



Global Donor Platform
for Rural Development

MINUTES

THEMATIC WORKING GROUP ON RURAL YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

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PARTICIPANTS

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AGENDA

Issue	Item	Details
1.	Welcome and Introduction	Frank/GIZ
2.	Updates from the Secretariat	Maurizio/GDPRD
3.	Technical Input: African Youth Agripreneurs (AYA) Platform	Victor Arimbi/FAO
4.	Year End Review and Outlook to 2023	Sven/GIZ
5.	Tour de Table/Feedback	Frank/GIZ
6.	Wrap-Up and Closing	Frank/GIZ

KEY HIGHLIGHTS/ISSUES

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

- Welcome to the new Co-Chair Elisenda Estruch Puertas, Rural Economy Specialist at the International Labour Organization (ILO).
- Anna Befus (FAO) and Peter Wobst (FAO) joined the call as Co-Chairs for the last time, they will transition to being regular members for the upcoming meetings.
- New member, Annira Busch from BMZ, joined the call for the first time.

2. UPDATES FROM THE SECRETARIAT

Purpose of section:

The Secretariat provided a brief recap of the past year's GDPRD events, publications and achievements, as well as looking ahead to 2023.

Issues discussed:

- The GDPRD Secretariat provided a summary of the main achievements in 2022, for instance the White Paper, [Transforming Food Systems: Directions for Enhancing the Catalytic Role of Donors](#), the series of roundtables focusing on donor approaches in times of crisis, including [Addressing the Impacts of the War in Ukraine on 3F \(Food, Fuel, Fertilizer\) Prices for Rural Small-Scale Producers](#) and identifying [key messages on what drives donor commitments when reshaping food systems financing in a crisis and post-crisis environment](#).
- The first hybrid [Annual General Assembly \(AGA\)](#) of the Platform was held successfully in June, and was an opportunity to expand and elaborate on national pathways and country-level coordination, while also featuring sessions by the TWGs, among which was the session on [Rural Youth Employment and Food Systems Transformation: Solutions in Times of \(Multiple\) Crisis!](#) The next AGA will take place in September or October of 2023, date TBD.
- The GDPRD also launched [a new website](#) this year, along with [the Food Systems Recommendations Database](#), and [dedicated spaces for TWGs](#) to explore news, events and documents and a knowledge hub.
- The December Board Meeting discussed approving a mandate for two new workstreams in 2023. **(1)** The first on “country-level coordination” among donors, which started with a series of interviews and a [webinar](#) to try to understand and clarify the pathways for achieving effective donor coordination at different levels. This workstream will culminate in a package of research, communication and learning materials for the Platform and its members to optimize donor coordination given past experiences and emerging challenges. **(2)** The second workstream, in collaboration with the [Shamba Centre for Food and Climate](#), centres on the paradigm shift needed in financing for sustainable agriculture and food systems. This workstream seeks to embark on three key activities:
 - **(i)** identify opportunities for donors to increase their effectiveness on ODA for agriculture and food systems,
 - **(ii)** understand how ODA for agriculture can better link to and increase synergies with other sources of development finance i.e., climate, gender, emergency assistance,
 - **(iii)** identify how public development finance can be more effectively leveraged to mobilize private sector finance for food systems and agriculture, locating how blended/innovative finance mechanisms can be better integrated.

Q&A:

Will these be two new thematic working groups, and how can the existing TWGs engage?

- To clarify, this will be a workstream managed by the Board of the GDPRD, and TWGs are encouraged to participate. The Secretariat will reach out to all TWGs with more information and opportunities for engagement in the coming year.

3. TECHNICAL INPUT: AFRICAN YOUTH AGRIPRENEURS (AYA) PLATFORM

Purpose of section:

A presentation was made by FAO on the African Youth Agripreneurs (AYA) platform, launched last year, with support from FAO and in collaboration with the East African Farmers Federation.

Issues discussed:

- The [AYA platform](#) is an online community designed to enable networking, planning and sharing for young individuals, agripreneurs and rural youth organizations across Africa. The platform fosters meaningful youth engagement in agri-food systems, essentially working as a social media platform for farmers, all of whom grow organically.
- AYA seeks to empower every rural youth across Africa to be able to grow a sustainable agribusiness by providing a safe space for rural agripreneurs. Its main services include: **(1)** facilitating community through interaction, personal experiences or activities, as well as knowledge exchange amongst young agripreneurs; **(2)** learning, mentoring and coaching through e-learning courses, curated digital content, access to finance and service providers, and e-mentorship or e-coaching opportunities; **(3)** do-it-yourself innovation through access to toolkits, encouraging youth entrepreneurs to easily adopt or develop innovations and digital technologies to bring their agribusiness to the next level.
- The AYA platform enables users to contribute to diverse advocacy efforts of young women's involvement in agribusiness. With upwards of 3,000 members, approximately 30% are women with future efforts aiming to increase this figure to 50%. On a monthly basis, the member growth rate stands at 10.6% with a relatively equal engagement of genders. A majority of members reside in East Africa and West Africa.
- Initially, the target audience of AYA included young farmer champions, associates of rural youth networks, individual agripreneurs who have been beneficiaries of FAO and its partners and any other youth who have been engaged in agribusiness across Africa within the FAO network. Now, with a large growth in membership, the platform also involves young migrants, currently unemployed or economically inactive youth and diaspora youth, thereby benefiting a wider range of youth within the continent.
- Current activities that exist on the platform include [the introductory course on Decent Work for Youth in Agribusiness](#), developed by the FAO Integrated Country Approach (ICA) programme for boosting decent jobs for youth in agribusiness. The second is the [AYA Ambassador Program](#) which serves to empower youth agripreneurs to use the platform as a tool to create and share content of interest to other youth in agribusiness, including their first-hand experiences, learnings, failures and success stories.
- Moving forward, AYA has the potential to be a launchpad for innovation, empowering youth with DIY innovation toolkits, running virtual or hybrid agribusiness innovation programs, as well as carrying out youth-focused research from which insights can be gathered and new initiatives, programs or innovations can be tested and launched.

Q&A:

Is this a virtual only platform, and are there any outreach activities planned in countries also targeting youth with limited internet access?

The AYA platform started as a virtual only platform. However, as conversations with youth progressed, the hybrid model became the most effective mechanism due to limited internet access and digital illiteracy across rural youth. Depending on the nature of activities that the participants undertake, both physical and virtual mechanisms can be employed, ultimately aiming to make participation as simple as possible. Engagement with the platform has also given rural youth the opportunity to increase their digital literacy.

Are the content/classes coming from FAO mainly and do they manage the content, or is that “open source” where members can also organize events?

- Content does not only derive from FAO, as the youth themselves disseminate information and learning opportunities with users. There are often posts connecting clients and suppliers with farmers, as was the case with a coffee farmer looking for a barista who posted and connected with someone within a week.
- The governance and structure are similar to that of social media, as members are free to post as they wish and are encouraged to report any posts that are not agriculture related.

What is the geographic ambition of the website, and are there any plans on integrating French or other languages, such as Spanish or Portuguese?

- Currently, the platform is only available in English. However, in the next year, there are plans to incorporate French, with efforts to make the interface even more user friendly.

As someone who manages the content or works to incentivize and steer these types of engagements, are there any strategies or lessons learned on how best to facilitate these types of platforms?

- As a community manager, interactions are encouraged through weekly broadcasts, either in the beginning or end of the week, to remind users to utilize the community for any help, requests, questions or concerns. Community managers also spotlight requests and repost for more engagement, i.e. if someone is looking for a cassava farmer, a community manager will share this post, creating interest around the topic while also offering their support of the request. Ambassadors are also trained in how to engage with members and facilitate further discussions, essentially acting as associate community managers.

Are there also sub-groups on certain countries, value chains, topics, etc., or is all content going to everyone?

- There are a variety of topics discussed, and the AYA Platform is currently converting them into groups to allow for more engagement. This will be launched soon.

4. YEAR END REVIEW AND OUTLOOK TO 2023

Purpose of section:

A presentation on the highlights of 2022 was given, along with ideas for a draft Work Plan for 2023.

Issues discussed:

- An overview of the RYE Policy Framework was given, starting in 2017 with the G20-Initiative on Rural Youth Employment and the G7 Framework on decent job creation for rural youth in the Sahel in 2019. The UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) in 2021, the CFS Policy Recommendations “Promoting Youth Engagement and Employment in Agriculture and Food Systems” and the launch of the African Agribusiness Youth Strategy (AAYS) in 2022 are all promising frameworks which influence policy implementation at the national level, as well as enhance and guide country coordination.
- It is important to implement and make use of the CFS Policy Recommendations and the AAYS at country level in 2023, as well as follow up on the COP27 initiatives related to agri-food systems and youth employment, as COP27 had a strong focus on food systems and on youth champions. The upcoming World Bank flagship report on “Job Transitions and Employment Creation” with empirical data and strategic aspects, as well as the topic of Green Jobs could greatly influence the work of the TWG RYE in 2023.
- There was an increase in membership of the group this year with 66 total members and an increase in active participation in Africa and beyond. There has been a close engagement with

the AUC, Youth Organizations and Research Networks. In total, there were 8 regular calls this year, plus additional events and work meetings. Several in-depth conceptual discussions on a wide range of topics were held, capitalizing on the work and networks of the TWG members and partners. The TWG RYE recognized the great support of the Secretariat, as well as emphasized the group's new web [Knowledge Hub](#). The co-chairs were recognized as working well in tandem, combining multilateral and bilateral perspectives and strong mandates.

- TWG RYE highlights for 2022 included the in-depth discussion on Green Jobs for RYE (FAO), and a webinar on Green Jobs for Rural Youth in Agri-Food Systems, as well as in-depth inputs on “Youth-Sensitive VC Analysis and Development” guidelines (FAO), on Decent Work and Living Wages (DWLIW) Coalition, on Mercy Corps RYE approach and programmes, on EU Youth focused policy engagement, and on the World Food Forum Youth Actions. Other highlights included the AGA session on “RYE and Food Systems Transformation: Solutions in Times of (multiple) Crisis,” the OWEG negotiations on the CFS RYE policy recommendations and an exchange with the UNFSS Coordination Hub.
- Initial ideas for the 2023 Work Plan included a second event on Green Jobs, to work further on the topics of agroecology and just transition, as well as jointly develop a workable definition of “Green Jobs” for the agri-food sector. The groups focus should be directed towards the implementation of the CFS Policy Recommendations and the AAYS, especially for national strategy development and donor coordination, possibly with attention towards country cases like Tanzania, Kenya and Mozambique. Members mentioned separating out these two processes and locating synergies between the two at country level.
- The finalization of the G20-RYE Initiative Stock Taking Study will be occurring in the next few weeks and dissemination of the report will follow. For 2023, continued knowledge exchange and coordination is expected, as well as the possibility to further engage with more research.
- The Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA) will be held in Berlin from 18-21 January. In June 2023, there will be the AU-EU Agriculture Ministers Meeting. From ILO, there will be a Coalition on Social Justice towards the second half of the year. The link to food systems, agriculture and youth will be further investigated and more information will be shared as the workstream develops. The thematic focus of the GDPRD AGA 2023 will still need to be discussed and developed.

Q&A:

Are there any prospects that the Indian G20 presidency will prioritize engagement of youth in agriculture, and to what extent are links being made between youth and food systems?

- In the initial Indian concept note, youth is not explicitly stated at this stage, however, food security will feature highly on their agenda, which is in line with the Japanese G7 Presidency. The Indian G20 Presidency mentions building inclusive agri-value chains and food systems that increase opportunities for women and youth in agri-food systems as a subgroup.

5. TOUR DE TABLE / FEEDBACK

Purpose of section:

Short inputs from members were encouraged, as well as any feedback, ideas or wishes for the TWG work for the upcoming year.

Issues discussed:

- Enabel is working on a toolbox for decent work which will include youth in the informal and rural sectors. Once the draft is finalized it will be shared with the group, hopefully by March. GIZ is also working on a toolbox and plans to finalize it with additional project examples. The ILO [employment policy gateway](#) was mentioned as reference for those toolboxes to utilize and locate synergies for youth employment policies.

- ILO held an event in November on [Social Dialogue With and For Youth](#). It was a hybrid event on how to engage youth in policy formulation processes and rights at work with a report currently being developed.
- FAO released a new publication on [Mainstreaming youth in FAO's Work Programme](#), which highlights how youth can be more strongly integrated in policy processes and how to more strongly address youth in other agriculture programs where they are often neglected or where coordination can be enhanced.
- There was a G7 Dialogue Forum [“Blue Collar, White Collar, Green Heart – Promoting Green Jobs and Skills Development Coordination” held in Berlin](#). This was not just on the agrifood sector, but there may be some interest in the future work on the topic of Green Jobs.
- Feedback for the future of the group was provided, including that meetings should be organized every 2 months rather than every 6 weeks. Another idea was to have a thematic focus for several months of the year with a higher concentration of critical inputs, events and discussions, i.e. migration, finance, technology adaptation or climate change. Feedback on these and more ideas is encouraged.

6. WRAP-UP AND CLOSING

- Note of thanks to Co-Chairs Anna Befus and Peter Wobst for their dedication and contributions to the TWG RYE, as well as their insights, events, projects and networks.
- The next regular call will take place during the week of 23-27 January, date and time TBC.

SUMMARY OF ACTION POINTS

Agenda item	Action	Timeline	Responsible Person(s)
3.	Read the two AYA publications: (1) “Ready to go digital? Assessing the digital readiness of young agripreneurs in East Africa” and (2) an Identikit of the East African youth agripreneur in the digital space .	Flexible	ALL
3.	Join the AYA platform to familiarize yourself with the various opportunities and conversations occurring within the rural youth space.	Flexible	ALL
5.	Send feedback via email about the TWG RYE's 2022 activities, as well as ideas about the 2023 Work Plan, to be discussed and finalized early next year.	Mid-January	ALL
5.	Explore outcomes from COP, identifying relevant initiatives and synergies to focus on in 2023.	Mid-January	ALL
5.	Brainstorm thematic areas in which to engage in the 2023 AGA.	Flexible	ALL