon	Benin
Malala Onisoa RAKOTOJAOFENO	Madagascar
HOUADAKPODE Dossa Stanislas	Bénin
Raphaëla Paula GNANCADJA	Benin
BAKIRWENA TIYAGOUNA Gilbert	Togo
Yacine Yade	Senegal
Issoufa BACHIR BOUNOU	Niger

Name	Country
Emmie Wachira	Italy
Paul Atsu	Ghana
Kafui Kwesi Agbe	Ghana
Jean Claude Ndayambaje	Rwanda
Nestor Ngouambé	Cameroon
Eric Nyikwagh	Nigeria
Amlan Beatrice Dibi	Ivory Coast
Sokhna Rokhaya Gaye	Senegal
Mohamed Sippo	Sierra Leone
Paul Zaake	Uganda
Minata Coulibaly	Burkina Faso
Oluyemi Adunoye	Nigeria
Omotola Ogunwole	Nigeria
Mrs Julianne KUISEU	Senegal
Alioune Mbow	Ivory Coast
Busani Bafana	Zimbabwe
Loise Wachira	Kenya
Nawsheen Hosenally	Burkina Faso
Hlamalani Ngwenya	South Africa
Kiringai Kamau	Kenya
Krishan Bheenick	Ghana
Karen Munoko	Ghana
Kofi Acquaye	Ghana
Benjamin Abugri	Ghana

Annex 3: Workshop Pictorials



Presentation of the identified youth initiatives within the continent



Ongoing group discussions during the workshop



Ongoing group discussions during the workshop



Ongoing group discussions during the workshop





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