

Youth Thematic Working Group Meeting
February 22nd, 2019
16:00 CET (1 h)

Summary of discussion

Participants:

Emanuela Benini (Italian Agency for Development Cooperation), Meredith McCormack (USAID), Edson Mpyisi (AfDB), Keron Bascombe (Tech4Agri, Trinidad & Tobago), James Kyewalabye (University of East Anglia, UK), Ida Morén Strømsø (Spire, Norway)

For the Platform Secretariat: Oliver Hanschke

Minutes: Oliver Hanschke

Agenda:

1. Welcome and round of introduction
2. Updates
3. Workplan and activities
4. AOB
5. Next steps

1. Welcome and outlook

After a short introduction, the group welcomes Ida Morén Strømsø, Vice President of Spire, Norway and James Kyewalabye, currently at the University of East Anglia/UK.

- Ida is the Vice President of Spire, a Norwegian NGO that works with NORAD on issues on agriculture, urban issues, and climate change. One of the intentions of this cooperation is to provide input on how NORAD can improve youth centred programmes.
- James is an agripreneur from Uganda and currently a M.A. student at the University of East Anglia. He attended the 2018 AGA in his role as one of winners of last year's AYAF Agri-Pitch contest and will be interning at the Platform Secretariat in summer 2019.

2. Updates and news

2.1. Updates from the Secretariat

Oliver Hanschke reports about the progress regarding the set-up of the new dedicated workspace for Rural Youth of the Platform's website. Technically, the new workspace will have the same functionality like the other work streams featured on the website. The set-up implies partial reprogramming of the website's back-end. Content wise, the new workspace will initially build on already existing material, i.e. relevant data and knowledge materials (e.g. AGA 2018 reports and the Compendium), that will be migrated to the new work stream. The work is underway and a first version of the workspace will be live by the end of March.

Currently, a graphic designer has been contracted by the Secretariat to develop a “Rural Youth” icon that is stylistically in accordance with the already established work stream icons and that symbolizes the essentials of the working group, i.e., youth representation, agriculture, transition, future. A first draft will be available on 25 February. A fine-tuned version will be shared with the group.

The question was discussed whether members will or should have the opportunities to post materials or put links into the new webpages. Edson emphasized the need to decide a strategy for member participation and interaction – especially when considering that the Thematic Working Group will ideally have a 50% participation of youth from outside the Platform. Emanuela highlighted the need for criteria to categorise content and evaluate its appropriateness. The Secretariat was asked to develop 2-3 options for this and share them with the group for discussion.

Various participants emphasized the need of including an attractive, up-to-date event calendar section on Rural Youth that features events and raises interest for cooperation. The Secretariat was asked to support the development of a standardized format for events and come up with a template for it. The template will allow for better cross collaboration promotion and, in addition, secure quality.

Action points:

- Secretariat continues the set-up of the Rural Youth workspace on the Platform’s website. A first version is to be finalized by end of March
- Secretariat shares final drafts of the new Rural Youth icon
- Secretariat develops 2-3 options for uploading content (publications, news, and announcements) onto the new workspace.
- Secretariat invites group to a special discussion on criteria for workspace content
- Secretariat develops a format for a calendar event template

2.2. Updates from Meredith McCormack/USAID:

- USAID’s Youth has recently launched the Youth Lead Platform website. It is an interactive workspace to share ideas, join discussions and learn about event. The website, that also contains a section on agriculture, allows youth entrepreneurs to interact with one another and to share their projects and best practices. It also highlights funding and training opportunities around the world and welcomes new ambassadors (requirements: 18-35 yrs. old; from lower or middle-income country) to promote the platform.
 - Weblink [Platform Website](#)
 - Weblink [Ambassador Program](#)
- USAID is going to recruit a new person to mainly deal with youth, probably in the later course of the year.

2.3 Updates from Edson Mpyisi/AfDB:

Edson highlighted the involvement of AfDB in two major events coming up this year with high relevance rural youth.

- African Youth Agripreneur Forum (AYAF)

June 24-28 Cape Town, South Africa

- The AYAF is an AfDB annual activity. It includes the attractive “Agripitch” competition, which gains special attraction from the fact that participants can pitch in front of investors and market their ideas.
 - AfDB sponsors up to 30 participants to participate in the event. Platform members are encouraged to sponsor additional participants.
 - Last year’s AYAF and AgriPitch Competition was held in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire under the theme “**Technologies and Innovations for Youth in Agribusiness**”. It attracted over 400 participants from across the continent, including youth agripreneurs, agribusiness companies, investors, and academia and development partners, among others.
 - Call for proposals: March/Edson will send the link when competition opens up
- Africa Green Revolution Forum (AGRF), organized by AGRA (Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa)

Steering Committee of Youth Technical Working Group

Sep 3-6, Accra, Ghana

- The African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF) is considered to be the world's premier forum for African agriculture, bringing together stakeholders in the agricultural landscape to take practical actions and share lessons that will move African agriculture forward.
- The 2019 AGRF aims at identifying and catalysing the enabling policies, programmes and investments to leverage digital transformation to drive sustainable food systems in Africa. Given the unprecedented growth and adoption of digital technologies, Africa has an opportunity to leapfrog the agricultural transformation trajectory of the past and revolutionise life by overcoming isolation, speeding up change, creating jobs of the future, and taking success to scale.

2.4. Updates from Emanuela Benini/IADC

- Youth issues take an important role at IADC; IADC is about to launch a Youth Strategy – for first time since 10 years ago. The new strategy is to be seen within the bigger framework of Agenda 2030.
- Emanuela is closely working together with Marco Platzter, who is IADC’s Focal Point at the Global Donor Platform and an economist by training. The strategy therefore incorporates social affairs (Emanuela) with economic thinking (Marco)
- With regard to concerting with the international framework, Emanuela is in close contact with Rome based UN agencies

2.5. Updates from Keron Bascombe/Tech4Agri, Trinidad & Tobago:

- Keron informed that WHYFARM (We Help You- Farm) is a recipient of an award via the Misk Grand Challenge in the global citizenship category, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
- WHYFARM aims at promoting agriculture among children by increasing their awareness on how they can contribute to solving the world’s food problem and by doing so grow the future feeders of 2050.

- The project is entitled: Creatively Empowering Youth & Kid agripreneurs as global citizens to achieve food & nutrition security by the year 2050.
- 4 projects will be implemented that build human capacity and agency, by using creative advocacy tools that will influence perceptions, behaviour, and policy to support youth engagement and participation in agriculture.
- Tech4agri will provide media & communications support for the projects' 18 month duration, namely through the Agripreneur MasterMind Program (a mentoring program) that places a call to Action for Trinidad & Tobago's Best Agripreneurs, AgriKOOLture Kidz School Drama Tour & Farm to Table Competition, AGRIMAN Adventures Comic Strip & Comic Book Series and a Museum and Food Factory Park
- Keron said, that WHYFARM is seeking partners locally, regionally & internationally to collaborate: TWG members are invited to contact Keron to learn more.

2.6. News from Ida Morén Strømsø/Spire, Norway:

- NORAD is planning to hold a youth event together with partners in Oslo in June. Background: NORAD intends to close the gap of youth issues in development strategies
- Major partner is Spire, an Oslo based NGO. The concept of the event links development issues with a high youth participation and will be organized during NORAD's Agricultural Week. The Agricultural Week coincides with the release of the Action Plan for Food Systems. Currently, a 1-2 day seminar on youth is planned before the launch of the Action Plan
- Spire plans event together with Plan International, in direct cooperation with NORAD
- Ida will send more information as soon as it is available and identify options for cooperation with the group
- The group also expressed the idea of organizing a side event on the Oslo event

Action points:

2019 African Youth Agripreneur Forum (AYAF) & Agri-Pitch:

- All: Check funding opportunities to sponsor Agri-Pitch contestants at AYAF 2019
- Edson: link when competition opens up

Misk Grand Challenge/Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation:

- All: Group members inform their networks about the competition and liaise with Keron in order to promote international cooperation.

3. Workplan and activities

There was consensus that the group must address the following issues beyond setting up the workspace on the Platform's website:

- What are or should be useful knowledge products?
- What are the gaps that have been identified in the compendium?
- Which major events shall the group consider for activities, such as side events? In this respect, a bigger event on agriculture and youth planned by NORAD and partners that will be held in Oslo in June was considered as an attractive opportunity

- What will be the process to invite new members?
- How will the TWG organize itself?

Emanuela suggested to have a core group and dedicated subgroups:

Tasks and responsibilities of the core group:

- Dealing with how to organize and build the TWG and Platform
- Develop and define formats for sharing ideas
- Identify options for funding

Tasks and responsibilities of the subgroups:

Subgroups should address the seven objectives outlines in the TWG concept note:

The objectives of the TWG are to promote meaningful youth engagement in all stages of donor initiatives on agriculture and rural development, through:

- Achieving youth mainstreaming in all donor activities.
- Sharing evidence-based approaches to effectively promote youth inclusive programming to create meaningful, decent, profitable, innovative, and inclusive work along diverse value chains.
- Identifying the gaps in youth programming and best practices.
- Promoting learning and collaboration across a variety of means, including South-to-South and South-to-North youth cooperation, rural and urban linkages, intergenerational linkages, and innovative partnerships.
- Promoting multi-stakeholder partnerships among donors, multilaterals, regional, and national institutions working with diverse actors, including youth, donors, governments, universities, and civil society organizations.
- Resource mobilization for catalytic and niche activities aimed at engaging and empowering youth and those that enhance coordination of donor youth programmes, for developing knowledge sharing products, and sponsoring youth participation in relevant meetings and fora.
- Creating effective and innovative communication systems and channels for knowledge, information and opportunity sharing (such as mentorships for young people) between donors and youth as well as with other strategic stakeholders.

Subgroups will occasionally pull in other Platform members but they can also stretch out and involve youth representatives and representatives from relevant organization outside the Platform. In fact, participants highlighted that high youth participation is key.

It was discussed that an exchange platform , incl. options for funding, will be a great tool, but very expensive (Meredith). The financial burden to the Platform must be taken into account when developing the workspace and adding features to it. It should be assessed which (other) resources are available.

4. AOB

Internship of James Kyewalabye at the Secretariat

- James will be interning at the Secretariat from 20 May until 16 August and will work on the Rural Youth work stream.
- The Secretariat has already prepared a work plan. A highlight of the work plan is a desk study of youth networks in Africa with the intention to identify the key network, as well as promising lesser-known networks, and learn about their goals, organisation, key persons etc.
- The group welcomed James and looks forward to working and exchanging with him.
- Edson stated that very often one is dealing with networks on an individual basis; therefore understanding how these networks operate and what drives them will be helpful.
- Some participants raised the issue that the study may find its limits in the volatile nature of many of these networks
- It was suggested that James may also look at the compendium on rural youth (released at AGA 2018) to identify gaps
- Another idea is to look at what has worked in youth initiatives and programmes by donors and what the success factors are. This will have to be based on feedback from projects that are already implemented. The willingness to cooperate and deliver facts and figures may be bigger if the focus is on successful approaches/best practices

AfDB support for studies on Rural Youth

- Edson informed that AfDB has a number of trust funds that are open to fund promising studies. Anyone who comes up with a good idea of study would be welcome and is encouraged to contact Edson.
- This option would also hold true for James; as Edson noted, it can take up to 3-4 months until approval, thus early action is required
- Edson will share ToRs of previous fund applications for inspiration. As he does not have time resources to draw up appropriate ToRs, he suggested that someone else in the group, e.g. the Secretariat together with James, takes the lead in the process.

Youth representation in the TWG

- Emanuela suggested to hold a small competition to find out what groups and networks are relevant, especially with regard to capacity development;
- By mid-March Emanuela will work out and develop this idea further, including a concept of how to approach the right groups all over the world

5. Next steps

- The next TWG call will be held in 4-6 weeks. The Secretariat will send an invite ahead of time to allow for high participation.
- The TWG is encouraged to have a pre-AGA meeting on 19 June in Zurich/Switzerland