



CONCEPT NOTE

Young and ready to move – empowering the new generation in the rural space

ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY (AGA) 2018

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Auditorium Friedrichstrasse, Quartier 110, Friedrichstrasse 180, 10117 Berlin

Co-hosted by

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development, Germany (BMZ)
and African Development Bank (AfDB)

General objective of Annual General Assemblies of the Platform

The general objective of Annual General Assemblies (AGA) is to provide an open space for debate and possible consensus building by [Platform members](#), partners and invited guests on emerging topics in agriculture and rural development (ARD). In these events, participants can benefit from the core functions of the Donor Platform such as knowledge sharing, advocacy and networking on key development issues and strategic directions that directly or indirectly affect the lives in the rural space.

Setting the scene

Engaging youth as actors of change for inclusive rural transformations

Youth accounts for one out of every six people worldwide. About 10 – 12 million jobs or self-employments as agri-preneurs need to be created and/or supported per year until 2035 in Africa alone and millions of young people are bound to engage in agriculture. The challenge of the so-called “youth bulge” is not only about the number of jobs to be created but the quality of those jobs as highlighted in the SDG 8¹. Rural young women face additional challenges including unequal access to assets and opportunities and more generally lack of participation in decision-making.

The future of agriculture and rural development depends on the young generation. Addressing inclusive rural transformation entails bringing young rural women and young rural men on board, empowering them to speak for themselves and to bring in their experiences and ideas, and creating spaces for them to connect, share and develop solutions.

¹ Decent work is often framed using the ILO four pillars of: Employment generation and enterprise development; Labour standards and rights of employees; Social protection; Governance and social dialogue.

An unprecedented need for collaboration to empower rural youth

How to design and implement ARD interventions that contribute to rural youth empowerment?

Two things are clear: firstly, there is a need to better understand/measure how many youth-responsive ARD programmes there currently are, and how to improve them. Secondly, creating and supporting conditions under which young women and men can thrive requires joint efforts and coordinated resources. There must be strengthened collaboration with and among a range of actors (donors, farmers' associations, cooperatives, the private sector and developing countries' governments), enhancing south-to-south cooperation and dialogue with youth.

Many donors/IFI are already engaged with rural youth in various ways. For example, the G20 Rural Youth Employment Initiative was announced at the G20 Summit in 2017 under the German Presidency as part of its Partnership with Africa, and the Jobs for Youth in Africa strategy 2016-2025 designed by the African Development Bank in 2015, which aims to create 25 million jobs and to build the skills of 50 million youth to improve their employability or become successful entrepreneurs.

The diversity of youth and the realities they face requires us to consider that there are different pathways to rural youth employment. Some will remain in rural areas and some are moving out. While farming is not always perceived as attractive for youth, this picture changes under certain conditions. A recent survey by GIZ in Africa shows that young people may appreciate agriculture as their professional environment as long as good and fair wages, a decent working environment and enabling conditions are in place to start an economically viable agri-preneurship.

Some of the pathways considered in donor programmes include support to agri-preneurship and self-employment within the agricultural sector. Others foster the diversification of rural incomes and access to wage (on- and off-farm) jobs, in particular for youth with no or little access to land.

Including a territorial approach² to youth employment can bring additional knowledge on the linkages between agricultural productivity, on-farm and off-farm employment (seasonal or permanent) in the food sector and other sectors, in rural areas, intermediary towns, peri-urban and urban spaces.

Beyond employment, the question of rural youth empowerment includes dimensions such as political and civic engagement, self-confidence and ability to make choices and being heard, as well as access to land, finance, quality education and health, just to name the few.

A compendium of engagements of the Platform membership with rural youth will be presented at the Annual General Assembly. The compendium highlights current approaches, trends and remaining questions. In parallel, young people will offer some answers on how to move forward in rural areas, e.g. with the ASEAN Young Farmers' Declaration.

² Allen, T., P. Heinrigs and I. Heo (2017), "Agriculture, food and jobs in West Africa", West African Papers, N°11, OECD Publishing, Paris.

Objective of the AGA

The general objective of the AGA 2018 is to improve donor/IFI approaches, programmes and strategies for rural youth empowerment against the needs and views of the younger generation in developing countries and the opportunities, which the private sector provides.

The AGA 2018 will bring together the donor/IFI community and young women and men for a dialogue:

- Provide an effective exchange of information and knowledge between the young rural generation and the AGA participants on how to make ARD programmes more youth-responsive;
- Present donor / IFI engagement in rural youth empowerment and provide insights of private sector engagement; and receive feedback from the young generation and what are the priorities in moving forward.

Structure of the AGA

Day 1 provides the space for exchange on perspectives of the young generation and how donors/IFIs are currently engaging with youth in rural areas. The AGA will begin with an interactive networking session around two questions: What is the most innovative and/or successful youth intervention or programme you have done or seen? What is the most challenging question we face in regards to youth and agriculture?

A forum is provided for youth to talk about their concerns and key priorities, followed by an open World Café discussion on Platform's perspectives and responses to the younger generation's needs and how it informs the way ARD interventions for youth empowerment are and should be designed in the future.

A compendium on current donor programmes will be presented and the findings will be reflected in a joint donors and youth panel. In working groups will then go into a deeper exchange of knowledge and suggestions on access to productive assets like land and finance, measuring impact of youth support programmes and approaches to engage youth directly into the design of future programmes.

Participants Day 1: [Platform members](#) & IFI, partners, ARD development practitioners engaged in rural youth topics, invited guests and representatives of the young farming generation, youth-led farmer organisations and young agri-preneurs as well as the private sector.

Day 2 provides a high-level forum to provide a strategic and political outlook on the future support to the young rural generation. A keynote note will frame the event by provoking the debate on challenges and opportunities in times of rapid urbanisation and migration. The following two panels will debate about the support to young entrepreneurship as well as development effectiveness through innovative and progressive donor and IFI programmes based on the views of the private sector and the young rural generation.

Participants Day 2: High-level representatives of donor/IFI organisations, [Platform members](#) & partners, ARD development practitioners engaged in (rural) youth topics, invited guests and representatives of the young rural generation and the private sector.