

# How to do

## Access to land for rural youth employment and entrepreneurship

### Land tenure toolkit



**How To Do Notes** are prepared by IFAD's **Strategy and Knowledge Department** and aim to provide country programme managers, project design teams and implementing partners with practical suggestions and guidelines to help them design and implement programmes and projects.

They present technical and practical aspects of specific approaches, methodologies, models or project components that have been tested and can be recommended for implementation and scaling up. The notes include best practices and case studies that can be used as a model in a particular field.

**How To Do Notes** provide tools for project design based on best practices collected at the field level. They guide teams on how to implement specific recommendations of IFAD's operational policies, standard project requirements and financing tools.

The **How To Do Notes** are "living" documents and will be updated periodically based on new experiences and on feedback. If you have any comments and suggestions please contact the originator:

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## Introduction

This How To Do Note (HTDN), prepared jointly by IFAD's Land Tenure and Youth teams, presents the challenges and opportunities for young people seeking to access land for employment and entrepreneurship in the rural sector of the developing world. Access to and control over land and other natural resources can take different forms, from individual to family or community-based access, and from freehold to use rights, while always remaining a defining factor in the engagement of youth in agriculture. By understanding the different ways in which youth can access land and exploring good practices from recent initiatives, this note aims to inform the design and implementation of IFAD-supported country strategic opportunities programmes (COSOPs) and projects. The HTDN presents several good practice examples. It will also be posted online as a "living" document. We encourage readers and users to continue sharing lessons learned and any other suggestions with IFAD's Land Tenure and Youth teams through the contacts provided on the cover page.

### Box 1. Land tenure in the Rural Youth Action Plan 2019-2021

For IFAD, the lack of access by young people to land and natural resources is not only a result of the scarcity of these assets. It is, above all, determined by the lack of an enabling policy and regulatory environment to make agriculture a profitable and attractive business for young people. This scenario is further compounded by cultural barriers and customary laws, together with a lack of awareness of rights and policies in this area. And since many young people are reluctant to engage in the back-breaking, low-return forms of farming carried out by their parents, their demand for agricultural land and their willingness to invest their energy and resources in it are often limited. Engaging young people in dialogue concerning specific policies and legal frameworks regarding land and natural resources issues is crucial. The Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests (VGGT) and the AU Declaration on Land Issues and Challenges in Africa represent a step forward in specifying the processes and rights and duties of those involved, including rural youth.

### Youth access to land

Current demographic trends point to the urgency of addressing the question of youth access to land, as both land fragmentation and migration are growing phenomena that affect rural youth across regions. The 2018 World Youth Report (United Nations, 2018) indicates that there are 1.2 billion young people aged 15 to 24 years, accounting for 16 per cent of the global population. This number is currently projected to reach 1.5 billion by 2035, with the greatest increase in sub-Saharan Africa (at 26 per cent) and South-East Asia (at 20 per cent). Some 55 per cent of these young women and men live in rural areas, and 13 per cent struggle with unemployment. Countries in sub-Saharan Africa have the largest proportion of young population in the world, with over 70 per cent of the region's population below the age of 30. While IFAD acknowledges the United Nations' official definition of youth as ranging between 15 and 24 years of age, in practice different country-specific definitions of youth are employed, which in some African countries can include individuals aged 35-40 years. The definition can also change based on the topic discussed: in the case of land tenure, the group generally considered includes people who are at least 18 years of age.

However, definitions based only on age can be restrictive: factors such as sex (boy/man or girl/woman), marital status (single, married or widowed), level of education (from illiterate to university graduate), legal status (minor or with full rights) and stage in the life cycle (an adolescent girl versus a 20-year-old single mother; a 12-year-old boy versus a 24-year-old man with a wife and children) also need to be considered as these characteristics may affect a young person's access to land, as well as their employment opportunities, in different ways. The heterogeneity of young people increases the complexity of the issues that they face, calling for diverse solutions to be found for the different sub-groups of young people. The complex and varied nature of issues affecting rural youth requires specific attention in countries' legislation and policies (and in regional and international judicial documents), and in project and programme interventions, as do issues related to land tenure security and land rights. Knowing that rural youth themselves are the best spokespersons for their own needs, in recent years IFAD has worked to ensure their direct engagement to influence the design of programmes and projects.

## Box 2. Land tenure definitions

### Land tenure

The rules, norms and institutions that govern how, when and where people access land, or are excluded from such access; Land tenure systems are diverse and complex. They can be formal or informal; statutory or customary; legally recognized or not legally recognized; permanent or temporary; of private ownership or of common property; primary or secondary.

### Land tenure security

The enforceable claims on land and people's recognized ability to control and manage land and its natural resources.

### The land rights continuum

The wide range of context-specific land rights can be expressed as a continuum, with formal, clearly-mapped, individual land rights recognized by law at one end of the spectrum, and informal, customary group rights, which may not be clearly marked or officially recognized, at the other.

### Land rights

There are three principal rights linked to the spatial dimension of land: use rights; control rights; and transfer rights. Use rights refer to the right to use land for growing crops, passage, grazing animals and the utilization of natural and forest products. Control rights refer to the right to make decisions about how the land should be used and how benefits should be allocated. Transfer rights refer to the right to sell or mortgage land, convey land to others, transmit land through inheritance and reallocate use and control rights.

Access to and ownership of land, including other natural resources such as water, is one of the main factors shaping youth employment and entrepreneurship in agriculture because it defines their ability to develop management responsibilities and access investment opportunities (Kwame Yeboah et al., 2019). The lack of access to land leads to a lack of economic and financial means and is the reason why landlessness among rural youth is a primary cause of migration to urban areas and elsewhere to find alternative sources of income. Youth migration has social and cultural consequences for rural areas, including population ageing, weakening of the social fabric and loss of culture. In some societies, male youth migrate more to urban areas leading, in the long term, to the feminization of rural labour. Where land is owned by the community, decisions on how to use it are generally taken by older generations, for whom young people's interests may not always be the primary concern: the fear of fragmentation and unviable land parcels results in youth being treated as farmhands or unpaid family workers without tenure security, rather than as young farmers in their own right. This lack of autonomy, in turn, restricts young farmers' participation in farmers' organizations, which are generally only for independent farmers with their own land. "Youth employment and entrepreneurship" and "youth access to land and natural resources" are both priority themes in the IFAD Rural Youth Action Plan (IFAD, 2018b), highlighting the comparative advantage of IFAD in this context (see box 1).

Youth access to land is also tightly connected to several other factors that define the opportunities for young people's social and economic development. Access to land and natural resources contributes to household food security, and it supports employment and income-generating opportunities (FAO, CTA, and IFAD, 2014). Access to land is also linked to access to rural financial services: when young farmers do not have a land title that can be used as guarantee, or they cannot include tenure security in a business plan when requesting a loan, their chances of successfully accessing funding are extremely limited (IFAD, 2014b, 2015). Looking at the capacity to adapt to climate change, IFAD's 2019 Rural Development Report also connected limited access to land and the capacity of rural youth to adapt to changing environmental conditions and other external shocks, putting them at a disadvantage when facing new and upcoming challenges (IFAD 2019). both because of an overall decline in land availability (fragmentation, degradation urbanisation) and because of challenges faced in accessing land both within the family and the broader community.

## Key issues/questions

In response to the challenges that youth face in accessing land, IFAD and its partners have often focused on supporting them to engage in off-farm employment and entrepreneurial activities, either as input suppliers or further down the value chain in processing and marketing. While this approach has some merit, it does not address the issue of where the future generation of farmers will come from.

The key challenge in keeping young people in farming is making it a more lucrative or profitable enterprise. Based on consultations with young people in rural areas, IFAD has learned that most of them are not averse to farming per se, but rather to the back-breaking, low-return forms of farming they grew up with (IFAD, 2018c). While many young people wish to adopt a more business-focused form of farming, many are also interested in more subsistence-oriented farming for food security, but even here their interest is in more efficient production. Moreover, farming continues to be a major potential employer for young people. Related challenges pertain to: (i) the inputs and skills required for young farmers to become professional entrepreneurial farmers; and (ii) the barriers that exist, especially access to markets, affecting many rural communities; (iii) the limited knowledge and legal support to navigate existing regulatory frameworks and limited space/trust to potentially engage in youth-sensitive policymaking; and (iv) the lack of basic infrastructures in rural areas such as of education, means of transport, health services and access to technology. The reality is that many people who endeavour to become entrepreneurs do not succeed on their first attempt (and sometimes not on subsequent attempts either, or indeed at all). This is more so for young entrepreneurs trying to make a business out of farming.

In practice, the main challenges faced by young farmers are similar to those faced by their parents. However, young people experience these challenges more acutely, in part due to the legal, policy and institutional frameworks, which remain distant and do not reflect the experiences and situations of youth. Among the particular challenges for young people wishing to access land for farming are:

**Lack of attractiveness of farming for young people.** Low productivity and income levels, limited access to inputs, technology, expertise, information and finance, are some of the main barriers that motivate youth to seek opportunities outside of the agricultural sector.

**Population pressures.** Increasing pressure on land due to demographic growth, causing land fragmentation, and to degradation due to changing climate and overuse – especially in Africa – points to the need to rethink land use and ownership to allow younger generations of farmers to engage in this sector.

**Generational gap.** The existing gap between generations has led to reluctance on the part of the older generation to provide the younger generation with land, or to facilitate their access to land. In particular, while the degree to which land is available for allocation may vary from country to country and even within countries, a reluctance on the part of older generations to provide land to younger generations is a problem that has been observed across the world, especially for young, unmarried women.

**Gender-related issues.** Combined with age, gender is one of the main factors affecting the chance to access and control land – particularly when access to land is decided by inheritance and marriage. According to IFAD's Rural Development Report (2019) "young rural women are only half as likely as young rural men to have sole title to a plot of land, regardless of the level of rural transformation, and they are almost twice as likely as young rural men to neither work nor be in school, in most cases as a result of marriage and child-rearing responsibilities."

**Lack of meaningful participation in policymaking.** Rural youth are often underrepresented in the public space and struggle to meaningfully engage in policymaking from local to national level. An increased involvement in this space could generate positive regulatory change keeping youth as a key interest group, whose needs can be considered as a priority by all levels of government. Youth-sensitive policymaking could lead to the establishment of public land access programs for young farmers, for example through land banks, and to a facilitated access to inputs and technology such as seeds, machinery and irrigation.

### Box 3. Young women's access to land in the Rural Youth Action Plan

As a consequence of gender-biased norms, young women face the double challenge of being young and being female, a higher chance of being married and pregnant at an early age, limited physical mobility, and more household responsibilities. The Rural Youth Action Plan (RYAP) recognizes these issues and will borrow from IFAD's gender work and its very rich and extensive experience in mainstreaming rural youth, capturing the lessons learned and applying a youth lens when adopting and adapting gender-sensitive tools such as the Gender Action Learning System (GALS) and the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI). The RYAP will also take into account the implementation capacity needs and ensure that workshops and capacity development activities incorporate a more gender-sensitive angle.

In Madagascar, the common challenges faced in young rural women's access to land are in evidence: (i) even though there are no discriminatory laws against women in terms of access to land, there are strong de facto inequalities; (ii) 70 per cent of young women do not inherit land (against 22 per cent of young men); (iii) young women obtained more land through donations from family members (20 per cent against 10 per cent for young men); (iv) young women have less land than men (47 per cent of women have less than 0.05 ha, while only 5 per cent of men have less than 0.05 ha).

Young people cannot be considered as a homogeneous group: a clear distinction needs to be made between young men and young women. Generally, as young people grow older, the autonomy of boys and men increases while that of girls and women declines. Young women remain trapped within the domestic sphere. An example of the different levels of autonomy is reflected in the differences in access to and control over land for young women and men, as highlighted below.

Cultural barriers, social norms and customary rights are very often obstacles to women who wish to have access to and ownership of land. The rights to land of girls and young women are channelled through their male relatives (fathers, brothers or husbands) and depend on their marital status or their relationship to a male. In patrilineal systems, sons inherit land, while daughters are assumed to be married to men who have inherited their own land, and couples settle in the husband's village (virilocal residence).

Inheritance systems leave women highly vulnerable to being dispossessed of their land by neighbours and male relatives because women are considered "outsiders" to the blood line. At the same time, they may not be in a position to return to their original families as they are no longer considered the responsibility of those families. Women's ability to rent or buy land is constrained by a lack of other resources, including access to credit and collateral. Indeed, their lack of ownership of land – as a secure asset – is a major constraint to their ability to borrow money. In addition, the education level reached by young women is generally lower than that of young men, and this is reflected in their knowledge of land rights. These observations demonstrate that young men and young women face very different problems linked to land tenure. The diverse challenges need to be identified and taken into consideration to ensure that land tenure interventions are tailored to the different realities of young men and young women.

## Paths for youth access to land

There are various ways in which youth can access land. Depending on the context, some are more relevant than others and certain interventions are enablers across all options.

### Intergenerational transfers

Inheritance or the granting of land is one of the main means by which young people can access land. Inheriting land potentially incentivises individuals to stay in their current residence and remain in the agricultural sector. However, it can also result in increased land fragmentation. At the same time, urbanisation and resulting shifts from extended to nuclear family are shaping inheritance and customary land tenure practices. Also, the increasing impoverishment of rural families often leads to increased sale of family land

that would otherwise have been inherited by the next generation. Inheritance usually only occurs after the death of parents and tends to favour male heirs. With the increased life expectancy across regions, and larger families, young people may inherit smaller parcels and at a later time than they used to. While parents are alive, young people may work on the land but they are not decision-makers and lack of ownership is another reason for them to turn to non-farm occupations.

Inter vivos<sup>1</sup> transfers among family members, while still less frequent, are a good tool for young people to access land that might not be used by family members. Cultural barriers can limit the transfer of land across generations. Activities aimed at raising community awareness and negotiation can encourage the transfer of land from older to younger farmers. The intergenerational aspect of family farming has been highlighted in the United Nations Decade of Family Farming Global Action Plan (FAO and IFAD, 2019), with the second pillar calling for action to “ensure the generational sustainability of family farming through enabling youth accessing land, other natural resources, information, education, infrastructure and financial services, markets and policymaking processes related to farming. Benefiting from the intergenerational transfer of tangible and non-tangible farming assets, stimulate young farmers to interconnect traditional, local knowledge with innovative ideas to become agents of inclusive rural development” (p.17).

How can intergenerational transfers of land to youth be promoted? Engaging with parents, elders and traditional leaders is essential to raise awareness of the importance of keeping young people in farming, and of providing an equitable land share for daughters. Support can also be provided in drawing up wills or formalizing inter vivos land grants.

### Share-cropping

Share-cropping arrangements, where a landowner grants use rights to another individual, can enable young people to access land, especially in the case where the land is owned by elderly people or women who experience labour shortages. Such land use agreements can sometimes create positive symbiotic relationships between young people and older generations. Often widows may have land but be unable work it, for example. But such agreements can also be exploitative where they are made verbally and young people are in a weak or desperate position.

How can the use of share-cropping practices supporting youth access to land be improved? Through support for clearly negotiated and possibly documented share-cropping arrangements, preferably done in contexts where land rights are certified.

### Allocation of public or communal land

Often villages have land reserves that are kept for future expansion (both for community facilities and for people's use), welfare or revenue generation, and the village has discretion over the purposes for which it can be used and the terms on which it can be leased. There is scope for local-level adjustments to land tenure arrangements that would allow young people, including women, poor and landless people, to have use rights over public land.

Cooperatives can offer valuable entry points for rural youth to access land. Thanks to established structures and reputations, cooperatives can request land leases from governments or local institutions, for youth groups or individuals to work on. Particularly in Africa, governments often prefer to provide land to cooperatives instead of individual farmers.

How can the allocation of public or communal land to youth be improved? Support can be provided for the strengthening of community to district forums or multi-stakeholder platforms that may also bring in outside stakeholders from government and the private sector, as well as for participatory local economic development and land use planning processes in which opportunities for allocating land for young people are identified.

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<sup>1</sup> *Inter vivos* refers to a transfer or gift made during the life of the grantor and are typically not subject to probate taxes.

Through these processes, community or government land may be identified for use by young people, usually organized in groups. This typically could include degraded forest lands (e.g. Indonesia) or degraded hillside lands (e.g. Ethiopia) but it could also include grazing lands or other land that may be available.

### Purchase and rent

In general, buying or renting land requires at a minimum the presence of a functioning land market (formal or informal) and the availability of funds. The value of land is generally increasing due to land scarcity, which is caused by the combined impact of demographic growth and increased commercial farming. For rural youth, accessing funds for renting or buying land presents a particular set of challenges because of the limited access to savings (linked to unemployment and low wages) and financial services. The situation is even more challenging for young women because they often engage in unremunerated housework or receive lower wages (FAO, CTA, and IFAD, 2014). IFAD's How to Do Note on Youth Access to Rural Finance (2015a) identifies youth's limited access to the formal financial system (only 38 per cent in developing countries) as one of the main challenges, confining them to the informal sector, which negatively affects their ability to engage in productive activities and invest in education.

How can youth be supported in purchasing or renting land? (1) Through financial support. Provisions can be made to allow start-up loans to be used to acquire land, preferably through short to medium term leases but also possibly for purchase (which is riskier in the short term when starting up an enterprise but provides greater tenure security and an asset base in the longer term). Alternatively, longer term loans could be used for land acquisition, once the young entrepreneurs have an established business record. Governments can also play an important role by facilitating youth financing by banks and other financial institutions, and by negotiating special low-interest rates to assist youth in acquiring land. (2) Through support for facilitating rental or even sales agreements. This could include developing standardized formats for rental or sales agreements and/or access to legal advice services for entering agreements (which may be better in the short-term but do not provide an asset base). Here too, government policies to formalize land markets and regularize price negotiations for sales and rentals of land can benefit youth access to land through markets.

### Enablers

All of the listed paths for youth access to land can benefit from initiatives at the community and family level to raise awareness of their importance for youth engagement in agriculture. These include, in particular, awareness-raising within communities and households, and participatory self-analysis at both the community and the household level on the socio-economic barriers facing different social groupings (poorer members of the community, women, youth and other marginalized or vulnerable groupings). Particularly effective is the "household mentoring" methodology, which addresses intra-household gender relations (IFAD, 2014a). Support can also be provided for community-level and local government-level participatory development planning and multi-stakeholder dialogue processes that include the identification of land for young people. In all these processes the issues of access to land for young people is often identified as one of the barriers or challenges. Intergenerational engagement can also be linked to support in establishing public land banks, in will writing and in advocating for changes in inheritance laws, particularly in favour of young women's tenure rights.

## Guidance for design/implementation

*"Investing in and harnessing the potential of rural youth will be essential to sustain dynamic rural economic growth in the future, making them a priority group for IFAD. Increasing attention to rural youth, particularly in countries where strong rural population growth is projected, will also be important to mitigate pressure on land, natural resources and labour markets, and stem unmanageable patterns of rural-urban migration. In promoting youth-sensitive development, IFAD will more consistently incorporate the needs and aspirations of young people into its operations, and pay closer attention to identifying and creating rural employment and enterprise options appropriate to them, in both the farm and the non-farm sector."*

IFAD Strategic Framework 2016-2025

Initiatives supporting youth access to land in the context of IFAD operations are part of IFAD's mainstreaming strategy for targeting rural youth. According to IFAD's Rural Youth Action Plan, between 2019 and 2021 all country strategies and 50 per cent of IFAD new project designs should be youth-sensitive, and 70 per cent of new project designs are to be youth-sensitive by the end of the Thirteenth Replenishment of IFAD's Resources in 2027.

At the same time, assessing the need for activities supporting youth access to land falls under a broader assessment, carried out at both COSOP and project design stage, of the specific land tenure context and the potential need for intervention.

### **Youth access to land assessment at the COSOP stage**

Conducting a land assessment can benefit the targeting of youth both when developing a COSOP and in the design of individual projects. The relevance and appropriateness of activities in support of youth access to and control over land is considered in the context of developing new COSOPs, where land tenure interventions are carefully considered and linked to other IFAD goals, such as youth mainstreaming and poverty reduction.

With the COSOP, a strategic framework is developed to guide IFAD operations in a country, with the objective of ensuring a positive impact on poverty. Both specific geographic sites and thematic areas are identified for IFAD interventions. COSOPs include an analysis of factors affecting IFAD operations in specific contexts, and discuss lessons learned from previous projects. Land tenure assessments conducted in this context identify challenges and concrete, strategic actions to support youth access to land, which can then be included in the strategic objectives or in the policy dialogue aspect of the document.

### **Youth access to land assessment in the project design**

When youth access to land activities is considered in the design of an IFAD-supported project, it is evaluated as part of a broader land tenure assessment, providing operational guidance to be incorporated into the project design. The assessment's recommendations will define the interventions that IFAD can carry out in the project area and in the timespan set for the project. If a land tenure assessment has already been carried out as part of the development of a COSOP, the assessment at the project design stage will build on that with a strong focus on relevant aspects.

### **Land tenure assessment**

Land tenure assessments (whether at the COSOP or the project design phase) are carried out following three steps:

- Initial collection and analysis of background information: In this phase, relevant documentation on youth access to land is collected and analysed; resource people are interviewed; key stakeholders at the country level are identified, including youth organizations;
- Fieldwork: this phase includes meetings with representatives of youth organizations, stakeholders and informants, possibly visiting past and current projects; reviewing and validating information collected in the first phase; assessing the land tenure context, particularly relating to access and tenure, and institutions dealing with land; in project design, this phase also includes meeting with target population; and
- Final analysis and presentation of the information for use.

Table 1 below summarizes the land assessment process at the project design stage.

**Table 1. Phases and key elements of the land assessment methodology**

| PHASE 1   | PHASE 2  | PHASE 3  |
|---|--|--|
| Initial collection and elaboration of background information  | Field work   | Final analysis and presentation of the information for use |
| Collection and desk review of relevant background documentation on the country and on IFAD activities | Meetings with key stakeholders and key informants                                    | Analysis of the information                                |
| Meetings with informed people (CPMs, consultants, technical advisers, etc.)                           | Visits to relevant projects and meeting with project staff and project beneficiaries | Write-up of the report                                     |
| Identification of key stakeholders and key informants in the field                                    | Initial information analysis   |  |



| Relevant information   | Key informants   |
|--|--|
| <p><i>On the country situation:</i></p> <p>General economic situation in the country and in the project area</p> <p>Country legislation on land with a specific focus on the laws and norms that can be used for project implementation</p> <p>Reports on the land tenure situation in the country and/or in the project area</p> <p><i>On IFAD country activities:</i></p> <p><u>Ongoing COSOP</u> (if relevant)</p> <p><u>Past and ongoing projects documentation</u> (design report, mid-term review documents, end of the project reports) of those projects which dealt/deal with land tenure issues</p> <p><u>Country/project evaluation reports</u></p> <p>Case studies, factsheets, etc.</p> <p><i>On IFAD:</i></p> <p><u>Operational procedures and guidelines for country strategies</u></p> <p><u>Project design guidelines</u></p> <p><u>IFAD Strategic Framework 2016-2025</u></p> <p><u>IFAD land policy</u></p> | <p><i>On the country/project areas situation:</i></p> <p>Government officials at national, district and community levels dealing with land tenure registrations, etc., such as:</p> <p>Land administration officers; land registration officers; cadaster officers; officials in charge of resource allocation or concession granting</p> <p>Dispute resolution bodies (formal and informal) and judges overseeing property cases</p> <p>Professionals (lawyers, notaries, surveyors, real estate agents, etc.) working on real estate and inheritance</p> <p>Financial institutions (formal and informal): bankers, moneylenders, etc.</p> <p>Land users: landowners; tenants; people leasing in and out land; pastoralists; groups traditionally occupying protected areas; forest management groups; other landholders (including squatters)</p> <p>Other land-related interested groups: expropriators/expropriates; displaced people; conflict-impacted landholders, including female-headed households; landless people (including men, women and minority group members); people recently transacting in land; families experiencing a death or a divorce; government land distribution or reallocation units and beneficiaries of such programmes</p> <p>Traditional/religious leaders and village chiefs</p> <p>Other actors: NGOs; women's organizations; farmers' organizations; other donors operating in the country</p> <p><i>On IFAD activities:</i> IFAD past project staff and beneficiaries; IFAD potential beneficiaries in the project area; past and potential partners collaborating with IFAD projects/activities</p> |

### Implementation phase

As illustrated by IFAD's guide on Mainstreaming Youth in IFAD Operations (2020a), adequate engagement with rural youth at the project implementation stage is essential for youth to benefit from the planned activities, and requires the mobilization of specific tools and approaches. IFAD's Rural Youth Action Plan stresses the importance of adequate capacity to be developed to ensure the successful implementation of projects targeting rural youth. Engaging rural youth requires capacity development both within IFAD and in the project team and implementing partners (IFAD, 2018a).

At IFAD, the youth team and regional social inclusion officers are tasked with supporting the strengthening of staff capacity, facilitating learning through the Operations Academy. The objective is for the capacity of project staff, service providers and implementing partners to be successfully developed to support their engagement with rural youth. Further capacity development and field-level training and policy engagement should take place thanks to IFAD's collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the International Labour Organization. Every project including rural youth as a major beneficiary should receive implementation support in order to generate and share best practices and lessons learned from across regions. Each year, regional hubs should award the youth-sensitive best projects, supporting regional learning as well as mapping of best-performing projects in IFAD's portfolio.

At the same time, the capacity of rural youth should be developed through activities integrated into IFAD projects, and through their engagement with IFAD. The capacity development of youth-led organizations should also be supported, targeting both individual skills and organizational systems mobilizing different learning methodologies such as household methodologies, farmer field schools, farmer business schools, junior life schools and learning routes.

Policy engagement with state and local actors, and capacity-building for local organizations are also key elements for the successful implementation of land tenure interventions (IFAD, 2020b). Gaining an in-depth understanding of the local land tenure system is also essential to ensure both the implementation and the sustainability of planned interventions. When possible, the following approaches can be put in place to ensure a higher level of engagement of youth in land tenure interventions:

- Encourage the participation of youth in registration or planning processes at the community level: this provides an opportunity for them both to learn about the tenure system and to engage with local land administrators.
- Combine land tenure interventions with other economic development activities, identifying ways in which tenure security can be linked to those.
- Keep fees low to facilitate youth access.
- Raise awareness in the community about the importance of supporting youth access to land, including the benefits for both families and community.
- Support youth access to information and legal support when dealing with land transfers.
- Encourage the formalization of share-cropping arrangements or other types of youth access to land that may have been initiated informally.

## Learning from interventions supporting youth access to land

In this section of the note, initiatives supporting youth access to land are identified, in the context of projects supported by IFAD and other rural development organizations. The sub-sections reflect the paths for youth access to land that were identified above. One additional sub-section, at the end, looks at initiatives that have aimed at improving awareness and knowledge within communities, thus building an enabling environment for more successful initiatives to take place.

### Land purchase and rent

#### **Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Support Services Programme (YESS)**

##### **IFAD, Indonesia 2018-2025**

The Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Support Services Programme (YESS) is an ongoing IFAD project aiming to create opportunities for rural youth to build their economic livelihoods through rural entrepreneurship and employment. In terms of facilitating youth access to land, the project identifies young people's limited access to financial services as the central cause preventing them from renting or buying land. As financial institutions in the country usually only extend loans to people that have at least 6 months' experience, the project intervened supporting access to "bridge financing". This financial tool promotes a graduation pathway for young people to access credit and build their credit-worthiness, allowing them to rent land without the need for prior experience. The expectation is that, following an appropriate period in which a young farmer or entrepreneur has successfully set up a business, the loan finance could be leveraged from financing institutions to purchase and register land. The project is in the early stages of implementation so there is currently no information available on the results. Still, the project addresses a key challenge for youth in accessing land, which is access to financial services. By identifying an innovative tool that provides more flexibility without exposing financial institutions to increased risks, the project has opened a new, sustainable path for youth to rent land.

#### **Rehabilitation and Community-Based Poverty Reduction Project (RCPRP)**

##### **IFAD, Sierra Leone 2006-2017**

The project aimed to reduce post-conflict poverty and food insecurity and to improve the livelihoods and living conditions of 20,000 rural households, particularly those headed by women, in the districts of Kono and Kailahun. The project's main interventions supported the short-term recovery of rural communities and the development of their farming activities as a necessary step to achieve longer-term participatory development. Particularly on youth access to land, support was provided to negotiate long-term leases of large areas of land of at least 30 years between land-owning families, Paramount Chiefs, local councils and youth organized in groups. This scheme targeted inland valley swamps and tree crop rehabilitation for male and female youths who had limited access to land or were unemployed. According to the project completion report, overall, RCPRP was successful as it rehabilitated and developed 2,960 ha of perennial and seasonal swamps for rice and vegetable production at 354 sites (3,000 ha targeted) for the benefit of 8,737 farmers (6,250 targeted). On youth empowerment, though, the report noted that the long-term leases of land to youth groups had not been easily enforceable, with inter-generational issues and power relations being seen to interfere with the targeting, allowing non-youth "supervisors" to benefit from the initiative. The outcome from Sierra Leone shows the importance of understanding the local context and power dynamics around land tenure, while strengthening the support to youth access to land through community awareness-raising.

### Share-cropping

#### **Community-based Integrated Natural Resources Management Project (CBINReMP)**

##### **IFAD, Ethiopia 2010-2018**

The project aimed to enhance the access of poor rural people to natural resources such as land and water and to introduce improved technologies for agricultural production, mainly through sustainable land management. The project targeted the Lake Tana watershed, benefiting 450,000 households, by establishing and strengthening community-based organizations, involving them in decision-making, and promoted off-

farm employment opportunities. On land and natural resource governance, the project supported community-based resource management, giving communities the lead role in watershed planning and management. It provided support for land administration, certification and registration, and rehabilitation of degraded lands. A substantive effort was made to target women, primarily by providing them with land certificates, thus supporting their legal and economic empowerment. As women became landowners, they started to engage in share-cropping arrangements involving landless youth. This allowed youth to rent land through verbal share-cropping agreements, often within their own household, but also within the broader community. The project was successful in creating employment opportunities for 10,133 landless youth and women (40 per cent of the appraisal target) through their engagement in income-generating activities. The success of share-cropping arrangements as a consequence of women's increased tenure security was an interesting outcome that was not foreseen at project design, but which benefited rural youth by providing a training opportunity for engaging in individual agricultural activities and managing the land.

### Intergenerational transfers

#### **Agricultural Value Chains Support Project (PAFA)**

##### **IFAD, Senegal 2010-2016**

The project aimed to improve the income and livelihoods of 14,000 farmers' households, specifically women and young people in Senegal's groundnut basin by integrating farmers into profitable value chains based on local agroecological potential. Focusing especially on women and youth, the project facilitated access to finance for harvesting, processing and packaging activities to allow better market placement. The project supported youth access to land in two different ways: for market gardening, irrigated land was distributed directly to youth and women at the start of the project; for all the other value chains, youth had to negotiate access to land with their respective families, with support from their youth group (the local sports and cultural associations) and from the young agricultural extension officers and farmer groups involved in the project. The farmers' organizations encouraged the negotiations between youth and their families, as they would also be included in the project as a result of their inclusion of women and youth in their activities. An IFAD impact assessment of the project (Garbero, Diatta, and Olapade, 2018) showed that PAFA's targeting strategy was successful because the activities brought higher gains for women and youth. In particular, qualitative interviews show that the project appears to have contributed to an increase in both the income and the decision-making power of young people, while also contributing to their decision not to migrate to urban centres. In terms of access to land, the choice to support young people's intergenerational negotiations with other members of the community in the community strengthened their bargaining power and improved their chances of obtaining land.

#### **Smallholder Tree Crop Revitalization Support Project (STCRSP)**

##### **IFAD, Liberia 2012-2018**

The project aimed to increase the quantity sold and the price received by poor farmers for cocoa and coffee by rehabilitating plantations, improving access to markets and strengthening the Ministry of Agriculture and/or private extension services and farmer-based organizations. The rehabilitation of 315 km of farm-to-market roads and 15,000 ha of cocoa/coffee plantations, using a value chain model, aimed at generating employment opportunities, mainly benefiting youth and women. The project addressed land tenure security as the two partners for tree crop rehabilitation (Bio United and cooperatives) were in charge of formalizing the farmers' ownership over their plots. According to the project completion report, the rehabilitation exercise involved 7,781 youths and most of them were able to become beneficiaries of the project's activities thanks to their interest in engaging in cash crops and their ability to access land through inheritance or allocation of land by their families. The project completion report notes that young people were not interested in getting involved until they learned about the profit to be made in the production of cash crops. This was a big motivator for them to obtain land from their families, demonstrating the importance of making farming more attractive/lucrative for rural youth to want to engage.

## **Integrated Country Approach<sup>2</sup>**

### **FAO, Guatemala 2015-2017**

During the second phase of the ICA programme, access to land for youth agripreneurs was facilitated in Guatemala thanks to community engagement around the youth employment priority. The ICA programme, in partnership with the local NGO Grupo Enlace, and the Ministry of Economy and Agriculture, established the *Factoria del emprendimiento*, a business laboratory that trained rural young people between 20 and 30 years of age as rural development agents. The main aim was to enable them to assess available local resources, markets and potential, and start up community business in the rural areas. Each trained youth engaged around 20 families from the local community, and around 10 organizations have been formalized. Thanks to the awareness-raising and participatory process established with the communities, rural youth managed to obtain access to land from family members, other community members and local authorities (i.e. municipalities).

## **Training programme on farm succession, Young Farmers' Federation of Uganda<sup>3</sup>**

### **UNYFA, Uganda 2019**

The Young Farmers' Federation of Uganda is a member-based organization for young farmers aged 12-39 years. The Gen X Project recognizes the importance of farm succession for young farmers in Uganda to succeed in the agricultural sector. At the same time, UNYFA realizes that the topic is sensitive and not well known in Uganda where it operates, which requires capacity development and the presence of support services to help those involved. UNYFA is working in partnership with the Andreas Hermes Akademie (AHA) and with support from GIZ/German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) to pilot a farm succession project in Uganda, while also developing a training programme on the topic. The training programme on family farm succession includes youth trainings on campaign awareness raising, business development services, business planning and farm succession planning. Implementation of this initiative will continue until 2022.

## **Allocation of public or communal land**

### **National Agricultural Land and Water Management Development Project (NEMA)**

#### **IFAD, Gambia 2012-2020**

The aim of the project was to increase the incomes of rural women and young people, among 22,860 households, through improved productivity based on sustainable land and water management practices. The project supported the commercialization of rice and vegetable production by incentivizing private sector participation and endeavoured to improve productivity of scarce agricultural lands through investments in land and water resources, vegetable gardens and access roads, coupled with farmers' capacity to manage their productive assets. Land and natural resource governance activities targeted youth and women *kafos* (traditional village groups) to facilitate their access to productive land and to establish village vegetable gardens. Through the *kafos*, young people gained access to land that they could cultivate and make an income from. Youth *kafos* received farming training, in addition to a starter kit and equipment for irrigation and distribution. The project also supported land registration following written agreement between the *kafo* and traditional and government authorities. Based on the latest supervision mission, the project was on track to meet the target for youth-led businesses, while the development of 33 vegetable gardens (165 ha) has already been completed, enough to benefit between 6,600 and 8,000 women and youth.

## **Tierra de Jóvenes<sup>4</sup>**

### **National Institute of Colonization, Uruguay 2019**

In Uruguay, the National Institute of Colonization, the National Institute of Youth of the Ministry of Social Development and the General Directorate of Rural Development of the Ministry of Livestock, Agriculture and

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<sup>2</sup> See also: FAO Integrated Country Approach programme webpage and Case study on ICA Guatemala in Youth in Motion for Climate Action (p. 30). <http://www.fao.org/3/ca5746en/ca5746en.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://unyfa.org/portfolio-item/executive-committee/>

<sup>4</sup> For more information about the launch of the pilot initiative: <https://www.presidencia.gub.uy/comunicacion/comunicacionnoticias/programa-tierra-para-jovenes>

Fisheries launched the Tierra de Jóvenes initiative to respond to interest shown by young people in working in rural areas. The initiative builds on years of dialogue and youth initiatives, and calls for groups of at least three young people between the ages of 18 and 29 year to access land with support for capitalization, investment and technical advice. The first call for applications opened in late 2019 and made 52 hectares of land available for lease to candidates of diverse education, work and family backgrounds. The young people selected will also benefit from investment and technical assistance in production, social, organizational and decision-making matters. The Uruguayan project, which is expected to be replicated in other parts of the country, represents a valuable alternative for accessing land, making the rural sector more dynamic and ensuring sustainable land use.

### **Agricultural cooperatives**

#### **Agriterra, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda**

In Ethiopia,<sup>5</sup> most of the agricultural primary cooperatives are managed by farmers/members on a voluntary basis. This has a negative impact on the performance of the cooperatives: the cooperatives do not give a fulltime service during working hours, financial transactions are not properly recorded, the records are not properly managed, etc. Furthermore, over 28 per cent of the Ethiopian population is younger than 35. Youth unemployment is estimated at nearly 27 per cent. Agriterra Ethiopia set up a collaboration with the cooperatives to create jobs for youths and women in rural primary cooperatives. Currently, more than 60 primary cooperatives of eight unions benefit from this approach. Among them is Seyemti Union, which operates an animal fattening business and was offered land by the government. The youth were given a portion in running their projects and enabling them to create employment.

In Uganda, KCFCS<sup>6</sup> (Kibinge) has developed a service for its members where the cooperative signs an agreement with the landowner, who must be a member, to manage its coffee farm for at least five years. This approach has proven to be successful and in the two years leading up to July 2019 it managed 43 farms on a total acreage surpassing 200. The demographics in the membership of the cooperative do not represent society at large: 48 per cent of the produce comes from farms owned by people aged 50+, whereas only 20 per cent of the Ugandan population is over the age of 35. Thanks to this approach to farm management, both farmers and their young successors can benefit from the agricultural yield. At PKWI, the youth council decided to copy part of the system they have seen at Kibinge. To rent land as a young person is difficult so the cooperative rented a plot of 15 acres. This land was managed by the youth council under supervision of Geoffrey Ochom, an agricultural sciences graduate who returned to his village after graduating and was unable to find a job. The landowner did not consider renting his land to the cooperative a high risk thanks to the fact that the cooperative is a registered entity. The project is successful, with 10 tons of sunflower seeds harvested during the first season in September 2019.

### **Public land**

#### **Orissa Tribal Empowerment and Livelihoods Programme (OTELP)**

##### **IFAD, India 2002-2016**

The project was successful at training young people in various aspects of agriculture, livestock and social mobilization. The project collaborated with Landesa, an NGO specializing in land survey and settlement processes, to train village youth as community resource persons (CRPs), whose role was to identify landless households and vacant village land, and to assist them in securing land and land titles. In March 2016, 26,038 households (about 87 per cent of the total landless population) had been given land titles under different state laws. Among these, 11 per cent of titles were for farm land and 89 per cent for homestead land. All land titles are held jointly, in the name of both husband and wife. Having a land title enables households to access support under government housing programmes and bestows a sense of dignity and confidence on women as landowners. The engagement of youth as CRPs has been one of the key factors in the success of the initiative.

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<sup>5</sup> On the work that Agriterra is doing in Ethiopia as part of its 'Jobs Jobs Jobs approach': [https://www.agriterra.org/jobs\\_jobs\\_jobs/](https://www.agriterra.org/jobs_jobs_jobs/)

<sup>6</sup> More on Kibinge Coffee Farmers' Co-operative Society: <https://kibingecoffee.com/>

### **Sustainable Agriculture Investments and Livelihoods Project SAIL**

#### **IFAD, Egypt 2014-2023**

The project invests in institutional development, rehabilitation of the existing infrastructure and support in facilitating access to a range of social sector and productive services through participation with the local communities. The project supports small farmers, graduate farmers, women and youth who have moved to 'New Lands' where land needs to be rehabilitated. The project addresses the issue of the overcrowded and rapidly-degrading land in the country's 'Old Lands', where the majority of agricultural activities are based, in Egypt, and supports the government's plan to develop the 'New Lands'. The project targets the large number of unemployed agriculture graduates, by distributing land and providing agricultural training, while also supporting with community development, rural finance as well as agriculture and livestock development, social infrastructure. A mid-term review report identified challenges in integrating youth into Community Development Associations, suggesting that in the future there should be an increased focus on youth-led associations. This is another example of the challenges that can be faced when addressing youth's role and engagement as community members and economic actors.

### **Integrated Country Approach**

#### **FAO, Senegal 2017-2020**

Under the ICA programme, in Senegal, selected youth are placed on government-owned production platforms (called MIJA platforms), implemented in partnership with the *Agence Nationale pour la Promotion de l'Emploi des Jeunes (ANPEJ)*/Ministry of Youth), which guarantees their access to land. A pilot first round was implemented in 2017, to be replicated and improved in 2020. For the young cohorts who only stay on the platforms temporarily, i.e. for incubation, the ICA programme, together with the Ministry of Youth, plans to establish formal agreements with local authorities to facilitate their access to land. For this purpose, partnerships are also being encouraged with public institutions and the private sector (i.e. ongoing discussions being facilitated between ANPEJ and the first cohort of young MIJA trainees (RAPEA youth network) to place them with one of the former farms of the completed Volunteers in Agriculture (VAGRI) programme; or in the ANPEJ supported platform of SANGALKAM in the Dakar region; or with the North Valley Producers Organization (SNPDS).

### **Building an enabling environment**

#### **Pro-Poor Value Chain Development in the Maputo and Limpopo Corridors (PROSUL)**

##### **IFAD, Mozambique 2012-2020**

The aim of this project is to improve the climate-smart livelihoods of 20,350 smallholder farmer households in the Maputo and Limpopo corridors, comprising 19 selected districts in Gaza, Inhambane and Maputo provinces. With regard to land and natural resource governance, the project supports measures aimed at strengthening land rights of the project's target groups, in particular women and youth, and at improving the management of land use by farmers' organizations and communities. The project supported community-based land use planning, civic education on land laws and representation in institutions managing land as a means of involving youth in land administration processes. Recent reports on project implementation show a high level of youth engagement in the project and among its beneficiaries. Looking to the future, it is expected that the introduction of smart technologies will contribute to attracting even more young people into agriculture.

#### **Market Gardening Development Support Project (PADMAR)**

##### **IFAD, Benin 2015-2023**

The Market Gardening Development Support Project (PADMAR) in Benin aims to facilitate access to land and farm inputs for young women and men engaged in vegetable production. In order to improve land tenure security for producers, PADMAR undertakes advocacy and awareness-raising activities with stakeholders on access to land rights for women and young people. In particular, the project aims to support the negotiation and stabilization of contractual clauses, encouraging long-term tenancy and the written formalization of temporary transfers of the rights to cultivate. During a supervision mission in early 2020, it was observed that some mayors had facilitated access to land for horticultural value chains in which youth participate. The same initiative will be replicated in other villages where communal land is available, allowing the scaling up of the initiative in other areas where PADMAR operates.

### **Mobile Applications to Secure Tenure (MAST)<sup>7</sup>**

#### **USAID Burkina Faso, Tanzania and Zambia**

MAST is an approach developed to help communities document their land and resources in a timely, cost-effective and inclusive manner. The approach is participatory and has been used to engage local community members (especially youth) in the mapping and documentation process. Local community youth are trained and recruited to support the process, and conduct the bulk of data collection and validation following initial training in land and resource governance and (depending on the context) land-use planning. In addition to receiving practical training in land services and technology, youth benefit from increased awareness of the customary land rules, legal framework, local resource governance structure and their own land rights.

## **Conclusions and strategic recommendations**

The cases that we have collected seek to address the challenges that affect rural youth employment and entrepreneurship in relation to access to land. Based on the lessons learned on how the different paths for youth access to land can be pursued, the following points should be considered in future projects addressing the same issues:

1. Supporting access to land for youth employment and entrepreneurship requires an integrated approach to agricultural and rural development, including improved access to markets and to rural financial services. Initiatives such as YESS in Indonesia are successfully addressing the gaps in access to financial services by enabling youth to access loans to rent land as a basis on which to build their own business.
2. Making farming more accessible should be pursued, either by investing in intensive production and value crops, which make farming more lucrative, as in the case of STCRSP in Liberia, which successfully engaged youth thanks to the attractiveness of cash crops, or by promoting access to shared tenure arrangements, as in RCPRP in Sierra Leone, which improved the affordability of accessing land.
3. In all contexts, community engagement, through awareness-raising, community-based land-use planning and multi-stakeholder engagement, should be supported because it creates an enabling environment where youth can be recognized as legitimate actors and make their needs heard. In Mozambique, PROSUL has shown the value of adopting such a community-based approach to land-use planning by actively involving youth in the land administration process, a strategy that contributed to a high level of youth engagement in the project.
4. Support to and empowerment of rural youth organizations and youth participation in mixed organizations should be a priority when addressing youth access to land as they provide young people with a platform for representation in policymaking processes, visibility for community-based awareness-raising, and increased opportunities to leverage resources. Understanding the importance of access to land for youth to succeed in the agricultural sector, the Young Farmers' Federation of Uganda is working on a farm succession programme, while also training youth on the topic.
5. Investing in developing youth's capacity in entrepreneurship, farming and social advocacy is essential for them to succeed in the agricultural sector, including negotiating access to land and financial services. In Guatemala, the FAO Integrated Country Approach programme trained rural youth as Rural Development Agents, allowing them to assess the potential of local resources and markets, and to start new businesses engaging the local community, which in turn led to obtaining access to land from family members, community or local authorities.

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<sup>7</sup> Additional information can be found at: <https://www.youthpower.org/innovations/mobile-applications-secure-tenure-mast> ; <https://www.land-links.org/tool-resource/mobile-applications-to-secure-tenure-mast/>

6. Strengthening legislation, local institutions and legal services for youth allows for their rights to land to be recognized and defended, particularly when it comes to young women's rights. This approach is observable in Benin, where PADMAR, as part of a broader effort to encourage youth engagement in agricultural production, involves young women and men through advocacy and awareness-raising activities on access to land, while also providing support in negotiating contractual clauses, encouraging long-term tenancy and written transfers of users rights.
7. Innovative, youth-based solutions are a key resource for the future engagement of young people in the agricultural sector, and particularly when it comes to land tenure, technology is opening new paths for rental markets and land registries. Different initiatives show the success of training youth to map and document land rights: in India, the OTELP project trained youth as community resource persons who helped identify and allocate unused land, while in Burkina Faso, Tanzania and Zambia MAST involves youth to conduct data collection and validation processes for the project.
8. In the current context marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, pressure on land is increasing, to the detriment of vulnerable sections of rural populations, including youth. This situation raises the stakes when it comes to investing in rural youth's access to land, which supports their resilience.

Youth has been a mainstreaming topic for IFAD since 2018, and both individual projects and entire country strategies are being updated to reflect the needs and priorities of rural youth. An effective youth-sensitive project can generate long-term youth employment and entrepreneurship and strengthen youth access to land by addressing context-specific challenges and opportunities. An intervention that combines measures to tackle the multiple barriers faced by rural youth is the best complement to activities supporting youth access to land.

Young people's access to land is influenced not only (and not always) by a shortage of land, but also by biased attitudes. Cultural barriers resulting from perceptions that young people have not reached "maturity" or that they are in transition from childhood to adulthood may translate into policy and practice biases, which – along with lack of awareness and of land policy tools – are the main hurdles to be overcome in the realization of land rights for youth. The challenge lies partly in engaging young people in the political and cultural arena, and in providing technical toolkits and policies for land issues. An important aspect of this is supporting the organization of young people and ensuring their full participation in existing organizations, so that young people's representatives can participate in policy dialogues for elaborating land policies and legal frameworks.

IFAD's comparative advantage lies in the ability to design integrated approaches that combine activities that simultaneously address a plurality of issues, all of which are contributing to poverty and food insecurity. Youth access to land is one of the issues that can benefit the most from an integrated approach as different activities, involving a plurality of stakeholders from the national to the local level, are necessary for transformation to take place. All responses require a careful assessment of socio-cultural, economic, legal and political aspects, alongside sensitivity in addressing inter-familial relationships and gender dynamics. IFAD's holistic approach to these issues will allow for the adaptability of interventions to current and future challenges, and the sustainability of their impact.

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## Annex: Additional resources/tools

**Youth and Land Responsiveness criteria** by UN-Habitat ((2015):

<https://gltn.net/download/how-responsive-is-your-land-programme-to-the-needs-of-youth/>

<http://gltn.net/2016/03/29/what-land-means-to-youth/>

IFAD and PROCASUR on youth access to land (Misleh 2014):

<http://juventudruralemprendedora.procasur.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Rural-Youth-and-Access-to-Land.pdf>



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