YOUTH NETWORKS IN AFRICA

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RURAL YOUTH

BACKGROUND & METHODOLOGY

- Establishment of Global Donor Platform’s Rural Youth Thematic Working Group – Development programme WITH the youth not for the youth
- Identification of youth representatives
- First step to understand: what kind of networks exists? what do they do? how are they structured?
- Identification of potential avenues for collaboration and getting broader youth representation

Methodology:
- Online searches and snowballing
- Information collected through phone calls and questionnaire with 40 organisations
- Networks selected based on willingness
WHY YOUTH NETWORKS?

- Creation of synergies to take advantage of economies of scale-marketing, production, bulking
- Sharing information (a lot of interactions online)
- Convening power can push agendas – with governments donors etc.
- Jointly purchase niche services e.g. trainings
- Peer mentoring and social capitals
- Access to finance

Source: facebook.com
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Rigid entry requirements for traditional cooperatives

Young people didn’t have a say in the decisions of the co-ops

Youth felt left out of opportunities

Expressed a feeling of “elite capture” by co-op managers

National youth councils – considered check box in policy & constrained by political will

MVIWAMBO Dairy cooperative, Tanzania

1. It is necessary to own livestock (price of a cow ranges between 700,000-1,000,000 TZS=266-380 EURO)
2. Have 5 shares (20,000 TZS for one share=8 EURO)
3. One needs to be 18 and older
4. Membership fee
5. Need to have milk arrive on time
6. Quality of milk needs to be at certain standard.

Flink et al., 2018
Literature around youth networks is very scanty
Various networks, doing different things, with different structures
They could be clustered based on different areas:

- **Scope of work** - Collective action, academia, lobby and advocacy, youth & policy involvement
- **Geographical scope of operations** – continental, regional e.g. west African, country or sub county or village level operations
- **Affiliations** – recognised country chapters, institutional affiliations e.g. AU youth
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Involved in agricultural production & come together to capitalize on economies of scale

- Carry out activities in production and marketing
- Usually focused on a particular crop
- Usually small in number (10–20)
- Usually funded by gains from production

Kibwezi Hortipreneurs Youth Group (KHYG):

- 14 members – Graduates with bachelor's degrees
- Involved in production of vegetables, grain, and value addition
- Has organised administrative systems with members spread around marketing, production, and value addition activities
- Housed by the University of Nairobi

Others:

- Tomato and Orchard Producers Association of Nigeria - Nigeria
- Associação Jan - value addition and production, Mozambique
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- Not necessarily engaged in agricultural production
- Contribute to ARD through data generation for various uses
- Work strives to diversify the youth involvement in Ag paradigm
- Composed of academic professionals
- Have commercial products

ACADEMIA

Young African Researchers In Agriculture (YARA):
- Peer network of young and early career researchers
- 150 researchers in 25 countries in Africa
- Youth mainstreamed in all themes
- Knowledge generation and dissemination capacity building of researchers
- Hosted by University of Cape Town in SA

Other network:
- Tanzania Graduate Farmers Association
**Young Farmers Champions Network (YOFCHAN):**

- Strive to voice the challenges and ideas of young people in the agricultural space
- Involved in creating linkages for young farmers, capacity building, with a focus on lobby and advocacy
- Created the "National Youth in Agriculture Manifesto"
- Reference point for MOA in regards to youth programmes

**Others:**

- Young Farmers' Federation of Uganda (UNYFA)
- Africa Initiative on Climate Change Zambia

**Lobby & Advocacy**

- Lobby for specific activities – getting the youth and their needs heard
- Policy makers – main audience
- Usually have larger membership – 500+
- Clearly laid out management structures
- Have strong affiliations with governments and other practitioners
- Activities are largely funded by donors
 Equip fellow young people with specific skills and knowledge
 Usually not involved in political lobbying – Rather focusing on getting information to young people
 Young people are the main audience
 A big focus on getting young people aware of current challenges e.g. climate change
 Large following of youth but have a core management team

The Youth Café Kenya:
 Intersection point between young people and policy institutions key activities
 Translating facilitation of youth participatory democracy information to “youth friendly” formats, podcasts
 Developed the Kenyan youth manifesto

Others:
 Youth Agenda Trust – Zimbabwe
 The initiative for a greener Africa – Nigeria
 Young Emerging farmers Initiative – Zambia
# Continental networks:
- Large networks with 1000+ membership
- Well built structures – secretariat functions, staff, etc.
- Usually structured with country chapters
- Handle a wide array of topics
- Diversity in performance of the chapters based on various factors
- Have solid recognition from different stakeholders

## Africa Youth in Agribusiness Association (AYA):
- A lot of activities carried out online
- Different focal points across different countries
- Promote continental cross learning and collaboration
- Share information to fellow young people

## Other networks:
- Africa Youth Initiative on Climate Change
- CAADP Youth Network
Country networks:
- Operations focused on country structures
- Usually affiliated with the national governments
- Have other networks tying into them
- Usually require membership subscriptions
- Operate with democratic structure – AGM
- Highly functional structures

Botswana Young Farmers Association:
- Over 5000 young farmers in Botswana along different value chains
- Provide conversion point for other networks
- Different activities - trainings for young farmers, policy participation
- Annual Botswana young farmers forum
- Legally registered with a board and administrative body

Other networks:
- Namibia Young Farmers Association
- Rwanda Youth in Agribusiness forum
- National Farmers Network Cameroon
Young Professionals For Agricultural Research and Development

- World wide informal network
- A shared vision of food secure world without poverty where young people are enabled to fully contribute
- A lot of activities online

Climate Smart Agriculture Youth Network:

- Operations in Africa, Asia, USA and Europe
- Focus on promoting CSA practices
- Sensitisation of youth in SDG processes – translated SDGs to local languages
- Take on other activities

Institutional affiliations:

- CAADP Youth Network
- AU- EU Youth Envoys
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CHALLENGES FACED BY YOUTH NETWORKS

- Operational resources
- Lack of political support
- Access to information & cross networking
- Technical Guidance
- Avenues for participation
- Youth Mindsets
- Others
RECOMMENDATIONS

- Understanding the diversity of networks specifically in regards to structures and composition
- Matching development programme needs with the structures to prevent unwarranted changes in the structures of the networks
- Need for more in depth studies to answer questions about power structures, representativeness and risks of “elite capture”
- Enhancing efforts to increase the visibility of youth networks – many networks are not visible and are not easy to find
Facilitation of creation of youth network led advisory committees within donor communities like the Rural Youth working group within the GDPRD

Promoting youth networks as recognised and relevant to governments

Creating programmes to bring together networks and harmonize efforts specifically at country and regional level

Provision of resources including hosting secretariat functions, operational funds

Building the technical capacity of network heads in terms of managing expansion, strategic planning and management

Creating arenas for networks to showcase their work i.e. international forums and events
Thank you...