

Thematic Working Group (TWG) on Rural Youth - Conference Call

Thursday, 8 June 2020, 15:00hrs – 16:30hrs CEST

WebEx Conference Call

Participants:

- **Oriane Barthélemy**, (MEAE – France), **Meredith McCormack** (USAID), **Ji Yeun Rim** (OECD), **Keron Bascombe** (Tech4Agri), **Peter Wobst**, **Anna Befus** and **Regina Kistler** (all FAO), **Rahul Antao** (IFAD), **Frank Bertelmann**, **Sven Braulik** and **Julia Bayer** (all GIZ Global Project “Rural employment with a focus on youth”)
- For the Platform Secretariat: **Maurizio Navarra** (IFAD), **Jörg Lohmann**, **Oliver Hanschke** and **Sylvia Otieno** (all GIZ)

Agenda:

- (1) Welcome and short round of introduction
- (2) What’s new? Update on past or planned activities of TWG members
- (3) Update from the Secretariat: Secretariat transfer and implications
- (4) Where does the TWG stand? How do we move forward? Discussion of modalities, responsibilities and concrete activities

Minutes: Sven Braulik, Oliver Hanschke

Summary of Discussions

1. Welcome and short round of introduction

Oliver Hanschke welcomed the participants in the name of the Secretariat and stated that the TWG call featured a high number of participants reflecting the diverse membership. All participants introduced themselves briefly, and Oliver Hanschke introduced the agenda for the call.

2. What’s new? Update on past or planned activities of TWG members

Updates from Oliver Hanschke, GDPRD Secretariat

- The TWG had a vibrant year with two TWG calls and two side meetings at the Annual General Assembly (AGA) in Zurich, Switzerland, in June and the 46th session of the Committee on Food Security (CFS) Rome, Italy in October 2019.

- The TWG held its first side event at an international conference in November 2019. The half-day side event was organized back-to-back to the Youth Entrepreneurship and Self-Employment (YES!) Forum 2019 along the side-lines of the World Export Development Forum (WEDF) and the Africa Industrialization Week (18 – 22 November) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. France’s Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MEAE) provided funding for the event. The event titled “Rural youth and decent jobs creation in food systems” was organized by the Platform Secretariat with substantial funding by France. It was attended by 60 participants, of which 12 were young agripreneurs from francophone and anglophone Africa . The roundtable discussion looked at the challenges and approaches to decent job creation for young people. There were also breakout session where participants held reflections on different areas affecting decent job creation for rural youth. Oriane Bathélemy submitted the major points taken from the discussions of young African agripreneurs and donors directly to the YES! Forum. (All presentations and the report are available for download on GDPRD website: [“Rural youth and decent jobs creation in food systems: The youthful future of African agribusiness”](#)).
- A mapping study on rural youth networks in Africa ([“Insights into youth networks around agriculture and rural development in Africa”](#)) was conducted and published by James Kyewalabye, who interned at the Secretariat from May to September 2019. The study looks at youth networks in Africa that have a rural focus and work in agriculture. The insights provided are intended to help identify youth representatives for concerted engagement and pragmatic discussion of rural youth issues in the TWG. This is crucial as the TWG is supposed to have a mixed membership of 50% representatives of Platform member organisations and 50% youth representatives.
- The findings of the rural youth assessment were also presented in a [webinar](#) in early November as part of the Platform’s Autumn Webinar Series. The webinar further explored questions on the types, structures, activities and challenges of rural youth networks, and most importantly identified entry points for donor intervention.
- In 2019, a total of [13 web-articles](#) were released on the Platform’s website, making “Rural Youth” one of the top three Platform themes, together with Agenda 2030/SDG2 Roadmap and Land Governance.

Updates from Peter Wobst, FAO

- FAO has published a series of policy briefs on youth and the effects of Covid-19, conducted youth related webinars as well as a survey capturing the voices of 170 young entrepreneurs from 24 countries.
- FAO explores to adapt the ICA (Integrated Country Approach) flagship program and organize other youth inclusive responses to the pandemic.

- Under the Global Initiative on Youth Employment together with the International Labour Organization (ILO) a forum on youth and rural jobs in the Sahel was initiated.
- Together with ILO a program on youth employment in the Sahel is under preparation in the context of the G7 framework on rural youth employment in the G5 Sahel countries.
- Preparations for a BMZ (Germany) financed project on building resilience in the Sahel through job creation are underway.
- In cooperation with UNIDO a program on “Opportunities for Youth in Agribusiness” is under preparation.
- Jointly with GIZ, AUC-DREA was supported to develop an African Agribusiness Youth Strategy (AAYS).
- A Rural Youth Action Plan and a Youth Employment Framework are being developed for mainstreaming within FAO.
- For more detailed information on FAO’s work, see the summary in the annex to these minutes.

Updates from Ji Yeun Rim, OECD

- OECD completed an EU financed 4 years project on youth inclusion in 10 countries.
- Under the workstream on youth employment, OECD is measuring the quantity of jobs in the food economy in 7 countries and developing a forecast for 2030, focusing on identifying local quality job opportunities for youth in the downstream of food VC. Results will be available in early 2021.
- Find out more about OECD’s work on youth [here](#)

Updates from Rahul Antao, IFAD

- IFAD’s Rural Youth Action Plan was released early 2019 with 4 pillars: (1) 50% of the portfolio should be youth sensitive, (2) internal and external capacity building, (3) partnerships and resource mobilization and (4) knowledge generation.
- Currently IFAD is exploring options for a youth engagement mechanism to further improve programming (80% of new projects in 2019 are already youth sensitive). IFAD is also interested to link into youth dialogues organized by FAO.
- Exchange with GIZ on the nexus of youth and land is ongoing, best practices will be gathered and shared.
- Coordination for the start of a BMZ co-financed Agribusiness-Hubs project is ongoing (concept note will be shared).

Updates from Karon Bascombe, Tech4Agri

- Current focus is on media and journalism features around Covid-19, producing a series featuring young farmers.

- A slowdown of food imports in the Caribbean was reported, failures in food systems and distribution systems obstruct food supply.
- Keron Mentioning informed about the progress of a Tech4Agri-led project on climate change and disaster relief for vulnerable rural communities in the Caribbean. The project was facing financial challenges but was shortlisted in several Media competitions.

Updates from Frank Bertelmann, GIZ Project Rural Employment with a Focus on Youth

- The project transitioned to an operational program with activities about to start in Kenya, Malawi and Burkina Faso this year, adding Mozambique in 2021.
- A study on “What works in Rural Youth Employment Promotion” ([link](#)) has been published. It describes lessons learnt and success factors based on an analysis of 11 GIZ agricultural and rural development projects.
- The project has engaged with AUS-DREA to support the AAYS as a continental strategy to provide guidance for member states.
- Youth dialogues were piloted in Namibia, Botswana and Zambia to empower youth to engage in political processes, especially related to CAADP and the formulation of NAIPs. The CAADP Youth Network (CYN) has supported the dialogues and a documentation was shared with the TWG.
- Based on experiences from Kenya guidelines for organizational development of youth networks and organizations have been developed and can soon be shared.
- Related to the nexus of land and youth the project is supporting the development of a training tool on generation exchange that will be piloted in Uganda. The concept of the tool was presented and received a lot of interest during a youth session of the Global Landscape Forum (GLF) conference end of May.

Action point

- Sharing of relevant documents or links (all TWG members)

3. Update from the Secretariat: Secretariat transfer and implications

- **Oliver** Hanschke briefly informed about the transfer of the Secretariat from GIZ to IFAD by the end of June 2020 and announced that the AGA will be postponed and will held in a different format. He informed that during the last board meeting two new Co-Chairs were approved. The acting Co-Chair David Hegwood will stay in his function for an indefinite period of time, ensuring a smooth transition. The two new incoming Co-Chairs are Conrad Rein (European Commission) Paul van de Logt (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands).
- **Maurizio** Navarra informed that IFAD is working closely with all Board members to develop a new 5-year Strategic Plan for the Platform. Part of the process is to review

the management of TWGs and their work programs. The importance and potential of the TWG on Rural Youth was stressed, together with the TWGs Agenda 2030 / SDG2 Roadmap and Land Governance. To provide support to the TWG and allocate earmarked Platform resources, results-based activities should be presented by the end of the year, not necessarily in form of a work plan. Since at IFAD only 3 staff will work for the platform secretariat best use must be made of these limited resources. The TWG should also identify specific leads that take the initiative on activities and support the TWG with resources. In addition, he informed that plans are currently developed for holding a virtual AGA around October/November and a special AGA 2021 leading up to the Food System Summit 2021 in New York, USA.

- **Jörg** Lohmann expressed his gratitude for the engagement and commitment at IFAD in taking over the Secretariat and added that it is very valuable to have a wide range of participants in the TWG, ranging from Board members to representatives from projects.

4. Where does the TWG stand? How do we move forward? Discussion of modalities, responsibilities and concrete activities

- **Oliver** Hanschke wrapped up previous discussions in the TWG on the modalities under which the TWG is supposed to work, including having strong youth participation, developing a work plan and meeting at side-events. Out of the seven thematic areas under the secretariat only three (Land Governance, Agenda 2030/SDG2 Roadmap, Rural Youth) have a TWG that is facilitated by the Secretariat, whereas other themes are only supported with minimal services, e.g. information sharing via mailing lists. He stressed that it is important to define the added value of the TWG, how the TWG will operate and organize itself in the future and how to ensure youth participation, especially as this is his last TWG call that he facilitates.
- **Maurizio** Navarra added by stressing that defining the added value of the TWG is of the essence to receive support of the secretariat. Clear results and outputs need to be defined, although a detailed work plan is not necessarily required. It is important that with concrete results the platform makes use of its convening power, potential for advocacy and building partnerships.
- **Peter** Wobst sees the value added of the TWG by possibly providing a playing field for effective exchange and coordination, matchmaking of actors, joint conceptualising, developing of proposals and further exchange on (joint) implementation. For example, for the coordination of actors to operationalize the G7 framework on rural youth employment.
- **Frank** Bertelmann supports the idea of developing a concrete, but still flexible work plan defining realistic goals and results. Coordination of the various actors supporting

rural youth is much needed at different levels and could be supported under the TWG. There are ample entry points for knowledge management, exchange on approaches and developing a joint toolbox, or identifying best practices of measuring employment. For organizing the work of the TWG it is important to identify leads, capitalizing on the teams of people working on the topic and being engaged in the TWG.

- **Jörg** Lohmann introduced the idea that the TWG could give up the status of an independent working group and be integrated in the thematic chapter on youth and gender of the TWG on land, the SDG 2 group or the Covid-19 task force. **Maurizio** added that the group is free to develop ideas and design the future set-up as long as the group is equipped with a clear vision and mission.
- **Frank** Bertelmann argued for the group to stay independent, since rural youth (employment) is not only a crosscutting issue, but a specific topic with specific approaches that are not covered in other groups.
- **Oriane** Barthélemy said that developing a work plan would be beneficial for the TWG providing a structure for thematic discussions and activities that should go further than just exchanging on what everyone is doing.
- **Keron** Bascombe commented that the TWG has spent too much time discussing about the administrative setup in the past and should become more actionable, identify synergies and maximize the benefits of the group.
- **Peter** Wobst expressed that he likes the idea of linking the TWG to another group or task force. However, the group should act independently, become more actionable, not by having a joint work plan with joint programming, but by coordinating different actions, keeping each other informed and creating the opportunity for forming coalitions and feeding into other themes like Agenda 2030 or Covid-19.
- **Maurizio** Navarra stressed several times the strong willingness of the platform to support the workstreams and the TWG. He encouraged someone from the group to volunteer and take the lead for the TWG. He emphasized that the development of a TWG strategy and work plan is crucial but doesn't need to be rushed. This can be done independently and in parallel to the development of the 5-year strategic plan for the platform. Early next year the platform will ask the TWG to present their planning for the year, either in the form of a work plan or a clearly articulated vision that will lead to a future work plan.
- **Oliver** Hanschke added by confirming that for the TWG the initiative and content needs to come from the members. He pledged for developing a work plan and suggested to revise the TWG concept note, aligning it with the new strategic plan. In response to **Ji Yeun** Rims question related to the financing of the workstream it was clarified that no core budget is available from the platform apart for basic organizational support. All activities must be financed on a voluntary basis by TWG

members, hence they must raise interest and fit into funding portfolios of individual donors.

- **Peter** Wobst emphasized the strong commitment and willingness to the TWG which is evident by the participation of multiple colleagues from FAO and GIZ in the call. Peter wondered whether the Secretariat could draft the necessary documents and agreed that a work plan should be developed soon. He also suggested that over the next weeks the TWG members could compile information on the impact of Covid-19 on rural youth employment and develop a compendium that provides an overview on the analysis, policy responses and actions taken so far.
- **Frank** Bertelmann suggested to prepare a joint document gathering the expectations and possible contributions from the TWG members as a basis to identify areas of joint interest and defining a future work plan.
- **Jörg** Lohmann supports the idea of Frank, with the aim that at the AGA the results and a concept could be presented. He also emphasized to identify a lead and co-chairs to make the group stable, sustainable, vivid and visible. If a concrete and concise concept is presented, there might even be the possibility that a board member provides funding for activities.
- **Keron** Bascombe mentioned that he considers volunteering as co-chair after reviewing the MoM.

Action points for the TWG (summarized by Oliver / Maurizio)

- Develop a new or revised concept note for the TWG (current version is available for [download](#) and will also be circulated to all TWG members)
- Define actionable results and eventually a more formal work plan
- Identify a lead for coordinating and facilitating the TWG who also acts as counterpart for the secretariat and helps shape the overall strategic plan (interest to be expressed in email response to MoM) .

Suggested Action Points (from Peter / Frank)

- Compile a compendium on Covid-19 impacts on rural youth employment and responses
- Prepare a joint document on expectations and possible contributions of TWG members

Annex

FAO DRET past/ongoing activities Rural Youth TWG Global Donor Platform for Rural Development

Past/ongoing activities (see also dedicated overview on DRE website: <http://www.fao.org/rural-employment/resources/detail/en/c/1276700/> - impact of rural youth employment, featuring:

- COVID-19 Policy Brief on **Rural Youth** (to be released soon) as well as **Informal Workers**, and **Migrant Workers** and **Youth in Africa** – [dedicated FAO COVID-19 website](#) - all COVID-19 related resources are accessible
- Advocating for youth-inclusive responses: IANYD contribution, ICA induced “survey” (As part of FAO’s youth engagement initiative COVID-19: **Voices of young agripreneurs**, a total of 170 youth in agribusiness from 24 African countries responded an online survey from 30 April to 20 May 2020.
- **UN IANYD Statement on COVID-19 & Youth - The United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development (IANYD)**
- **Webinars** focusing on rural youth and youth employment, e.g. responding to Covid-19 in Africa through youth-led digital solutions in agri-food system; Youth and Responsible Investment (27/05); Pastoralist youth in towns and cities - Supporting the economic and social integration of pastoralist youth in Chad and Burkina Faso.
- **Elaborating a FAO-ILO proposal: UN joint programme focusing on RYE in the G5 Sahel**
- FAO-ILO collaboration on **Sub-regional Forum** on “Boosting decent jobs for youth in Sahel’s rural economy”
- Pipeline proposal with **BMEL**, to be initiated within 2020 focusing on “Building resilience in the Sahel Region through job creation for youth” (2 further active pipelines on youth engagement, and seasonal migration)
- **Assessment of the policy and programming environment related to rural youth employment in Mauritania** – funded through FR MoFA related to the G7 FW on RYE in the G5 Sahel.
- **Paper on RYE in the Sahel**, featuring, among other things, good practices of youth-led or youth suitable initiatives, including COVID-19 (Context: G7 FW on RYE in G5 Sahel; exchange with the G5 Sahel Alliance Secretariat).
- **African Agribusiness Youth Strategy** (AUC-DREA - process supported by CAADP Support Programm, GIZ/German Development Cooperation): Active participation at the Inception Workshop and Contribution to the development of the strategy.
- **FAO Rural Youth Action Plan (COAG)**



- Regular exchange with GIZ (Global Project on Rural Employment with a Focus on Youth country packages in Kenya, Burkina Faso, Malawi) and BMZ (Nina Neubecker at division 120) on lessons learned and synergies on promoting rural youth employment
- FAO-UNIDO Joint Programme **Opportunities for Youth in Africa (OYA)**: Accelerating Jobs creation in agriculture and agribusiness
- **FAO Youth Employment Framework**
- Engaging youth through digital communication initiative