

EMPOWERING RURAL YOUTH THROUGH FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS

Lessons from
Asia and Pacific Region
and beyond



Investing in rural people

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by Elizabeth Ssendiwala,
Esha Singh and Sashwati Mishra

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Please contact the authors for any questions:

Elizabeth Ssendiwala
Senior Regional Technical Specialist, Rural Institutions, Asia and the Pacific Region
e.ssendiwala@ifad.org

Esha Singh
Global Technical Specialist, ICT4D in Agriculture for IFAD
e.singh@ifad.org

Sashwati Mishra
Monitoring and Results Specialist, Social Inclusion for IFAD
s.mishra@ifad.org

ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AFA	Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development
AFFM	Agriculture and Farmers Federation of Myanmar
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BAFLF	Bangladesh Agricultural Farm Labour Federation
CARLEP	Commercial Agriculture and Resilient Livelihoods Enhancement Programme
CFAP	Cambodian Farmer Federation Association of Agricultural Producers
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CTA	Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation
CTCF	Central Tea Cooperative Federation
FAEC	Federation of Farmer Associations Promoting Family Agriculture Enterprise in Cambodia
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFP	Farmers Fighting Poverty
FNML	Southern Laos Food and Nutrition Security and Market Linkages Programme
FNN	Farmer and Nature Net Association
FO	farmers' organization
GSAC	Gubat St. Anthony Cooperative
ILO	International Labour Organization
JTELP	Jharkhand Tribal Empowerment and Livelihoods Project
LFN	Lao Farmers Network
MTCP2	Medium Term Cooperation Programme with Farmers' Organizations in Asia and the Pacific, Phase II
OTELP	Odisha Tribal Empowerment and Livelihoods Programme
PAKISAMA	Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka [National Movement of Peasant Organizations]
PICSA	Partnership for Irrigation and Commercialization of Smallholder Agriculture
PIFON	Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network
RERP	Rural Enterprises and Remittances Project
RUDI	Rural Urban Distribution Initiative
SEWA	Self Employed Women's Association
SPTN HPS	Sekretariat Pelayanan Tani dan Nelayan Hari Pangan Sedunia [Secretariat of Farmers and Fishermen Services]
TREE	Training for Rural Economic Empowerment
UNDF	United Nations Decade of Family Farming 2019-2028
VNFU	Viet Nam Farmers' Union

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Almost 88 per cent of the world's 1.2 billion youth live in developing countries. Youth in the Asia and the Pacific region account for over 60 per cent of the total global youth population. The long-term development of this region in terms of agriculture, food production and the rural economy still depends significantly on youth engagement and its outcomes in the agricultural sector. However, this potential is undermined by unemployment, as employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for young women and men remain limited in rural areas of the region. Young rural women may face additional difficulties in accessing productive resources, markets, etc., since they face several restrictions based on social and cultural norms. There is a largely untapped reservoir of farm and non-farm employment opportunities in the agricultural sector. Facilitating the entry, retention and remunerative engagement of young people in agriculture requires strategies that empower young women and men by removing barriers to gainful employment, understanding their needs and aspirations, and facilitating the development of skills, with the aim of nurturing entrepreneurial drive in agribusiness and agriservices. Farmers' organizations (FOs) have the potential to help rural youth overcome barriers to productive, gainful employment in the rural economy.

This technical paper aims to support FOs and global development practitioners in: (i) exploring the strategies and approaches used by FOs to empower rural youth through a synthesis of what has worked well in the field, some of the existing limitations to engaging young people through FOs and what lessons can be learned, and (ii) providing strategies for and lessons on the empowerment of young people through FOs.

The paper dives deep into initiatives and strategies employed in the Asia and the Pacific region and beyond to empower rural communities and rural youth. It presents a synthesis of what has worked well in the field, strategies and approaches employed by FOs and development agencies, and how to leverage the comparative advantage of FOs to attract rural youth towards sustainable rural livelihoods. It also highlights FOs' efforts to address the productivity and socio-economic challenges faced by rural youth. The paper uses data gathered from interviews and a survey (conducted remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic) with 19 FOs in the Asia and the Pacific region, and with stakeholders from development agencies and FO networks working with rural youth. The analysis highlights the need for internal scrutiny and structural changes within existing FOs, accompanied by a move towards a differentiated approach targeting youth and promoting and strengthening mechanisms for engaging rural youth.

The paper offers lessons in key areas including facilitating skills building and mentorship, and adequately accessing land, credit and other financial services, digital solutions and markets, while also enhancing opportunities for youth inclusion

in policy and strategic debates related to youth agency and empowerment. As youth are pioneer adopters of digital solutions in rural areas of Asia and the Pacific, FOs can attract and retain youth membership through uptake of digital solutions. FOs, through strategic partnerships and synergistic collaboration with international development agencies, national governments and regional stakeholders, can tap into technical support, investments, knowledge-sharing and policy engagement, which will not only strengthen their own organizations but also steer youth towards reducing rural poverty and improving food and nutrition security in the region.



1.

CONTEXT

Rural youth are a huge resource with the potential to become a driving force in inclusive rural transformation. There are 1.2 billion young people aged 15-24 years, who account for 16 per cent of the total global population (United Nations, 2018). About 600 million youth live in rural areas, of whom more than 60 per cent live in the Asia and the Pacific region (IFAD, 2019a). The Asia and the Pacific region, and particularly South Asia and South East Asia, has one of the highest ratios of youth-to-adult unemployment rates in the world. About 85 per cent of youth employment in this region's rural areas is informal, and rural youth spend an estimated 50 per cent of their time working in agriculture (IFAD, 2019a).

Youth need to be systematically engaged in remunerative farming, the broader food sector, and farm-related and rural non-food-related activities for the future of farming and food security, rebalancing migration, youth employment (especially in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis) and overall rural development. Needless to say, there are both structural and operational challenges to empowering rural youth, including access to productive resources, skills, markets and appropriate policies, among others (FAO, 2020a).

Rural youth are a highly diverse group due to differences in age, gender, race, ethnicity, rural/urban divide and living/socio-economic conditions, leading to differences in needs, opportunities and aspirations (IFAD, 2019a; ILO, 2012; OECD, 2018; White, 2019). But, despite their diversity, youth tend to have similar characteristics – they are often quick to learn, are more likely to adopt innovations and take risks, tend to be more mobile, and tend to be frustrated at their lack of assets, services, skills and voice (IFAD, 2020a). Youth, specifically rural, also face persistent barriers due to poverty and lack of investments in education, health and infrastructure in rural areas, all of which deprive young people of opportunities to be educated or to acquire skills to become gainfully employed. Being young, a woman and rural can be triply disadvantageous (IFAD, 2019a). Evidence from rural economies has also shown that young people are likely to migrate from rural areas to urban areas or overseas, resulting in both positive and negative impacts (i.e. loss of family labour for farm work and exerting pressure on the urban infrastructure and services versus gain in household income through remittances) (FAO, 2018a).

There is growing commitment by development partners through farmers' organizations (FOs) to empower rural youth, such as by putting in place global mechanisms to ensure that the potential of rural youth as agents of change is tapped, in line with the aims of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.¹ The [Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth](#) engages 46 development partners to ensure policy convergence and

¹ While there is no youth-specific goal, a few targets of Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 8 refer to substantially reducing the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training.

innovative thinking and to mobilize investments in youth employment (ILO, 2017a). The United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth is mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to act as a bridge between young people and the United Nations system, ensuring the right of youth and children to meaningful participation, including in policy and advocacy, capacity-building, youth action and knowledge generation. Similarly, IFAD, as the largest United Nations agency working on agriculture in rural areas, has, in its Strategic Framework 2016-2025, committed to promote rural employment and enterprise options for rural youth in both farm and non-farm sectors. IFAD's Rural Youth Action Plan 2019-2021, which guides mainstreaming of youth in IFAD's operations, and targets 50 per cent of all new IFAD-supported projects to be youth-sensitive² (IFAD, 2018a). Further, its position paper on mainstreaming youth in IFAD operations (IFAD, 2020a) has adopted a grass-roots approach for connecting youth voices to action to consistently enhance the quality of IFAD and governmental youth-sensitive investments through their increasing involvement in IFAD governance at all levels as equal partners. The United Nations Decade of Family



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2 A “youth-sensitive” project is defined as one that generates long-term youth employment and/or entrepreneurship opportunities by addressing context-specific challenges and the potential of rural youth (IFAD, 2020a). A youth-sensitive project design is one that (i) describes youth and its context-based challenges and opportunities in the project design analysis, and (ii) informs a targeting strategy that explicitly targets youth with concrete objectives and activities to achieve impact in priority areas, expressed as part of the project’s theory of change, approach and results framework. It also allocates resources to deliver activities targeting youth.

Farming (UNDF) 2019-2028 has also created an opportunity to highlight the role of farming families in addressing food insecurity and malnutrition and in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (FAO and IFAD, 2019). The UNDF Global Action Plan has seven pillars, of which pillar 2 specifically calls for supporting youth to ensure the generational sustainability of family farming through inclusive mechanisms in rural institutions, including FOs and improved access to services, resources, etc. Further, under pillar 4, the action plan focuses on enabling FOs seeking to “strengthen family farmers’ organizations and capacities to generate knowledge, represent farmers and provide inclusive services in the urban-rural continuum”. The 2021 Food Systems Summit specifically mentions creating decent livelihoods for small-scale farmers and other rural workers engaged in processing, storage and marketing of food, taking into account the unique perspectives of youth and their organizations in the overall sustainability of food systems.

FOs are autonomous membership-based professional organizations of smallholders, family farmers and rural producers, including pastoralists, artisanal fishers, landless people and indigenous people, which are beyond the grass-roots or community level, at the local, national, regional and global levels, on either a commodity basis or a territorial basis (IFAD, 2016a). They include various forms of producers’ associations, cooperatives, unions and federations. FOs may be well placed to help rural youth overcome persistent barriers and support their full participation in economic, political and social life. FOs provide a wide range of economic and sociocultural services to their members, such as training/capacity-building, input supply, collective marketing, credit access and policy advocacy services, to improve the incomes and quality of life of their members, and they can effectively bridge the gap in engaging and empowering youth. With an active presence on the ground in all countries and in most rural areas, albeit with different levels of maturity, development and capacity, FOs can be strategic partners in helping rural youth connect to people, markets, services, information and technology to create broader opportunities for youth in rural areas. FOs can bring young people together based on their aspirations of modern, remunerative employment and help build their knowledge and skills, facilitate their access to productive resources, promote uptake of digital solutions and encourage them to form and build their own organizations. FOs can support youth to develop entrepreneurial abilities and link them to programmes and other services that will improve their market access, social engagement, negotiation powers and participation in policy spaces.

FOs provide unique value to rural development agencies through direct services to target groups; sectoral consolidation; strengthening learning exchange for innovation and better inputs to regional and global policy by decreasing coalition costs; and enhancing ownership and accountability. The cost of generating feedback on project interventions and policy inputs from farmers (particularly in remote villages and fragile contexts) will be extremely high and time-consuming for development agencies otherwise. Organizations working on sustainable rural development can strengthen FOs by providing technical inputs and results-based grant financing to FOs as they are well placed to provide direct services to smallholder farmers, pastoralists, fishers and rural communities. FOs and their collective federations can be critical partners for rural development organizations. Recognizing the central role of FOs in smallholder development, IFAD has facilitated the development of the Farmers’ Forum as a process of consultation and dialogue that aims to strengthen partnerships between IFAD and FOs.

2.

DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE, METHODOLOGY AND STRUCTURE OF THE PAPER

This paper aims to capture and synthesize the key approaches, strategies and lessons from FOs in empowering rural youth in the Asia and the Pacific region. The paper also captures lessons from strategies and work on the empowerment of rural youth from regional and international development agencies. Specifically, this technical paper aims to support FOs and global development practitioners to:

- Explore the strategies and approaches used by FOs to empower rural youth through a synthesis of what has worked well in the field, what are some of the existing limitations/gaps in engaging young people through FOs and what lessons can be learned.
- Provide strategies and lessons for the empowerment of young people through FOs, with recommendations for FOs on empowering rural youth.

The technical paper is built on the analysis of information collected from interviews and a remote survey of 19 FOs in the Asia and the Pacific region,³ and stakeholders from development agencies and networks working with rural youth, including IFAD, FAO, the International Labour Organization (ILO), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA). Various forms of FOs were consulted, including those at local, national, regional and global levels (see annex B). The paper was developed in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and all sources of primary data collection, including surveys and interviews, were collected remotely. The secondary data/information has been collected from various sources, including case studies and research studies from knowledge products of United Nations and other development institutions. Seasoned experts in the field were interviewed to validate the information collected on good practices and approaches of working with rural youth and of FOs.

³ Based on an initial database of over 100 FOs in the region, 50 FOs were contacted for a remote survey. It may be noted that while most national-level FOs had working email addresses and contact information available, several smaller FOs could not be reached through email. Only 10 out of 50 FOs we reached out to responded with a completed survey questionnaire. The low response rate may be due, for example, to low interest, limited interaction with IFAD or, non-functional email addresses. In addition, we scheduled interviews with nine national and regional FOs that expressed interest. The team also consulted two global FO networks and five development partners working with youth and/or FOs.

The paper presents the challenges faced by youth in agriculture and provides examples of strategies and approaches employed by FOs to address the constraints and provide youth with remunerative and sustainable livelihood opportunities. This is articulated in the theory of change. The paper also offers examples and approaches of key development partners/international organizations working on rural youth empowerment. The recommendations provide guidance on strengthening FOs' efforts to empower rural youth for profitable, sustained participation in agriculture and the rural economy. The recommendations also provide insights on how development agencies can closely support and work with FOs to empower rural youth. The recommendations are drawn from the analysis of secondary literature and the primary data collected. The paper also addresses how FOs are comparatively well placed to play an instrumental role in empowering rural youth. The recommendations have the potential to inform the policy, investment, operations and programmes of governments, FOs and the development community working on empowering rural youth. Annex A provides the questionnaire/guide questions administered for data collection and annex B presents the list of individuals consulted.



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3.

CHALLENGES IN ENGAGING AND EMPOWERING YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE

Literature reviewed for this study shows that rural youth encounter a plethora of challenges to earning a decent livelihood in the rural economy. Of the 19 national and regional FOs interviewed, 7 FOs highlighted negative perceptions about agriculture and almost all FOs highlighted migration, landlessness and access to finance and markets as a key challenge to engaging and empowering youth in agriculture. A few FOs also indicated lack of capacity, knowledge and entrepreneurial mindset among youth, along with a prevalence of customary laws and practices that hinder youth and more prominently young women's participation in agriculture.

The challenges are of an intersectional nature and include: agrarian tenure and scarcity of land, which makes it increasingly difficult for young people to engage in farming; youth often lacking access to credit and productive resources necessary for agriculture; shortage of inputs, including new technologies, practical skills, agriservices and markets. Insufficient access to knowledge and information also hinders the development of entrepreneurial ventures for youth. This, coupled with negative perceptions about agriculture and a dearth of rural infrastructure, means that agriculture is not seen as a lucrative option for youth. The COVID-19 pandemic has further compounded these challenges and has presented new hurdles for youth to meaningfully engage, build capacities and earn a dignified rural livelihood.

COVID-19 pandemic: The closure of education and learning facilities due to the COVID-19 pandemic may mean that millions of rural youth are left behind, owing to the difficult context they live in, paired with difficulties in accessing technologies for distance and virtual learning. All this may further result in stalling their transition from school to work. Around one in five of the world's youth are not in employment, education or training, with young women outnumbering young men by two to one. Furthermore, youth unemployment rates are about three times as high as those of adults (ILO, 2020a). The COVID-19 crisis will increase this already tough scenario and intensify unemployment rates for young people and possibly their labour market vulnerabilities. The youth cohort aged 15-17 years may experience heightened barriers to preparing and accessing decent employment opportunities because of the current crisis and may be more vulnerable to child labour if exposed to hazardous work as a negative coping mechanism. Overall, young people represent a large majority of the workforce in the informal employment sector and therefore may not be able to access countries' COVID-19 social protection measures. A joint study by ILO and ADB reported that the COVID-19 pandemic had worsened the unemployment situation in the Asia and the Pacific region, with disproportionate impacts on youth (ILO and ADB, 2020).

Youth – a heterogeneous group: Youth are in transition towards adulthood, a period marked by the completion of education, marriage and family formation, and entry into employment. Young people are ascribed characteristics: they are gendered, i.e., young men and women; rural/urban; “classed” or “raced”; able-bodied/disabled; and allocated an ethnicity (White, 2019). Rural youth may be young farmers, fishers, forest dwellers, indigenous peoples and pastoralists. It is important to recognize these differences when engaging with youth. Although youth are a diverse group, they tend to have similar characteristics – they are often quick to learn, more likely to adopt innovations and take risks, tend to be more mobile, and tend to be frustrated at their lack of assets, services, skills and voice (IFAD, 2020a). Young women have the triple disadvantage of being young, female and rural (IFAD, 2019a). Rural development

programmes and initiatives need to be informed of the heterogeneity of rural youth and their respective vulnerabilities to enhance their impact.

Access to financial services: Most financial service providers are reluctant to provide their services – including credit, savings and insurance – to rural youth because they may lack collateral and financial literacy, among other reasons. Youth also lack knowledge of available financial services, guarantees and financial literacy and may be unable to open a bank account owing to minimum age requirements (AFA, 2015a; FAO, 2014; IFAD, 2018a; IFAD, 2018b; WCC, 2018).



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Lack of productive resources: Rural youth also face challenges of small landholdings or landlessness, insecure tenure arrangements and limited knowledge of land titling (AFA, 2015a), with young rural women only half as likely to own land as young rural men (IFAD, 2019a). Youth’s lack of access to land may be attributed to several factors: (i) land becoming less available as the population grows; (ii) parents living longer and continuing to farm; and (iii) increasing competition for land for non-agricultural uses (IFAD, 2019a). Environmental factors such as soil degradation, erosion and loss of topsoil also reduce the amount of land available for cultivation (WCC, 2018). Owning land is an incentive for farmers to invest in their farms to increase their productivity and boost their income. It also provides the opportunity to access credit with land as collateral. Yet, in many Asian countries, there is no land and agrarian reform that focuses on young farmers (AFA, 2015a). Young farmers are often landless and perform seasonal agricultural labour; if they work on their parents’ land, they have little or no control over decision-making in farming operations. Rural youth also need to be provided with basic resources, including input supplies, equipment and machineries, to make farming lucrative and less tedious.

Access to markets for youth is becoming even more difficult as a result of the growing international influence of supermarkets and the rigorous standards of their supply chains. Young rural women in developing countries face additional constraints in accessing markets, and their freedom of movement is sometimes limited by cultural norms. **Poor and inadequate education** limits productivity and the acquisition of skills, while insufficient access to knowledge and information can hinder the development of

entrepreneurial ventures. Particularly in developing countries, there is a distinct need to improve young rural women's access to education, and to incorporate agricultural skills into rural education more generally.

Diminished agency and collectivization of youth: Young people's voices are often not heard during the policymaking process, and so their complex and multifaceted needs are not met. Policies often fail to account for the heterogeneity of youth, and so do not provide them with effective support. In addition, there is a lack of organization of young farmers at local, national and international levels to serve as platforms for solidarity, exchange of information and ideas, mutual support and representation. Youth can be attracted to agriculture if they see meaning and feel a sense of pride in it, gain income opportunities from farming and see that daunting challenges are being addressed. A joint study by FAO, IFAD and the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) suggests "it is crucial for rural youth to organize themselves or to join an existing organization, providing a sustainable channel to get their voices heard and to actively engage in policy dialogue" (FAO-IFAD-CTA, 2014, p. 90).

The situation is further compounded by inadequate/lack of supportive government policies and programmes for family farmers or policies that tend to prioritize corporate farming at the expense of small-scale family farming. In the absence of a supportive environment and infrastructure in agricultural spaces, rural youth are resorting to **migration** to urban spaces. Rural youth see migration as an option that can provide higher incomes, access to better social services and improved livelihoods for themselves, and improved education and nutrition for their children.

Lack of infrastructure and negative perceptions around agriculture: There are negative perceptions among rural youth about farming and agriculture for many reasons. For most farmers, farming is not a profitable job, leaving them poor and without enough income to meet their family and personal needs. The situation is further compounded by insecure land ownership and increasing land price due to market-oriented land and agrarian reform. Another key constraint in attracting youth to agriculture is the lack of rural infrastructure such as roads, electricity, hospitals, schools and universities, internet connections, markets to sell their agricultural produce, and facilities for small- and medium-scale agro-industries or factories. Poor support from elders, combined with structural constraints, such as lack of access to land, finance, agricultural knowledge and market accessibility, are among the many obstacles that limit youth participation in farming. Factoring in the rising aspirations of rural youth for gainful employment, a modern and technologically supported livelihood and one that allows innovation, leisure and recognition as agripreneurs and change agents will be instrumental in attracting youth to agriculture and to FOs.

4.

ROLE OF FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS IN EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES AND RURAL YOUTH

This section explores how FOs can empower communities and rural youth, and presents examples of concrete interventions aimed at the empowerment of rural youth from selected FOs in the Asia and the Pacific region.

FOs play a key role in influencing and shaping policies for agriculture and sustainable development, providing a voice for smallholders in the decisions that affect their lives, as well as providing key economic services to members for profitable engagement in markets. FOs have proven to be critical institutions for the empowerment, poverty reduction and advancement of farmers and the rural poor (AFA, 2011). They are therefore well placed to be vehicles of rural youth empowerment. FOs are in a position to support youth to gain skills, access input supplies, form agri-enterprises to process



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and market their products more effectively, access jobs and generate higher incomes. By consolidating their products, youth can develop linkages with other institutions and achieve economies of scale, which lower the costs of production, processing and marketing of agricultural commodities. By being organized, rural youth gain greater bargaining power and are in a better position to negotiate with market players and increase their profits, while their voices become stronger and more amplified in lobbying for fair and equitable policies and programmes. FOs in many developing countries have developed a wide range of economic services for their members, such as (i) input supply, storage

facilities, collective marketing opportunities, credit access, equipment and agricultural advisory services; (ii) contract negotiations with buyers; and (iii) business partners for downstream stakeholders in agricultural and food value chains (IFAD, 2020a).

With the declaration of 2014 as the United Nations International Year of Family Farming, the Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA)⁴ mobilized

4 The Asian Farmers Association (AFA) is an Asian alliance of national FOs composed of women and men small-scale family farmers, fishers, indigenous peoples, forest users, herders and pastoralists. AFA was established in 2002 after a series of farmers' exchange visits organized by the Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia (DHRRA), a partner Asian regional NGO.

its network of FO members in 11 countries to prepare policy proposals through local, national and regional consultations focusing on youth and women farmer issues in Asia (AFA, 2014b). Findings from the consultations (**BOX 1**) highlight key areas of youth empowerment being addressed by different FOs⁵ in areas of knowledge-sharing, skills training and policy activities.

BOX 1. KEY ACTIVITIES OF FOS FOR YOUNG FARMERS IN THE ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGION

Knowledge-sharing and skills training: In Viet Nam, the Viet Nam Farmers' Union (VNFU) has provided training and technology transfer in sustainable agriculture through "learning by doing" or "farmers train farmers" methods. In the Philippines, Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka (PAKISAMA, the National Movement of Peasant Organizations) has trained young farmers on integrated diversified organic farming systems and family farm planning, a participatory system of planning by parents/elders and young family members in the development and management of their farms. In Cambodia, the Farmer and Nature Net Association (FNN) has mentored young farmers to become young leaders and farmer entrepreneurs through exposure to demonstration farms and good farming practices, such as building a fish pond, growing organic rice, applying multi-purpose farming, raising livestock and using manure to produce biogas.

Policy advocacy: In the Philippines, PAKISAMA has introduced a *Magna Carta of Young Farmers* among legislators to promote, protect and encourage the participation of young farmers (aged 15-40 years), to put pride and dignity back into farming, and to institutionalize young farmers' representation in agricultural policymaking bodies and other agencies that have reserved seats for youth. This also entailed the introduction of "farm takeover" programmes to incentivize young farmers by providing capital to enable them to buy their parents' land. In Viet Nam, VNFU has supported the Movement on Volunteers to the Countryside to encourage youth in urban areas to go to rural areas to help in agricultural production, stay with farmers and transfer their knowledge to build local infrastructure.

Development partners are increasingly engaging FOs in strategic roles that have operational responsibilities in capacity-building and institutional development (IFAD, 2016a; IFAD, 2020b). Such engagement provides opportunities for addressing youth-related issues. Due largely to the investments through the Medium Term Cooperation Programme with Farmers' Organizations in Asia and the Pacific (MTCP), a grant mechanism supported by IFAD and the European Union, FOs in the Asia and the Pacific region were able to collectively pursue 86 policy themes relevant to rural development. Three of these focused on youth involvement in agriculture, including passing a law on young farmers, setting up youth committees within FOs and financing business plans of young agripreneurs (AFA, 2019a). In the Pacific, MTCP2 funds to FOs promoted a "value chain way of thinking" among rural youth through entrepreneurial skills training and granting of start-up funds (PIFON, 2018).⁶

5 For more information, please see annex C.

6 For details, refer to annex D.

The initiatives cited demonstrate that FOs have the potential to support youth in agriculture by addressing key issues. FOs are well placed as on-the-ground partners, capacity-building facilitators, resource mobilizers or service providers, to empower rural youth. FOs help improve youth access to agricultural inputs and resources such as land and rural finance, improve information and technology communication solutions, support technical capacity-building, and improve their market access, social engagement, negotiation powers and participation in decision-making.

With their ears on the ground, FOs help identify gaps and challenges faced by rural youth and advocate and work on solutions. **TABLE 1** describes youth participation in FOs based on key informant interviews and specific activities and/or policies incorporated by FOs to promote youth involvement. **TABLE 2** describes youth-specific policies/activities implemented by FOs in the region (not in the list of key informants in annex B). More details can be found in annex C.



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TABLE 1. YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS

Farmers' organization	Country	Total members	% of youth, women and FO staff	Specific policies for youth
Lao Farmers Network (LFN)	Lao People's Democratic Republic	4,631	FO staff: 91% youth	YES. Policy on 20% youth representation in the management committee; and in leadership of FO members, 50% should be women; youth advancement committee established in 2018; youth given priority in all training, study visits, etc.
Farmer and Nature Net Association (FNN)	Cambodia	57,000	10% youth (6% are young women) Local capacity-builders: 67% youth	YES. Youth committee created and is represented on the board, but many leaders had resigned hence FO plans to reactivate
Cambodian Farmer Federation Association of Agricultural Producers (CFAP)	Cambodia	105,690	21% young men; 19% young women; 57% women FO staff: 71% youth and women; "farmer master trainers": 35% youth	YES. Policy to promote youth at all levels of the organizations and allocates 20% of participation to young women in all activities; the youth representative on the board was above the age limit and had not yet been replaced; youth "capacity-builders" are trained to become the youth branch of FOs
Federation of Farmer Associations Promoting Family Agriculture Enterprise in Cambodia (FAEC)	Cambodia	7,578	40-45% youth; 57% women FO staff (central level): 89% youth	YES. Young farmer engagement policy to promote youth membership; set up youth groups; at least 50% of board and internal committee members should be women and youth; has coordinator and field facilitator on youth
Viet Nam Farmers' Union (VNFU)	Viet Nam	11 million	3% youth; 30% women FO staff: 77% youth	YES. Youth has seat in VNFU's party committee; collaborates with Viet Nam Youth Union
Agriculture and Farmers Federation of Myanmar (AFFM)	Myanmar	29,048	15-20% youth; 52% women FO staff: 17% youth	YES. Youth committee formed in 2019; no action plan yet; collaborates with youth committee of parent organization, Confederation of Trade Unions of Myanmar
Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka (PAKISAMA)	Philippines	75,000	FO staff: 91% youth	YES. Congress resolutions in 2019 approved to (i) recognize the official youth group (PAMANAKA) and allocate it one seat on the executive committee; (ii) mobilize funds for the young farmers' programme; and (iii) appoint dedicated staff for youth; PAMANAKA has conducted a visioning process and has organized 18 chapters nationwide
Gubat St. Anthony Cooperative (GSAC)	Philippines	44,660	2% young men; 5% young women FO staff: 40% youth	YES. Two board directors for youth (one male, one female); has youth focal person
Sibulan Ancestral Domain Organic Producer Cooperative (SADOPCO)	Philippines	228	5% young men; 3% young women; 90% indigenous peoples	NO youth policy but there are initial discussions on "succession plan" policy
NGPI Multi-purpose Cooperative (NGPI)	Philippines	–	10% young men; 15% young women	NO youth policy; no youth-specific projects

Farmers' organization	Country	Total members	% of youth, women and FO staff	Specific policies for youth
Sekretariat Pelayanan Tani dan Nelayan Hari Pangan Sedunia (SPTN HPS)	Indonesia	–	30% young men; 20% young women	YES. Five-year programme in 2007 prioritized youth as the engine of development, and each region should have “youth motivators”; organic agriculture youth forum established in 2008 with at least 25% youth and women training participants on organic agriculture, and 100% youth for training on rural job creation
Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA)	India	1.9 million	35% youth FO organizers: 55% youth	YES. Leadership-building programme for young women leaders; no major differentiation between young and older women members; organizational review being done to ensure that FO programmes are relevant to aspirations of young women members
Nari Gunjan Farmers' Organization	India	1,000	75% young women; 5% young men; 100% marginalized (Dalits) FO staff: 80% youth	NO policy on youth empowerment but youth are always included in activities; no fixed platform for youth representation; annual youth festival is organized
Central Tea Cooperative Federation Ltd. (CTCF)	Nepal	7,500	25% young men; 15% young women; 40% indigenous peoples cooperative managers: 10% youth	YES. Youth subcommittees in 10 primary cooperatives represented in management and governance; youth technical committee; no quota for youth on the board; youth workshop action plan: increased participation of youth in member cooperatives
Bangladesh Agricultural Farm Labour Federation (BAFLF)	Bangladesh	102,000	40% young men; 20% young women FO staff: 100% young men	YES. Policy to engage rural youth through union activities, special efforts to empower rural youth, especially rural farmers; no special youth section; no quota for youth on the board
Labour Resource Center (LRC)	Bangladesh	334,102	20% youth; 47% women	NO policy on youth; there is a separate platform to organize youth (Bangladesh Youth Farmers Association), with focal person
Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON)	Pacific	80,000	10% youth	NO policy on youth; youth are benefiting from FO programmes
Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA)	Regional	13 million in 16 countries	FO staff: all women, 38% young	YES. AFA youth committee's elected representatives sit on the board
International Co-operative Alliance – Asia and Pacific (ICAAP)	Regional	–	–	YES. Committee on youth cooperation works for inclusion of youth in cooperatives, provide linkages, strengthens business activities; youth representative in regional board; many Asia and the Pacific region cooperatives actively encourage youth representation

TABLE 2. YOUTH-FOCUSED POLICIES IN FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS

Farmers' organization	Youth-focused policies/activities of farmers' organizations
API (Indonesia)	Knowledge-sharing among youth and elder farmers through <i>musyawarah</i> (popular discussions)
FNN (Cambodia)	Establishing a youth committee with representation on the FOs' board
SORKORPOR (Thailand)	Creating incentives for young farmers towards agricultural entrepreneurship
Kendrio Krishok Moitree (Bangladesh)	Introducing "land banking" where medium- and large-scale farmers can deposit their land with a bank to lend to smallholder cooperatives
National Land Reform Forum (Nepal)	Involving youth in ensuring farmers' rights in the constitution
National Association of Mongolian Agricultural Cooperatives (Mongolia)	Promoting the movement of "New Generations of Herder Volunteers"
Union of Water User Associations (Kyrgyzstan)	Supporting the formation of youth organizations in rural areas
Korean Advanced Farmers' Federation (Republic of Korea)	Ensuring succession in family farms, exempting young farmers from military service
Taiwan Dairy Farmers' Association and Taiwan Wax Apple Development Association	Supporting a new farmers' programme
AINOUKAI (Japan)	Helping young farmers secure markets, acquire agricultural skills and shift to organic farming

5.

THEORY OF CHANGE

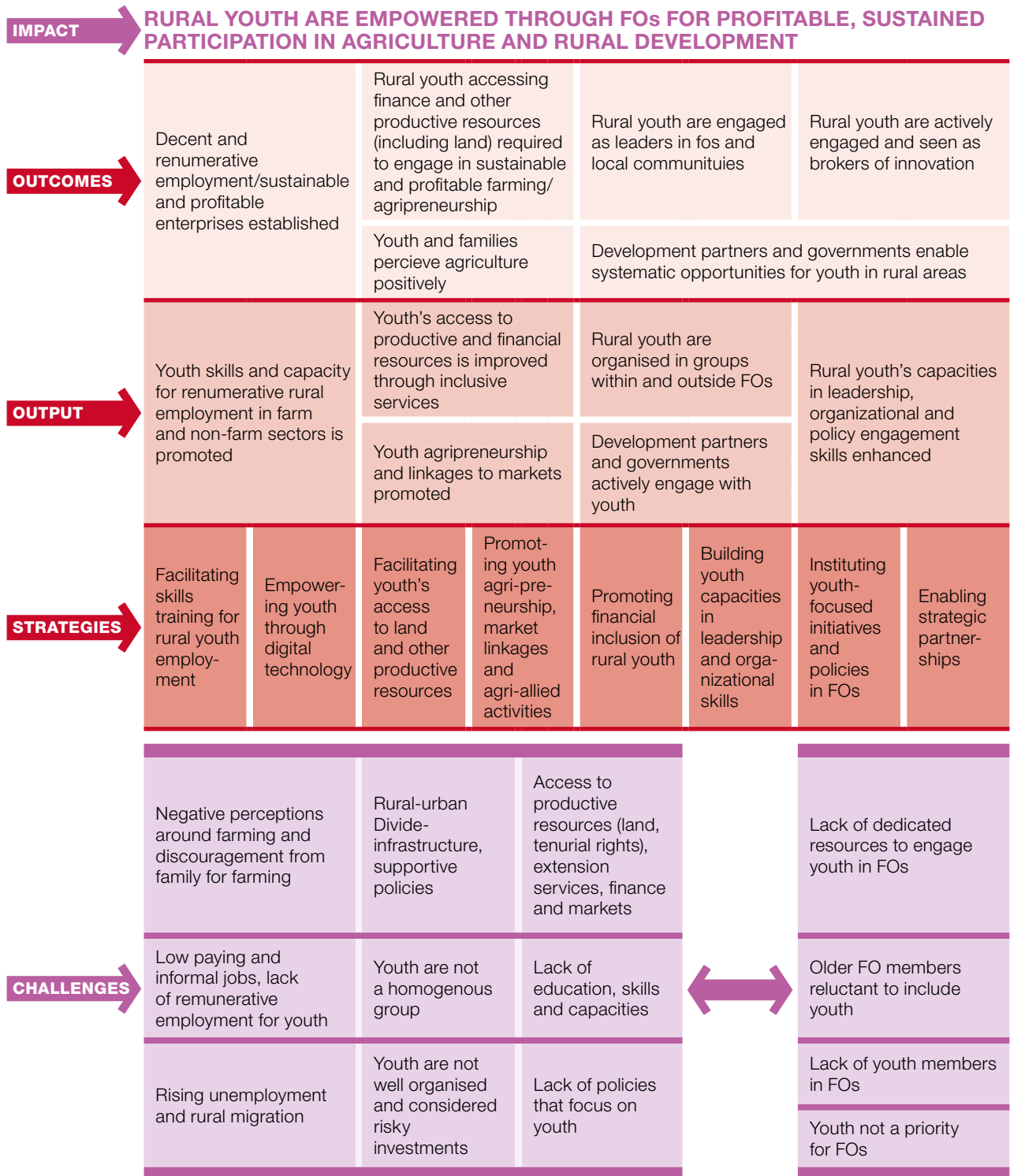
Building on the role that FOs have in empowering youth, this theory of change presents the proposed strategies that FOs have adopted or should adopt at a greater scale for rural youth's profitable, sustained participation in agriculture and rural development. The theory of change builds on the existing set of challenges highlighted in the literature review (section 3) and illustrates the specific pathways that FOs have identified with respect to youth engagement. The challenges include issues of rural-urban divide in terms of infrastructure, availability of resources, skill gaps, etc. to further include specific challenges related to youth, such as negative perceptions around agriculture, and access to productive resources including land, finance and inputs, as well as access to markets. While the FOs have been successful in mitigating several of these challenges for their farmer members across the region, they have only recently started focusing on youth.

The theory of change thus presents eight emerging strategies or models that can be adopted by FOs in order to meaningfully engage and empower youth. These strategies have the potential to provide remunerative jobs by building their self-efficacy and attracting youth to agriculture. The strategies are as follows.

- Instituting youth-focused initiatives and policies in FOs.
- Building youth capacities in leadership and organizational skills.
- Facilitating capacity-building and skills training for rural youth employment.
- Promoting youth agripreneurship, agri-allied activities and linkages to markets.
- Promoting financial inclusion of rural youth.
- Facilitating the access of youth to land and other productive resources.
- Empowering youth through digital technology.
- Enabling strategic partnerships.

It is expected that, through a combination of FOs facilitating skills/capacity-building and access by youth groups to land and other resources, and systematic changes within the FOs themselves to engage youth as leaders or to strengthen their voice in their local communities, youth will be enabled and empowered to venture into non-farming, agriculture-related, farming and farm-related activities. It is also expected that, with FOs engaging youth in rural areas, government and development partners will further develop youth-specific policies to enable scaled-up, systematic opportunities for youth in rural areas.

FIGURE 1. PROPOSED THEORY OF CHANGE



6.

STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT



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This section consolidates the strategies and lessons learned through remote surveys and interviews of 19 national and regional FOs in the Asia and the Pacific region and six development partners and networks other than IFAD (annex B) that work with rural youth across the globe. In addition, case examples of IFAD-supported projects and the knowledge generated from them are discussed in this section.

Data from the 19 FOs show that, on average, an estimated 33 per cent of FO membership consists of rural youth (see table 1 for more details). The results also indicate a growing recognition among FOs in the region that

investing in youth not only empowers young people but also provides benefits to FOs in terms of (i) ensuring the sustainability of FOs; (ii) bringing about innovation and change; and (iii) building the capacities of future food producers and agripreneurs in rural communities, as explained in **BOX 2**.

7 The Agriculture and Farmers Federation of Myanmar (AFFM) was formally registered as a federation in May 2015 and its first Congress was held in 2011. It is organized at township, region/state and sectoral level and has 29,000 individual members. Its long-term goal is to be recognized as a dynamic and responsive farmers' federation working in partnership to promote sustainable agricultural productivity, innovation and educating its members. Its programme components include: AFFM institutional capacity; enabling environment; and service delivery.

8 The Farmer and Nature Net Association (FNN) was initially set up in 2003, and officially registered with Cambodia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in March 2006. Its members include 900 associations/self-help producer groups, 75 agriculture cooperatives and 750 savings groups, and the average size per group is 80-100 members. FNN has 57,000 individual members in 16 provinces; 62 per cent of its members are women. FNN works with rice, vegetable and poultry farmers on the following thematic areas – agroecology, livelihood and agriculture, business development and entrepreneurship, self-help savings and credit, capacity-building and networking, policy change advocacy, and cross-cutting issues relating to women and rural youth.

9 The vision of FAEC is “to see the smallholder farmers in Cambodia, including women farmers and young farmers, have a prosperous life and economy and live in harmony with the natural environment”. Its mission is to “strengthen good governance, sustainability and independence of FOs in Cambodia; improve the livelihoods and economy of smallholder-farmers, including women farmers and young farmers; and improve the natural environment in a sustainable manner”. FAEC

BOX 2. YOUTH ARE THE FUTURE OF FOs

Youth are the next generation of FO leaders and need to be enabled to gain knowledge and skills, access production inputs, form agri-enterprises, prepare business plans and link their products to markets. When provided with the opportunity to learn and lead, young people can ensure continuity of the FO's vision, mission and goals. They can also attract other youth members into the FO as FOs are always looking to increase their membership base. Promoting dialogue between young and old FO members facilitates transfer of knowledge, skills, culture and history from the old to the new, building relationships of trust in the process. This is well recognized by some FO leaders, as demonstrated by their remarks below, captured during interviews:

- Agriculture and Farmers Federation of Myanmar (AFFM):⁷ Recruiting young people into farmers' unions guarantees "future trainers when (the FO) sets up its own school for agriculture".
- Farmer and Nature Net Association (FNN),⁸ Cambodia: It is important to mentor young members to become the "succession generation" of agri-entrepreneurs and cooperative managers.
- Federation of Farmer Associations Promoting Family Agriculture Enterprise in Cambodia (FAEC):⁹ "Youth are a part of a new generation who understand the urge of climate change and food and economic security and sovereignty ... (which) makes them more sensitive to new ways of producing."
- Lao Farmer Network (LFN)¹⁰: "If you have young people, you can see the future of the FO."
- Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka (PAKISAMA)¹¹ Philippines: "Young farmers are the future of agriculture."
- AFA: "Bringing youth leaders together in common learning experiences fosters trust and confidence, which bodes well in future coalition-building and networking among FOs."

Source: Key informant interviews and remote surveys, 2020.

was founded in 2009 and registered with the Ministry of the Interior. The members of FAEC are both agricultural cooperatives registered with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries under an agricultural cooperative law in Cambodia and farmers' associations registered with the Ministry of the Interior under an association and NGO law in Cambodia. FAEC has 50 agricultural cooperatives and 22 farmers' associations, with 7,578 individual members, 57 per cent of whom are women. (Based on survey findings and information interviews).

¹⁰ The Lao Farmers Network (LFN) is a national farmers' network in the Lao People's Democratic Republic with 59 FO members and 4,631 individual members. It was established in 2014 to help members improve and sustain the livelihoods of their smallholder farmer members. All the members are smallholder family farmers, comprising women, men, young people and ethnic minorities in remote areas. LFN's objectives are strengthen FOs; improve production techniques to ensure a greater quantity and sound quality of produce; adding value to products, for example through processing or marketing for income generation; and policy dialogue to ensure farmers' voices are being heard and integrated into policy development. (Based on survey findings and information interviews).

¹¹ Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka (PAKISAMA) is a 34-year-old national movement and confederation of small farmers, fishers, indigenous people, rural women and youth organizations dedicated to building empowered, prosperous and caring family farmers and resilient rural communities by ensuring their asset ownership and control, productivity and resiliency, product value addition and enhanced market power, and meaningful participation in policy spaces and in public programmes. It was established immediately after the 1986 People Power Revolution in the Philippines and coordinated several successful national policy advocacy campaigns in asset reforms and produced a number of successful models in agri-cooperatives, sustainable agriculture and farm rehabilitation. (Based on survey findings and information interviews).

INSTITUTING YOUTH-FOCUSED INITIATIVES AND POLICIES IN FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS

FOs are increasingly instituting internal youth policies to ensure youth responsiveness at the organizational level. Key elements of such policies include formation of youth groups in FOs, setting a quota for youth representation in leadership, and building youth capacities in leadership and organizational skills. The policies guarantee youth an avenue through which to organize themselves, learn from each other and participate in decision-making. Further, several FOs are implementing youth-specific projects, either as stand-alone projects or ensuring youth focus in cross-cutting themes within ongoing programmes/projects. Among the key informants, almost all of the 19 FOs had young staff members, ranging from 20 per cent to 70 per cent of total staff, but, only 4 national-level FOs had youth representation in leadership. Most regional FOs had youth-led committees.



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Youth group formation within farmers' organizations promotes collectivization and inclusion

It is important to have a two-pronged approach whereby youth organize into youth-specific groups/organizations while at the same time providing space for youth in the mainstream FOs. Within the FOs in the study, LFN (Lao People's Democratic Republic) and AFFM (Myanmar) established a youth advancement committee in 2018 and a youth committee in 2019, respectively, while FAEC (Cambodia) set up youth groups of 10-15 members in its 12 cooperatives as platforms to organize marketing of their products. In the Philippines, a new youth

group (PAMANAKA) was formed in 2019 with its own vision, mission, logo and programme of action, and members have been actively communicating through their own social media pages. In Nepal, the Central Tea Cooperative Federation (CTCF)¹² established a youth subcommittee and a youth technical committee in 2010; the FO is also organizing orientation programmes for chairpersons of grass-roots-level cooperatives to approve policies in their by-laws for more youth engagement.

The experience in forming indigenous youth groups in an IFAD-supported project in the India – Jharkhand Tribal Empowerment and Livelihoods Project (JTELP) – is illustrative. The project has established 811 youth groups, including 155 adolescent girl (13-18 years) groups. After an initial mapping exercise, training in leadership

¹² The Central Tea Cooperative Federation (CTCF) was established and registered in September 2010 under the Ministry of Agriculture as an umbrella organization to assist the different primary tea cooperatives in economic, social, educational, cultural and business development. It has 101 tea cooperatives as members, including five district tea cooperative federations covering 14 districts of Nepal. Around 7,500 smallholder farmers are involved under the CTCF Nepal. With the vision of Sustainable Tea Cooperative, Prosperous Farmer, CTCF Nepal is organizing various programmes at grass-roots, farmer, cooperative, district, state (provincial) and national levels in cooperation with local people, states and federal government, and other government and NGO/INGOs. CTCF has the following goals: (i) professional and strengthened institutional capabilities of tea cooperatives in Nepal; (ii) intensified representation in lobbying and advocacy; (iii) improved cooperative tea marketing; and (iv) CTCF sustainability.

skills and functional governance literacy were provided and the youth groups were encouraged to meet and save weekly. Within 2-3 months, the youth groups were encouraged to open a group account at the nearest bank. After 6 months, the youth groups were evaluated, and those with high ratings became eligible for seed capital and simple business management training. As illustrated in **BOX 3**, in one of the all-girl youth groups, a first-ever “eye-opening” exposure visit outside their village motivated the group to engage in a leaf plate-making enterprise during the COVID-19 pandemic. Youth groups also developed social action plans to promote indigenous culture, language, rituals, and folk songs and dances, and to address social issues in their community (such as alcoholism, gender discrimination). Out of 811 youth groups formed to date, 451 have been registered with the government to ensure they receive continuous support. Despite ongoing efforts, sustaining youth engagement in the long term remains a challenge for several development partners, including IFAD.

BOX 3. THE POWER OF COLLECTIVIZATION AND CROSS-LEARNING FOR AN ALL-GIRL YOUTH GROUP

Sunita is the president of her group (Ebhen Taras Yuvati Samuh) in a village in the Godda district of Jharkhand, India, which was formed in 2016. Her youth group is one of the beneficiary partners of the IFAD-supported JTELP in India. The girls were new to the concept of group formation and were all students and busy with their studies. The group collected INR 40,000 (US\$556) as seed money for income generation, but due to lack of confidence, they were not able to utilize the fund. In December 2019, the girls were given the opportunity of a two-day exposure visit to see how activities were being carried out by other youth groups in the village of Chakra, Boarjor block, Godda district. It was their first opportunity to leave their homes to learn something new and this became an “eye-opener” in their lives. After a training session on business planning in March 2020, the group decided to start a leaf plate-making enterprise with support from women in self-help groups. The COVID-19 lockdown provided an opportunity for their enterprise to prosper. Jharkhand state had started a “Didi Kitchen” which served food to poor and needy people, and leaf plate was needed. Sunita’s group contacted the Didi Kitchen and quarantine centres (where returning migrants were kept for 14 days) to supply leaf plates. According to Sunita: “So far we earned INR 12,890 [US\$177] in this small venture. We are so happy to see the fruits of our hard work (money) in our hand. That had never happened before. We have decided to continue to go forward with this work. We will always remember that exposure visit, which has motivated us to take a new step in our life as well as in our group. After becoming part of JTELP project, we had to go through ups and downs of life experience. This taught us new lessons in our lives and bonded us together as group.”

Source: Interview with JTELP project team.

Lessons from these examples point to the need to organize youth, to promote interventions that recognize their different circumstances and challenges, and to bear in mind that youth are not a homogenous group.

Amplifying voices of the young farmers FOs in the region are promoting youth representation in leadership through setting quotas for youth in leadership and decision-making positions. In the Philippines, PAKISAMA allocates one seat for youth

in its Executive Committee, and similarly Gubat Saint Anthony Cooperative (GSAC)¹³ allots two. In Indonesia, Sekretariat Pelayanan Tani dan Nelayan Hari Pangan Sedunia (SPTN HPS)¹⁴ has reserved seats for youth on the board, while LFN (Lao People's Democratic Republic) has a policy that 20 per cent of its leadership will be young people. In Cambodia, FAEC has elected 4 young women members among the nine board members. VNFU¹⁵ has expanded its membership to recruit university agriculture students, who are encouraged to work on the farms after graduation. Youth representation in leadership positions is important in ensuring that the needs of rural youth are recognized and addressed and that their voices are heard and reflected in decisions made, including formulation of youth-responsive policies (based on survey findings and information interviews).

During COVID-19 restrictions, AFFM and PIFON in Myanmar and the Pacific Islands, respectively, brought to the attention of their governments the plight of young returning migrants who had lost their jobs in the cities or overseas and who were in need of employment and livelihood opportunities. These efforts to engage government in addressing problems brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic have had a youth lens and are continuing.

Similarly, the Bangladesh Agricultural Farm Labour Federation (BAFLF)¹⁶ campaigns to protect the rights of farm labourers and attract youth in its efforts to commercialize agriculture. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the FO called upon the government to guarantee payment of basic wages and incentives to agricultural workers, including workers engaged in informal work, and to provide a special bailout programme that included unconditional cash payment and relief for small-scale and marginal farmers impacted by the pandemic (BAFLF, 2020). In Cambodia, the Farmer and Nature Net Association (FNN) established a youth committee represented on its board.

13 The Gubat St Anthony Cooperative (GSAC) was founded on 8 April 1964. Its vision is to become the "leading cooperative of empowered members in a progressive community." As of June 2020, GSAC has 21,830 regular and 22,830 associate members from farmers, youth, professionals and fisherfolk and transport sectors in the Bicol region and Samar in the Philippines. GSAC is committed to enhancing the socio-economic conditions of its members and the community by providing quality financial and allied products and services. Its objectives are: Good Governance; Service; Adaptability; and Commitment to Excellence.

14 Sekretariat Pelayanan Tani dan Nelayan Hari Pangan Sedunia (SPTN HPS), or Secretariat in service for the World Food Day Farmer's and Fishermen's Movement of Indonesia, focuses its work on addressing the plight of farmers and fishermen to implement sustainable agriculture and rural marine community development that is "ecologically sound, economically viable/feasible, culturally rooted, and socially just include respect to all creations in order to develop human in holistic and sustainable". The farmers' movement started on 16 October 1990 in Ganjuran, Sumbermulyo village, Bantul subdistrict, after farmers' leaders, religious leaders, academic experts and government representatives met and agreed to a farmers' statement known as "Ganjuran Declaration 1990". The secretariat was established two years later, in January 1992, as a result of the mandate of the farmers' meeting.

15 The Viet Nam Farmers Union (VNFU) is a socio-political organization with nearly 11 million farmer members throughout Viet Nam. The aim of VNFU is to protect farmers through laws, including constitutional laws. VNFU has 15 departments that work in various areas (e.g. funding, economic, international cooperation, social and family departments, ethnic minorities in agriculture in rural areas). VNFU used to have only smallholder farmers as members but it is now expanding its membership to scientists and university students studying agriculture and rural development.

16 The Bangladesh Agricultural Farm Labour Federation (BAFLF) is a national federation of trade unions for agricultural farm labourers. It was established in 1978 to promote the rights of farm labourers and to ensure food security and agrarian rights. All the workers on government-owned agricultural farms, especially agricultural research farms, are registered under the banner of BAFLF as there is no other organization representing these farms. It is a member of La Via Campesina and the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tourism, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF).

Young people are also facing critical challenges in finding gainful work in rural areas in spite of accounting for 47 per cent of the total unemployed globally (ILO, 2020a). Rural development investment programmes and policies should specifically address the views and needs of young people and should include technical and vocational education training as integral elements of funded programmes (this is further elaborated in *Facilitating capacity-building and skills training for rural youth employment*, page 31).

Building youth capacities in leadership and organizational skills

It is recognized that providing leadership and decision-making opportunities for youth needs to be backed by necessary skills. FOs are therefore offering leadership skills and organizational skills training specifically for youth members, aimed at strengthening the capacities of the younger members of FOs to ensure good governance and build stronger camaraderie among future leaders of the FO. The training usually focuses on (i) value formation (such as people-centredness, participatory democracy, gender equality and justice); (ii) FO management, team-building, resource mobilization, negotiation; and (iii) transformational leadership in areas such as local and global policies, land governance, climate change and rural development. Regular coaching and mentoring of youth leaders are provided to continually build youth skills and confidence. Team-building and bonding opportunities among youth can minimize feelings of isolation.

Youth-focused training is more effective when delivered in an engaging manner, using more informal and interactive training techniques. This training should be delivered by skilled trainers and specialists according to the topic. Ice breakers and short-duration courses, with regular teasers through social media, are some of the teaching methods used by FOs.

In the Philippines, GSAC conducts leadership courses known as the Leadership Trajectory (LEATRA), which target a core of youth leaders who will become future cooperative trainers. Using a combination of group training and one-on-one coaching, Leadership Trajectory focuses on young people's personal strengths and improves their competencies and behaviour. In 2017, 62 per cent of those trained were women and 51 per cent were youth (Trias, n.d.).

The Sibulan Ancestral Domain Organic Producer Cooperative (SADOPCO)¹⁷ in the Philippines uses the vision tool from the Gender Action Learning Systems (GALS) to help youth envision their future as individuals and within their families. In India, the **Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA)**¹⁸ spreads awareness among its

17 The Sibulan Ancestral Domain Organic Producer Cooperative (SADOPCO) aims to be sustainable in organic farming and to be a leading producer of organic cacao and coffee products. Its mission is to: (i) supply good-quality coffee and cacao by-products; (ii) operate an efficient manufacturing plant; (iii) create a gender-fair, culture-sensitive and enjoyable workplace; and (iv) generate the highest dividends possible for its member/growers. It registered with the Cooperative Development Authority in 2014. Its areas of coverage are Sitio Cabarisan, Lawaon, Mamaon, Mitondo, Kilabe, Cabagaayan, Catalilan, Mariras and Barangay Sibulan in the Toril District of Davao City in the Philippines. The cooperative has 228 members, 60 per cent of whom are women.

18 The Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) was founded in 1972 from a textile labour association, based on the principles of Mahatma Gandhi. It uses Gandhian values and ideology in organizing – as poor people, as women, as workers no matter what caste, community or religion. SEWA relies on the collective strength of members in the fight against poverty. It has 1.9 million members in India – Ahmedabad, Gujarat, has the largest membership. SEWA also works in neighbouring Afghanistan, Bhutan and Nepal. Some 54 per cent of SEWA members are small farmers or agricultural workers. SEWA organizes women workers in the informal sector through a holistic and integrated approach to build collective strength and create assets to fight poverty, including savings accounts held by women.

members, of all ages, on gender issues (e.g. number of hours women spend on agriculture and care work; difference in earnings between men and women workers; equal entitlements for women in asset ownership; how to bring about change by organizing). In addition, SEWA trains young women in personality development, self-care and stress management, as part of building self-confidence.

In working with *Musahars* of the *Dalit* community (“untouchables” within the Indian caste system), Nari Gunjan (Women’s Voice)¹⁹ found **that the only way to bring young people together was to organize them through sports, and gradually motivate them in other activities**. The caste system has brought much damage to the self-worth of youth in the *Dalit* community. To empower *Musahar* teenage girls and young women, Nari Gunjan organizes them into self-help groups, runs vocational training centres for girls, campaigns against domestic violence and enables women to engage in electoral politics. **BOX 4** presents a case of youth empowerment through targeted training and leadership opportunities.

BOX 4. EMPOWERING MUSAHAR TEENAGE GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN IN INDIA

The *Musahars* of the *Dalit* (“untouchables”) community live in the most destitute areas and fall into the lowest rung of India’s caste ladder, and are landless and without assets, with a very low literacy rate of 0.9 per cent; their livelihoods depend on agricultural work (Edina Morningside Rotary Club, n.d.). Nari Gunjan (Women’s Voice) promotes the concept of savings among *Musahar* girls at a young age and organizes them into self-help groups. Since 2002, more than 900 young girls and women have benefited from its vocational training centres, which run various programmes. Nari Gunjan has programmes that create solidarity groups for women campaigning against domestic violence and support groups for women victims of domestic violence. The FO also conducts leadership training to help young women take up decision-making positions in local bodies such as *panchayats*. In 2005, for instance, Nari Gunjan worked with 10 *panchayats*, where at least 50 seats were available that could be contested by *Musahar* women. The FO helped choose women candidates, trained them on effective campaigning, and helped them expand their social networks. But the women still faced many challenges. One *Musahar* woman received a majority of votes but was not declared the winner due to a technicality (Bajracharya et al., 2006). These reserve seats for underrepresented women are a result of the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution of India (Mahajan, 2020). Nari Gunjan builds the women’s capacities to engage in local governance and empower women politically.

Source: Informational Interview, NariGunjan.

19 Nari Gunjan FO was founded in 2015. Its mission states that “women who always worked as agricultural labourers on others’ fields for very unfair wages will take land on lease and cultivate and make this as their livelihood option”, which will give them fair returns for their hard work, and food security, which they have not previously been able to enjoy. The ultimate goal of the FO is for its women members to become self-sufficient in providing food for themselves and their families. Nari Gunjan has a membership of over 1,000 women in the areas of three blocks in the Patna district of Bihar.

FACILITATING CAPACITY-BUILDING AND SKILLS TRAINING FOR RURAL YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

Limited skills and knowledge hinder the ability of and opportunities for youth to engage in gainful employment, job creation (through agriprenueurship), negotiation and leadership, among other opportunities for improved livelihoods. This section highlights some of the capacity-building efforts for youth undertaken by FOs. Peer-to-peer learning exchanges, farmer-to-farmer mentoring, immersion programmes, study tours and exposure visits to cooperatives or demonstration farms are common techniques implemented by FOs to enhance the capacity of rural youth. FOs also organize youth camps, youth conferences and “fun days” to make learning and farming fun and foster friendships so that youth can continue to exchange among themselves on personal and organizational levels.

When organizing training for indigenous and marginalized youth, FOs need to have a specialized approach that recognizes their particular sociocultural context, and customary laws and practices. Indigenous and marginalized youth are usually uneducated, unskilled and unemployed, and will start from a very low literacy rate, low self-esteem and sense of inferiority. Indigenous youth often have little voice and are underrepresented in decision-making processes within their communities. Capacity-building interventions for indigenous and marginalized youth need to factor in the risk of their first-time exposure to a diverse cultural environment, and proper family-based counselling is needed to prevent dropouts due to homesickness or culture shock (IFAD, 2018b).

In Indonesia, SPTN HPS provides training for youth on commercial production of organic vegetables such as red spinach, baby green leaves and cherry tomatoes; breeding valuable fish and exotic birds that target niche markets; and use of modern machineries such as tractors, post-harvest processors and packaging equipment. The FO has supported the establishment of the Organic Youth Farmers' Forum in Yogyakarta and Central Java, which has a regular meeting every 3-4 months to exchange their experiences and challenges in practising organic agriculture and other initiatives, such as pioneering a small enterprise and marketing. Through organic agriculture practices, the use of chemical inputs has decreased and production yield has increased, thereby increasing farmers' incomes. The FO has also conducted training for farmers and fishers on how to set up a credit union or cooperative programme. As a result, two fishers' cooperatives in East Java, managed by mostly young members, were established.

In Bangladesh, the Labour Resource Center²⁰ conducts workshops on organic food production technologies, for example cultivating non-toxic vegetables, producing non-toxic dried fish, using organic fertilizers and pesticides, and native seeds, mixed farming, fish farming. It has a separate platform to organize youth, called the Bangladesh Youth Farmers' Association, which has its own focal person and

20 The Labour Resource Center (LRC) is a national-based organization in Bangladesh founded in 2005. It has a total membership of 334,102, with 47 per cent women, in the districts of Gopalganj, Gazipur, Gaibandha, Munshiganj, Barisal, Sirajganj, Dinajpur and Madaripur from the following sectors: agriculture, landless people, agricultural labour, fishermen, rural working people, and youth. Most of the LRC members are at the village level, union level, *upazila* level or district level. Its strategic goals for the next 3 to 5 years include: (i) build financial solvency for the organization; (ii) make members self-reliant by launching production-oriented programmes in eco-friendly agriculture, indigenous seed production, food processing; (iii) introduce various training systems to build cooperative-based production capacity; and (iv) provide capacity-building training.

a separate steering committee that manages the platform, identifies problems and solves them in groups. The youth members have become more knowledgeable as a result of the training they have attended and they are now able to guide their family members and help them to use modern technology.



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FOs also establish partnerships with public and private training centres as a means of accessing programmes such as scholarships, apprenticeships or start-up funds for rural youth. In Myanmar, AFFM sends youth scholars to a learning centre operated by an NGO that runs a young farmers' programme that offers courses of 3-6 months on organic farming, mushroom production and business planning. AFFM provides a small allowance to its youth scholars. Some parents and village elders, however, are reluctant to allow their daughters to participate because the centre is far from their village and the girls need to travel 2-3 days by bus. In the Pacific, PIFON joins up with the Tutu Rural Training Centre

in Fiji to equip young people to become successful farmers on their own land; this "Tutu model" is being replicated in other parts of the Pacific, including the Napil Rural Training Centre in Vanuatu (BOX 5). In both cases, after-training support is provided in terms of continuous mentoring and coaching.

The three-year Young Farmers' Course (Tutu model) run by the Tutu Rural Training Centre in Fiji is recognized across the Pacific as best practice to help provide self-employment in rural agriculture (PIFON, 2018). The experience of Tutu has shown that rural youth can earn good livelihoods from farming their own land. The Tutu model combines both theoretical training and an on-farm approach wherein the participant-student is allocated land on campus, and is farming back and forth between their own farm and on campus. A condition of entry into the course is a signed agreement with the participant's parents and village chief that land (0.25-0.5 hectare) will be allocated to the student for a period of at least three years. The Tutu centre trains youth on new farming techniques to move away from subsistence farming into commercial agriculture, which necessitates a change in mindset and attitudes towards farming, for example building "farm tunnel houses" for off-season vegetables for greater food security and generating income for the centre and for families. Youth are trained to grow crops that they are fully familiar with and for which there is an established marketing system, such as *dalo* and *yaqona* (TRTC, 2019).

In a 2010 review of the Tutu model, key success factors were identified as (i) the right attitude to develop a farming business; (ii) unconstrained access to land for farming; (iii) capital for farm development that can also provide independent housing; and (iv) follow-up upon graduation (PIFON, 2019a). Most of the graduates returned to productive lives and became change agents in their villages. The highest annual income by a former student of the Young Farmers' Course (2018) stood at FJD 120,000 (approximately US\$60,000). Since 1983, 224 young men have completed the course; 92 per cent are still farming as their source of livelihood, and 89 per cent of these men are farming their own family land (PIFON, 2019a).

BOX 5. THE TUTU MODEL IN VANUATU

In Vanuatu, the Napil Rural Training Centre adopted the Tutu model with young men and women between 18 and 30 years of age selected from the local villages as participants. As with Tutu, land agreements are also critical components of the Napil courses. A review of the Napil training course in 2016 found trainees starting to reap the benefits in (i) fresh vegetables being produced and sold in local markets, providing cash income and enhancing nutrition; (ii) seeds, seedlings and nursery supplies becoming available to other local farmers; and (iii) more sustainable and productive farming systems being introduced (PIFON, 2018). The Napil course is seen as pioneering for Vanuatu in terms of the involvement of village-based youth, particularly young women, in commercial agriculture.

The “**lead farmer**” model in IFAD-supported projects such as the Commercial Agriculture and Resilient Livelihoods Enhancement Programme (CARLEP) in Bhutan have strengthened extension services and have proven potential to increase outreach and establish a viable non-state extension system (CARLEP-OPM, 2019; Chekey et al., 2018 IFAD, 2018c; IFAD, 2019b). CARLEP provides material and equipment to “**young lead farmers**” to establish demonstrations on their farms, and youth producer groups are strengthened through training on modern farming practices, farmers exchange visits and exposure to farmers’ field festivals.

Similar examples (outside the study sample) have been observed in other regions. In West and Central Africa, the Agricultural Value Chains Support Project (PAFA) in Senegal trained youth aged 18-30 years, with one third being women, as “**family farm advisors**” to inform young farmers of good practices in family poultry production. Women and young girls were also trained in processing and cooking techniques using local cereals to promote the consumption of local products. In the same region, the Community-Based Natural Resource Management Programme (CBNRMP) in Nigeria organized rural youth into commodity groups and “**incubation hubs**”, which served as mini-platforms for knowledge-sharing and hands-on training on enterprise management. This incubator model has been scaled up in the south of Nigeria through the IFAD-supported Livelihood Improvement Family Enterprises Project in the Niger Delta” (LIFE-ND) which links young aspiring farmers to successful rural agribusinesses – that are producing and trading in commodities for which markets are available and demand is high – to receive the needed mentoring and support to produce greater volumes, leading to more enterprise and higher community incomes.

Several youth employment initiatives have focused on vocational education to encourage youth to acquire marketable skills. **Vocational training for rural youth** should be demand-driven and linked to job creation in industries or enterprises. Compensating loss of wages during training is also important, especially for daily-wage earners who need to ensure a continued income to their households (IFAD, 2018b). The rural investment projects specifically need to factor the linkages of demand-driven vocational training and job creation in their design and implementation. FOs provide a cost-effective way of gathering information and vetting these linkages by tapping into the organized youth collectives within their organizations. In India, for instance, the Odisha Tribal Empowerment and Livelihoods Programme (OTELP) designed a vocational training programme for tribal youth aged 15-35 years who were reluctant to take up agriculture or forest product gathering. OTELP built their skills as drivers,

masons and computer operators, for example, with a view to self-employment or jobs that are linked to existing livelihoods in the community. At least one fifth of those trained were young women. As part of a sustainable extension strategy, the project also trained local educated youth in various aspects of agriculture, livestock and social mobilization as community service providers. The community service providers are managed and paid for their services by the village development councils and farmer groups and their federations.²¹

For ILO, a major entry point for engaging youth is through technical and vocational education and training (TVET) partner institutions, which link up education and employment. ILO (2014) has developed a community-based tool called **Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE)** to promote rural employment among vulnerable groups, including women and youth. The TREE methodology is directly linked to the beneficiaries' training requirements based on a mapping exercise of livelihood opportunities carried out with the local community and relevant social partners (**BOX 6**).

BOX 6. THE TREE MODEL IN NEPAL

IFAD, through the Skills Enhancement for Employment Project (SEEP) in Nepal, partnered with the International Labour Organization in Nepal in 2010 to provide training to young people and to place them in ongoing economic activities. The implementation approach was based on the ILO Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE) methodology, which builds on the principles of community-based training. At the time of completion, the programme had promoted income generation and local economic development for youth in the five targeted districts of western Nepal. A total of 1,252 young people were enrolled in 39 different capacity development and vocational training programmes with a 96 per cent graduation rate; 70 per cent were placed in employment through post-training support; 250 programme beneficiaries interested in starting their own businesses were provided with entrepreneurship and enterprise development training; and some 150 trained young people were organized into cooperatives.

Source: IFAD, 2019a.

PROMOTING YOUTH AGRIPRENEURSHIP, LINKAGES TO MARKETS AND AGRI-ALLIED ACTIVITIES

Agriculture as an enterprise is attractive to youth if it is profitable, has a short gestation period, affords ownership and promotes social linkages. Youth entrants to agri-enterprises need understanding of production techniques, entrepreneurship and agribusiness skills, such as cost-benefit analysis, understanding the key players in agricultural value chains, how the market works and how to negotiate with market operators to ensure fair prices for their products. There are also numerous entrepreneurship opportunities for young people to be engaged along the downstream and upstream in agriculture value chains such as in extension service delivery, inputs supply, post-harvest processing and marketing.

²¹ Under OTELP vocational training programme, High school dropouts were trained as drivers, plumbers, masons, electricians, computer operators and similar roles by accredited institutions. The project allocated funds for board and lodging and to compensate for loss of wages. The young participants usually depend on daily wages for their livelihoods, and the needs of their households should be taken care of while they are away on training. Those who completed the training courses were placed in the urban sector, for example in construction or manufacturing.

At the same time, there is increasing demand for employment opportunities, driving many more young people to migrate out of rural areas in search of employment, often into low-paying informal jobs in urban and peri-urban areas and secondary towns. While, these jobs may be attractive to youth, they lack the social ties and often keep them trapped in urban poverty. With agriculture still the mainstay of the rural economy and less agricultural land available for young farmers, it is important to develop and introduce non-farm economic activities as livelihoods for young rural people. There also exists a largely untapped potential for youth in agriculture, particularly in expanding segments of food supply and value chains (FAO, 2015).

Promoting youth entrepreneurship and market linkages

IFAD-assisted projects such as the **Rural Enterprises and Remittances Project (RERP) in Nepal** have been providing support to rural youth in order to gain the full benefits of migration as a transformative step in their families' economic livelihoods by targeting both migrants and returnees (IFAD, 2015b). RERP has been mobilizing farmer groups with at least 50 per cent youth involvement and providing training and vocational education in several trades and programmes coupled with job placements. The project staff also offer counselling to communities and youth to stay in agriculture. RERP is working with returnee migrants in accessing opportunities in profitable supply chains, setting up their microenterprises, accessing skills training and linkages with financial institutions.



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BOX 7. YOUTH-SPECIFIC BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

The Developing Business with the Rural Poor Programme in Cao Bang Province in Viet Nam helped young people create common interest groups specialized in agriculture, small industry and services. The groups improved their ability to further their own development, express their needs, influence the activities financed by the project, and negotiate mutually beneficial contracts with other stakeholders and partners. By 2013, around 2,230 young group members produced and processed a broad range of foods and goods, and provided services. Some cultivated coconuts, ginger, japonicas, maize, rice, bonsai, mushrooms and vegetables. Some produced tree and rice seedlings and grew cocoa. Some raised pigs, and organic and backyard poultry, cattle, pigeons, swans and goats. In addition, some groups manufactured woven articles, brooms, work clothes and incense, and baked banana cakes. Other activities included cooking and fish drying.

The SNV Inclusive Dairy Enterprise Project worked with 20,000 dairy farmers in western Uganda. It tackled the challenge of trying to involve youth in dairy enterprise development – very few of whom could afford to own dairy cows. To address the issue, the project worked with existing dairy cooperatives and organized youth in associations. Five specific business opportunities were also identified for youth involvement: extension, silage making, yoghurt making, milk transport and bull fattening. Through a compelling campaign to recruit youth, the project made headway, with youth accounting for 80 per cent of dairy cooperative extension staff, and of these 37 per cent were female. The project also offered business training to the young people, including business case development, marketing and proposal writing for the other business enterprise areas. Through the cooperatives, the project provided the groups with equipment at subsidized prices and on credit.

Sources: IFAD, 2014a; Developing Local Extension Capacity (DLEC) Project, 2020.

FOs are well placed to support rural youth to set up agri-enterprises, create decent and remunerative jobs in on-farm and off-farm activities and link young farmers to markets. They often use approaches such as engaging youth along local value chains; promoting “incubation hubs” to help establish high-value, quick-win microenterprises; consolidating farmers’ products for economies of scale; providing seed funds for simple business plans; linking business plans to commercial banks; and entering into marketing agreements with buyers and private companies.

In Cambodia, **FNN** moulds young farmers into agripreneurs through exposure visits to demonstration farms with good farming practices in growing organic rice or recycling farm waste to produce biogas. FNN also supports young farmers in raising crickets and processing them into spring noodles and other ingredients, and in developing links to markets. It has been assisting a member cooperative that has a pilot project with a Japanese investor who bought an initial supply of dried cricket products that are exported to Japan to be used as ingredients in chocolate powder, body lotion, spring rolls, other food and cosmetics; and using ICT and social media for online marketing.

In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, entrepreneurship training conducted by **LFN** has enabled young women vegetable farmers who were hesitant about speaking in public to gain more confidence and participate in FO meetings (LFN, 2020). Young women learn how to calculate their production costs and use this information to set farm-gate prices and prepare their business plans. They meet with farmers from other provinces who also produce vegetables and sell them in Viet Nam. The women call each other regularly to check prices, which helps them negotiate with buyers.

In India, the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) trains young women to treat farming as an enterprise and introduces them to techniques for farm planning and management. It also helps them gain entrepreneurial skills so that their small pieces of land can bring year-round employment and farming does not become a liability. SEWA says that young women members are usually more open to adapting new technologies, such as on-farm processing or setting up small oil-milling units or solar dryers, to create additional employment and build their own supply chains. Young women farmers are also more easily convinced to shift to sustainable production techniques such as the use of biofertilizer and bio pesticides



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after being provided with knowledge and enabled to do research on their own via YouTube. SEWA's young members are trained in how to add value to the grains they grow by processing them into bakery confectionery items that can be sold directly to markets. In 2004, SEWA set up a for-profit rural distribution company (RUDI Company) that engaged in retail marketing, provided additional income to members, and strengthened the rural economy. Decent jobs were created for young women – as “RUDI Bens” (salespersons), procurement agents, barcoders, quality inspectors, hauliers and finance/accounting/IT staff (**BOX 8**).

BOX 8. THE RUDI MODEL: YOUNG WOMEN OWN AND OPERATE A RURAL DISTRIBUTION COMPANY

In 2004, SEWA set up a for-profit rural distribution company – Rural Distribution Multi Trading Company Limited – with its own brand name, RUDI, to engage in retail marketing. RUDI aims to strengthen the rural economy by linking producers and consumers in a value chain that allows rural capital to circulate locally.

SEWA women, with 35 per cent youth, are the owners, managers, producers and suppliers of the entire RUDI distribution network, ensuring fair returns, food security and employment opportunities for its members. The company operates with district associations or self-help groups of small and marginal farmers in two states, Gujarat and Rajasthan. It procures agricultural goods locally from marginal farmers that are cleaned, sorted, graded, processed and packaged at processing centres where SEWA members work. Processed goods are then sold back to the farmers at low prices or packaged and distributed through hubs under the RUDI brand.



RUDI sells more than 32 products that are certified by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, Agmark, ISO 22000:2005 certified. Products include whole and ground spices, pulses, cereals (rice, wheat), non-agro-staples (sugar, cooking oil) and commodities (cotton, industrial salt). Young women are eligible to work in RUDI as RUDIBens. Technical training is provided to RUDIBens, women producer groups and staff at RUDI processing centres. The company employs some 4,500 RUDIBens who go door-to-door selling good-quality RUDI products in quantities that are affordable to poor farming households. A RUDIBen earns a monthly income of Rs. 3,000-15,000 (approximately US\$40-200). She can decide which market she would like to sell to and when, she knows her customers and the price and quality that she can offer; she also uses mobile phones and ICT technology for faster transactions.

RUDI Company has an average turnover of more than Rupees 15 crore (approximately US\$2 million) today. The employment opportunities and steady income of women as RUDI workers has enhanced their position as community leaders and contributors to the household. As reported by SEWA, the level of migration has reduced, the health of women and children has improved due to the consumption of good-quality RUDI products, and rural women have been able to save money and provide quality education for their children.

Source: SEWA, 2012.



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In the Philippines, PAKISAMA has developed a tool called Business Planning Model for Micro and Small Agriculture Cooperatives, which helps young farmers prepare “indicative”, “innovated” or “bank-ready” business plans, depending on the level of complexity and amount of financing needed (PAKISAMA, 2019a). The business planning model has been piloted in two cooperatives in the Bicol region, where youth are active members. With support from PAKISAMA and various government agencies, the two cooperatives are now establishing a cooperative food centre enterprise, which is intended to be a consolidated supply and marketing hub for organically grown rice and other agricultural products. An accessible and profitable one-stop food centre is now being constructed, where cooperative members and other community residents can sell and purchase fresh, processed and/or cooked food for their families.

In Nepal, CTCF trains young tea farmers in tea value chain analysis and supports them by establishing marketing outlets in Kathmandu. In the Pacific, PIFON has been working with youth since its founding in 2014 to pilot new approaches in value chains for crops such as ginger, papaya, vanilla, taro and spices, and help extend the reach of government and aid agencies in Fiji, Tonga and Vanuatu through ICT.

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck in early 2020, the movement of farm products was limited and threatened food supplies in urban areas. Several FOs have been able to turn the pandemic into an opportunity. For example, AFFM in Myanmar set up a Union Mart to sell its products directly to industrial workers, and youth are managing the enterprise (**BOX 9**).

BOX 9. THE UNION MART MODEL: LINKING FARMER-PRODUCER UNIONS TO INDUSTRIAL UNION WORKERS

To help its members during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Agriculture and Farmer Federation of Myanmar (AFFM) opened a Union Mart in the Hlaing Tharyar Industrial Zone, which hosts over 700,000 workers, as the main target market (AFA, 2020a; AFA, 2020b). This marketing initiative was carried out in collaboration with **AFFM's parent organization, the Confederation of Trade Unions in Myanmar (CTUM). The AFFM Union Mart hired young people as managers and merchandisers** and sold their farm produce, such as vegetables, paddy/ rice, potatoes, onions, pulses, and fruits, at less than the usual market prices. Rice is packaged in 6-kg bags, which is more convenient for the workers to buy and carry to their lodgings. The leaders of the industrial zone also requested service delivery to factories where their members work. Once a month, AFFM organizes a food fair and invites industry leaders to display traditional food from their members and exchange crops with farmer members in other townships. AFFM advertises its products online through its Facebook marketing page. The Union Mart established by the FO has provided a direct link between farmers and urban consumers, who are mostly from low-income groups. Both food producers and worker-consumers benefit because the agricultural products are made readily accessible to the consumers at fair prices, and the profit goes directly to farmer-producers, who include rural youth.

Engaging youth in non-traditional activities in agriculture

Rapidly growing demand for diverse food, for instance, creates opportunities for farming-allied sectors such as beekeeping, processing and supply of services. Lessons from implementation suggest that low-cost processes and green technology can act as niche entry points for youth in the value chain. Youth members also have a more competitive edge in FOs that are largely focused on production and market linkages but not on processing or other subsectors in the value chain. Young FO members can venture into this subsector as aggregators, transporters, biopesticide producers/distributors, etc. (FAO-2020b).

Another area for engaging youth and providing sustainable employment is green jobs. Climate change and the youth employment crisis are closely related. Better and remunerative job opportunities can be created for youth while transitioning to a low-carbon, environmentally and socially sustainable economy. This will entail building a sustainable economy through investments in technology, energy, buildings and infrastructure in sustainable ways that will in turn have significant impacts on the world of work and build momentum for job creation. It involves young women and men as agents of change who are increasingly concerned about environmental issues and acknowledge the key role they can play in greening and in building sustainable economies. Within the agriculture space, the increasing pressures on future food supplies present clear opportunities for creating sustainable agricultural jobs for unemployed rural young people. Green sectors, such as organic farming, renewable energy, sustainable agriculture and green manufacturing, offer attractive opportunities for engaging youth. (BOX 10)

BOX 10. GREENING THE AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAIN

FAO is supporting a global project, Green Jobs for Rural Youth Employment (2019-2024), that provides skills development to selected rural and urban young people in Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe and Timor Leste. The focus is on green agriculture, the green energy and green waste management sectors, and transferable soft skills (for example, in communication, teamwork, gender balance in leadership, green business development). The key features of the project are: (i) youth-led problem identification and solving; (ii) youth participants: 20 per cent urban youth/college graduates and 80 per cent rural youth for rural-urban linkages; (iii) local partnerships with training centres, educational institutions, local/national government; (iv) policy mainstreaming of best practices through a national development strategy; and (v) skills development and green jobs (employment, entrepreneurship) opportunities. Young people with green job solutions to address a local issue will be offered a two-year employment (public employment programme) or entrepreneurship (business start-up) opportunity. The key result areas are: conducive environment to green business established; green rural infrastructure provided; green agrifood value chain identified and developed; other non-farm rural economic sectors "greened" (energy, waste management); and government capacity developed and green development strategies mainstreamed. Overall, the transition to a greener global agriculture sector is expected to generate over 200 million full-time jobs by 2050, with more decent green jobs created throughout the entire food production system.

Source: FAO, 2020b.

Meaningful engagement and consultation with young people in developing youth-related initiatives is important as they have unique ideas about how to address key challenges. At the Asian Development Bank, the Youth for Asia (YfA) team has been working directly with young people since 2013 to mainstream meaningful youth engagement in the bank's projects across the region. **BOX 11** highlights this engagement and the solutions proposed by the young people.

BOX 11. YOUTH FOR ASIA (YFA) INITIATIVE IN THE PHILIPPINES

In the Philippines, the Youth for Asia (YfA) team ran a preliminary Youth in Agriculture Survey in 2019 in two agricultural communities in Tarlac and Bulacan provinces to assess rural youth's attitude to and interest in farming (Magnata and Lucht, 2019). The team found that: (i) young people worked (for example, weeding) on the farm with their family for an average of 43 hours per week; (ii) most of the young people are in higher education; and (iii) there is a lack of accessible employment activities. For the young people, farming was not profitable and was a lot of hard work for little reward; financing was also an issue for the miscellaneous costs of higher education (rent and transport). The solutions they offered included (i) summer job opportunities, for example in a pilot farm enterprise, so that they can earn money for their school needs; (ii) creating better facilities and institutions, such as warehousing, land security and properly-timed inputs; and (iii) upskilling and subsidizing young farmers in agricultural technology and in financial services.

Lessons from CTA further suggest that successful agricultural businesses rely on strong linkages with actors along the value chain. They also indicate that agricultural cooperatives/FOs have proven to be effective in engaging young people in agriculture and increasing their social capital and employment opportunities through on-farm and downstream off-farm activities (CTA, 2019).

Youth can also be engaged by FOs in the community as focal persons or extension agents, especially in hard-to-reach areas that involve walking long distances and are therefore better suited for younger people. For instance, youth are supported through IFAD-assisted



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projects in the Lao People's Democratic Republic as: (i) key project beneficiaries in agriculture production groups; (ii) nutritional focal points; (iii) key household and "food-for-assets" labour; and (iv) village or cluster facilitators or extension service providers. The young people were reported to have benefited from the project in terms of increased knowledge and skills in enhancing productivity, financial literacy, business management and climate-resilient technologies; young women gaining more confidence; and young people taking over leadership roles (**BOX 12**).

BOX 12. EMPOWERING YOUTH IN IFAD-ASSISTED PROJECTS IN THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

In line with government and IFAD policy, youth are a key driver for three ongoing IFAD-supported projects in the Lao People's Democratic Republic – the Southern Laos Food and Nutrition Security and Market Linkages Programme (FNML), the Agriculture for Nutrition Project (AFN) and the Partnership for Irrigation and Commercialization of Smallholder Agriculture (PICSA). Young men and women are empowered through their participation in project activities, which enables them to gain better access to agricultural support and financial services and play active roles in FOs. As key project beneficiaries, youth were supported in their investments through agriculture production groups (for vegetables, pigs, goats, tea, coffee, cassava), with some 3,550 groups being planned (350, FNML; 800, AFN; 2,400, PICSA). The groups include poorer and young men-/women-headed households in their membership and decision-making structure and in project implementation. Young women are selected as nutrition focal points to support the nutrition behaviour change programme, with modules designed to target pregnant and young mothers and including nutrition education, food selection and technical training for home garden production. As key household and “food-for-assets” labour, youth from households with sufficient land and labour are engaged in the construction of fish ponds and access roads, for example; and in return, villagers own the fish ponds and receive food items (canned fish, rice). As project village/cluster facilitators or extension providers, young graduates from vocational schools are hired to provide extension services – 60 under FNML and 60 being planned under PICSA – and to organize farmer-to-farmer exchanges, establish farmer networks and market farm products.

In Cambodia, FAEC has identified and supported chicken breeding as a new value chain in which youth members are trained to become breeders, collectors, and slaughter/processing house and sales staff. This has many advantages for youth, since this agri-enterprise: (i) needs less land and investment; (ii) has a rapid turnover; (iii) mitigates environmental risks; and (iv) does not threaten more experienced or older FO members. A young member of an agricultural cooperative in Svay Rieng province earns an income of between 2 million and 2.5 million riels per month (approximately US\$500-600) from chicken breeding, growing vegetables and rice cultivation. FNN has likewise developed plans to engage youth in the various subsectors of the rice mill value chain. After milling the rice, FOs can sell directly to wholesalers, and process into good-quality and guaranteed-safe local rice wine, which is an important commodity for Cambodian people.

In India, FOs can benefit from a government programme called Attracting and Retaining of Youth in Agriculture (ARYA) that supports youth-led enterprises such as fish farming, poultry farming, hog-raising and mushroom cultivation (ICAR-ATARI, n.d.).

PROMOTING FINANCIAL INCLUSION OF RURAL YOUTH

Access to finance remains one of the biggest barriers to the full engagement of young people in agriculture and rural development. To promote **financial inclusion of rural youth**, comprehensive approaches that combine financial and non-financial services with supportive family and social networks appear to be the most effective (Anderson et al., 2019). There is a need to support interventions that promote financial education and behaviour, alongside youth savings groups, to build assets and a culture of long-term savings for creditworthiness. Furthermore, it is important that young people are offered technical coaching or mentoring in conjunction with start-up loans. On the supply side, interventions are needed to develop the capacities of financial service providers and their readiness to deliver specific financial services catering to youth, including digital technologies for finance and structuring alternative forms of collateral to lower the cost of loans in rural areas.

Innovative financial products, such as a mix of loans and grants with technical assistance, can also overcome the reluctance of financial institutions to lend to rural youth. Lessons from implementation also suggest that solidarity credit groups can help youth build assets and develop long-term savings habits, while reducing their risk exposure. Furthermore, financial products with small loan sizes using alternative collateral and group guarantees are more attractive than larger loans that require more stringent business plans and collateral. Savings products that involve a low minimum balance, a free debit card, no fees or a scheme to reward active savers are also popular among young savers (IFAD, 2015a). **BOX 13** provides examples of initiatives that offer financial support from IFAD-supported projects both in the Asia and the Pacific region and in other regions.

BOX 13. EXAMPLES FROM IFAD-SUPPORTED PROJECTS WORLDWIDE

To improve youth-inclusive financial services, the youth entrepreneurship and employment support (YESS) programme in Indonesia supports the financial education and capacity-building of selected financial institutions with a view to delivering innovative solutions such as small savings, loans and contract farming arrangements, and providing bridge financing for youth enterprises.

RERP in Nepal, Rural Agro-enterprise Partnerships for Inclusive Development and Growth (RAPID) in the Philippines and the Rural Microenterprise Transformation Project (RMTP) in Bangladesh have helped to channel migrants' saving and remittances into productive enterprises. The programmes employ a variety of approaches, including financial education, peer counselling, employment and resource centres, in addition to migrants' remittances, savings and investment.

Similar examples (outside the study sample) have been observed in other regions. The IFAD-supported Rural Youth Economic Empowerment Programme (RYEEP) in Yemen tapped into banks that offered youth-inclusive services to expand their coverage to rural areas and combined financial and non-financial services to ensure rural youth have access to credit while also building their entrepreneurial capabilities (IFAD, 2018b). In Tunisia, a microfinance institution was contracted to provide enterprise start-up loans and business development services before and after financing. In Yemen, welfare payments were used as alternative collateral for enterprise loans, while savings were promoted among young people →

in Morocco to build their assets for education. In Egypt, youth savings groups were established and then linked to institutions that provide formal financial services, financial literacy and entrepreneurship training.

In the Republic of Moldova, the Rural Financial Services and Agribusiness Development Project (RFSADP) **supported a young farmers' programme that provided start-up loans and matching grants to young rural entrepreneurs, which, in turn, increased the willingness of commercial banks to lend to rural youth.** In Mali, the Rural Youth Vocational Training, Employment and Entrepreneurship Support Project (FIER) used a French crowdfunding platform to enable the Malian diaspora in France to provide finance for rural young people and micro-entrepreneurs (IFAD, 2017a; IFAD, 2018a). Remittances were tapped to finance sound and viable projects prepared by youth, for example, in the procurement of a water pump to grow tomatoes and peppers during the dry season, and a small goat-fattening business (IFAD, 2018b).

FOs have registered several initiatives to promote financial inclusion for rural youth. In Cambodia, FAEC has installed a subsidy system that offers small grants to young agri-entrepreneurs who pay interest each month and then the total amount once their enterprise is considered "successful". The system is effective because it allows young people to invest in improving their economic power and create jobs. In India, SEWA enables women members to open their own savings accounts and save regularly, and to start their own pension account and invest in family and children's insurance.

In the Lao People's Democratic Republic, LFN enables rural youth to invest in an agribusiness enterprise to earn additional income for their families (LFN, 2020b). It provided start-up funds to one group composed of seven youth members who ventured into soap production. To produce 1,000 bars of coffee soap bar, the group needed US\$1,000, but they were only able to collect US\$400 from the members. LFN contributed a matching grant of US\$600 so that the youth group were able to engage in their business.

In Nepal, CTCF provides training on cooperative and financial management, and trading of green leaf and organic fertilizer and pesticides, which enables members to access soft loans from the Youth and Small Entrepreneur Self-Employment Fund (CTCF, n.d.).

FOs may also apply for financing for rural youth enterprises in the form of government grants and low-interest loans to buy facilities, supplies or equipment. In the Philippines, for instance, the Department of Agriculture has launched three programmes to boost the advancement of the agribusiness industry, with cash grants of up to PHP 500,000 (US\$10,000) and zero-interest loans of up to PHP 15 million (US\$300,000) made available to youth aged 18-30 years (Lomotan, 2020).

Several FOs link up with commercial banks and other rural financial institutions to convince them to expand their outreach to rural youth. In Viet Nam, for instance, VNFU provides small loan packages from its own resources to encourage youth to develop business models, and those with more potential are brought to commercial banks to avail of larger loans. Under VNFU's advisory assistance, the business plans have had a success rate of more than 90 per cent in terms of approval of bank loans.

FACILITATING YOUTH ACCESS TO LAND AND OTHER PRODUCTIVE RESOURCES

Several FOs are engaged in movements and campaigns to institute fully-funded agrarian reform programmes or promote or defend land and water rights of vulnerable groups, such as indigenous peoples, women and landless people, and enable youth members to engage in policy advocacy and lobbying work. In India, for instance, SEWA is engaged in a campaign on gender equality and joint ownership of assets, and for women's names to be included in land titles and records so that they can apply for loans and nobody can sell or mortgage their land without their consent. This also applies to women's shareholdings in a cooperative or other types of asset ownership (such as a house, tools or equipment). In Indonesia, SPTN HPS provides skills training to youth on advocacy and lobbying that includes modules on social analysis, defining advocacy, advocacy strategies, and conflict resolution of natural resources management in coastal areas. SPTN HPS also lobbies local governments to provide access to government land for landless farmers.

Rural youth are also enabled to access land and other productive resources in projects supported or implemented by FOs and development partners. The allocation of resources for youth earmarked for specific purposes in development projects or training programmes guarantees that youth are allocated land and water services. For instance, young farmers in the IFAD-supported CARLEP project who were granted land use certificates in Bhutan were among those targeted for support in the project. In Fiji and Vanuatu, a three-year young farmers' course (the "Tutu model") promoted by the Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON) required, as a condition of entry into the course, a signed agreement with the participant's parents and village chief that 0.25-0.5 hectares of land would be allocated to the student for a period of at least three years after his/her graduation (PIFON, 2018).



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In the Philippines, PAKISAMA has trained young indigenous leaders on community mapping, a strategy that uses participatory geographical information systems to enable local villagers to make maps and help secure their ancestral rights, which are under threat from the proposed construction of a large dam (PAKISAMA, 2019b). Indigenous youth were trained to survey remote areas to establish "reference points" using a GPS device and create various maps that show the potential harmful impacts of the dam project on their ancestral lands, agrifisheries and forestry, community settlements, key biodiversity areas and sacred grounds.

Several FOs have also enabled young and old members to have access to other productive resources under public programmes or private grants, for example livestock/poultry, agricultural inputs (improved seeds, organic fertilizer and pesticides); equipment/machinery (hand tractors, solar dryer); processing facilities (rice mills, packaging centres); and trucking/logistics. In India, in the Senapati district of Odisha, for instance, the following activities were conducted under the OPELIP project: Skill-

based techniques were demonstrated to the youth through training; an awareness/orientation programme was conducted with a total of 123 young people participating; 22 units (5 in poultry, 4 in piggery, 5 in fishery and 10 in large cardamom) were established; fish ponds were constructed and renovated, and cardamom sets for 20 hectares were purchased and supplied to selected participants; a poultry shed, pig breeding unit and pig rearing shed were constructed; and linkages had been developed with the local markets within and outside the district.

Another strategy that is not necessarily youth-specific but has an impact on youth is the use of the human rights approach by FOs. This approach is based on the notion of land not merely as a commodity but as an essential component in the realization of many human rights: from the perspective of economic rights, for example, because land is a source of livelihood, and from that of social and cultural rights, because land is often linked to people's identities (OHCHR, n.d.). In the Philippines, for instance, the Commission on Human Rights took affirmative action on PAKISAMA's recommendations for mining corporations to engage the local community and use a human rights-based approach in adopting a no-displacement policy as part of its human rights commitment in the case of local villagers under threat of involuntary resettlement due to expansion activities of a mining corporation (CHR, 2017).

Aside from linking land to human rights, FOs are also looking at the Committee on World Food Security Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security. In 2014-2015, the AFA implemented a project to increase awareness of the guidelines and conducted a regional sharing workshop among AFA members and key partners in 2015 with 42 participants, 16 of whom were women (AFA, 2015b). The project deepened the understanding and appreciation of the guidelines by farmers' leaders and key government officials at the national level and facilitated the implementation of land tenure assessment and action plans, particularly those concerning large-scale land investment at the country and regional levels.

STRENGTHENING RURAL YOUTH INVOLVEMENT IN PUBLIC POLICIES

There are various initiatives to ensure not only that rural youth **are involved in policymaking but also that public policies are youth-sensitive and respond to the needs of rural youth**. The IFAD Rural Youth Action Plan has adopted a grass-roots approach to connecting youth voices to action with the aim of enhancing the quality of IFAD and governmental youth-sensitive investments. It does this by increasing the involvement of young people in IFAD governance and their systematic participation in country programming activities as equal partners (IFAD, 2018a). FOs whose members include rural youth are key partners in this forum. In addition, there has been a gradual increase of youth representation in the global Farmers' Forum, FAFO (a forum for dialogue between IFAD and FOs that was established in 2005). Discussions about the empowerment of youth have gained momentum within FAFO (IFAD, 2020b). Other forums, such as the First Asian Continental Youth Assembly in Sri Lanka also serve as platforms to enable youth participation in policy discussions (LVC, 2020).

FOs are taking the lead in promoting public policies that advocate positive discrimination in favour of rural youth, including facilitating their access to training, markets, services and other key resources such as land, credit and other agricultural inputs. To enable young people to meaningfully engage with policymakers on these issues, it is essential that FOs train their young members on social analysis, policy research and advocacy, launching campaigns, organizing press conferences, lobbying parliaments and executive bodies, and organizing non-violent direct action. Key lobbying points have included: developing laws to promote rural youth development, providing more budget for youth programmes and ensuring youth representation in farmers' conferences.

In Myanmar, AFFM's youth committee trains its members to lobby for the inclusion of agriculture in the existing **occupational safety and health law**, which prioritizes only the industry and construction sectors but has ignored the risks in the agriculture sector, where workplace-related accidents are frequent (e.g. harmful pesticides, loss of limbs due to machines). The FO is engaged in discussions on the law as applied to the agriculture sector, has developed a position paper and is training youth members on the law.

In Cambodia, FAEC raises the issue of a lack of government policy and incentives to restore young people's interest in agriculture despite agricultural labour becoming increasingly scarce. The Cambodian Farmers Association Federation of Agricultural Producers (CFAP),²² which sits on the National Committee of the IFAD-supported Agricultural Services Programme for Innovation, Resilience and Extension (ASPIRE) in Cambodia, makes concrete proposals such as access to low-interest loans that will benefit smallholder farmers, including young agripreneurs. As a member of the Technical Working Group on Agriculture and Water, organized by the Ministry of Agriculture Forestry and Fisheries and Ministry of Water Resource and Meteorology, CFAP also speaks out on family farmers' issues related to water for agriculture, the price of electricity, agrarian reform, and others.



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In the Philippines, PAKISAMA has been lobbying for legislation on a *Magna Carta of Young Farmers*, which establishes mechanisms for the promotion and protection of young farmers' rights, while instilling a sense of pride so that they will opt to stay in farming, make a decent living from agriculture and secure the country's food sufficiency. Key provisions of the PAKISAMA proposal have been incorporated into pending legislation known as the Young Farmers and Fisher Folk Challenge. GSAC and PAKISAMA are supporting the participation of youth representatives in policy platforms such as the Knowledge Learning Market and Policy Engagement (KLMPE) forum, which has a sub-theme on young farmers.

22 The Cambodian Farmers Association Federation of Agricultural Producers (CFAP) has 26 member organizations in 12 provinces, with 21,138 household members, 46 per cent of whom are farmers. Other members are students, labourers and volunteer community teachers who provide primary-level education to children. CFAP was founded in 2002, with a focus on agriculture, climate change, policy advocacy, contract farming, and building the capacity of member organizations.

In Nepal, CTCF conducts policy analysis and training to enable youth to lobby local, provincial and federal governments for favourable policies and investment in youth programmes. As a result of these efforts, the FO notes that more youth are now interested in engaging in agriculture, local governments are starting to develop strategies for youth involvement in agriculture and member cooperatives are more willing to change their by-laws to ensure youth participation on the board.

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, AFA mobilized its member FOs in the Asia and the Pacific region to highlight its harmful impacts on family farmers, such as limited mobility, other restrictions, lack of processing and storage facilities, and closed markets that forced farmers to sell low or simply dump their products resulting in income losses and threats to food and nutritional security. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, AFA proposes²³ that family farmers should be regarded as frontliners and their FOs be seen as key actors, not only in climate resilience, but also in crisis management and disaster and risk management (AFA, 2020c). Member FOs documented and raised greater awareness of the negative impacts of the pandemic on farmers and the food chain; helped sell their farmers' produce and partnered with government institutions to buy their farmers' produce; lobbied their governments to ensure that frontline food producers have adequate protection; linked their members to social amelioration funds from governments; distributed food packs to needy communities; and trained farmer members on the new normal of doing business via online platforms and other social media apps.

In India, the COVID-19 pandemic arrived when farmers were ready to harvest their fields; members worried that they may not be able sell their produce or repay their loans. SEWA reached out to its members, documented their problems and submitted a memorandum to national and state governments to allow farmers to go to their fields and harvest their crops. The FO successfully lobbied for the government to buy produce directly from the local farmers. The government also established a National Agricultural Infrastructure Fund that will build roads closer to the villages to connect farmers to markets and construct warehouses with cold storage. Under the "new normal", SEWA has foreseen that younger women members with ICT skills will play much larger roles in creating more livelihood opportunities for its members.

EMPOWERING YOUTH THROUGH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Rural youth are keen to take up **new ICT technologies** that facilitate their access to information, financial services and markets, enhance productivity on their farms and enable agricultural innovation (FAO, 2014). Digital technology thus offers a major opportunity for rural youth empowerment. Despite being early adopters of ICT technologies, most rural youth need skills and capacities to capture the full potential of the digital revolution (IFAD, 2019c). It has been noted that women in lower- and middle-income countries are 10 per cent less likely than men to own a mobile phone, and 433 million women are completely unconnected (GSMA, 2018). Thus, in addition to youth, the gender gap in access to information technologies also needs to be addressed. Furthermore, **inclusive digital innovation** that narrows the digital divide (urban/rural, big/small farmers) by harnessing new and mostly internet-based tools and developing public policies that are appropriate to small-scale farmers are needed (FAO, 2019a; FAO, 2019b).

23 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=molfaOLVPq0>

A simple “digital farmers” course, such as pilot training conducted by the Department of Agriculture in cooperation with a leading internet service provider in the Philippines, may contain lessons on the basics of smartphone use, accessing the internet and social media marketing; more advanced lessons could include mobile, e-commerce and online payment systems (Castillo, 2020). Several new IFAD-assisted projects are incorporating digital skills training to expand the use of ICT tools in agriculture. IFAD-assisted projects in Cambodia (ASPIRE and AIMS) have mapped farmer clusters and value chain actors to support physical service delivery; and a newly financed project (SAAMBAT) is also delivering digital literacy training to 5,000 rural value chain actors, aimed especially at young farmers and agri-entrepreneurs.

BOX 14. EMPOWERING YOUNG AGRICULTURE ENTREPRENEURS USING DIGITIZATION (PACIFIC ISLANDS)

The Pacific AgriHack Lab 2018, ICTs – From Farm to Table brought together targeted in-country experts, tech-savvy young professionals and agri-entrepreneurs to identify ICT applications with the greatest potential to connect the agriculture and food sectors. The hackathon attracted 27 teams from six countries in the region. One of the three winners was the Malaita Youth in Business Association from the Solomon Islands. They used the grant to develop the MalaAgri app, which seeks to connect young farmers to the market in remote parts of this Pacific Island state, as well as to link youth entrepreneurs to support services to increase their access to information on updated farming techniques and opportunities.

The key lessons identified by the project for upscaling ICT4Ag solutions include working directly with farmer groups, youth groups, communities, SMEs and other actors, so as to better identify and respond to their specific needs; testing and evaluating the functionalities of the ICT4Ag tools in partnership with end-users; and to develop a business case for sustainability.

Source: CTA, 2020

FOs can function more efficiently by using ICTs to provide a series of benefits to their members, such as: enhanced connections between members, thus improving the sharing of information on technologies and markets; improved accounting and administration through modern management practices, information systems and financial management (FAO, 2012).

FOs can link tech-savvy youth with older farmers and enable them to connect to the digital space and establish an e-venue to exchange information such as weather updates, market prices, or where to buy input supplies. Lessons from implementation suggest that digital solutions (for example in extension services and market information) should be easily, cheaply and sustainably localized, make the most of social media and involve young people as beneficiaries or actors in delivering services (FAO, 2018c).

In India, SEWA trains its members on the use of smartphones to gather market information or collect data, and how to use a dashboard in online meetings. In Indonesia, SPTN HPS trains youth on how to operate the internet and blogspot.com, and apply new mobile software in promoting organic agriculture. In Nepal, CTCF's youth technical committee maintains a Facebook group dedicated to sharing experiences, videos and photos on good tea production and showcasing success stories.

In Cambodia, CFAP collaborated with a tech company to provide ICT training and connect farmers to an app, which enabled them to chat directly with agricultural experts and exchange information on where to procure input supplies. FNN also plans to train more youth members to use Facebook not only for entertainment but also to make a profit through social media.

In Viet Nam, VNFU provides training on digital technology to farmers of all ages, and introduces them to Google and how to use smartphones and the internet so that they can enhance their knowledge and “react to the world”. In the Philippines, GSAC



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linked up with a partner youth organization to conduct an online infographics training session for young staff and members that also looked at how to use mobile and online platforms to address the needs of members. PAKISAMA trains young members to help establish a digitized membership registry for member cooperatives. Over the past two years, some 44 “data enumerators” have been trained to collect data through face-to-face surveys (PAKISAMA 2019c).

Within the COVID-19 restrictions (particularly on travel and gatherings), ICT has offered great relief in many areas, including marketing, virtual training and capacity-building. IFAD-assisted projects in India are embracing new

and existing digital platforms to link farmers directly with consumers. In Jharkhand, for example, farmer groups including several youth groups are selling vegetables and fruits through the Aajeevika Farm Fresh app developed by the Jharkhand State Livelihood Promotion Society. In Maharashtra, self-help groups started selling fresh produce through WhatsApp groups.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS FOR RURAL YOUTH

Building partnerships with other FOs and other civil society organizations (CSOs) and network partners is important. This includes supportive institutions from government, agri-agencies and private sector. Successfully working together will rely on some intangibles such as trust, relationships, social capital and solidarity, or a history of working well together. FOs can also leverage catalytic funds from partner institutions for youth empowerment activities. This section presents three innovative financing partnerships and an alliance-building model that launched a global campaign involving FOs and their strategic partners.

In 2005, a dialogue platform, the Farmers’ Forum (FAFO) was established by IFAD and partner FOs to provide guidance to IFAD’s operations and to jointly identify opportunities for partnerships in IFAD’s country programmes and investment projects. This dialogue mechanism has offered opportunities to discuss increased participation of youth and women in agriculture and agribusiness (IFAD, 2016a; IFAD, 2020b). IFAD has been providing support to FOs and their member organizations through direct grants, such as the two phases of the Medium-term Cooperation Programme (MTCP) in the Asia and the Pacific region, and the Support to FOs in Africa Programme (SFOAP), both

of which supported capacity-building activities and economic services of FOs in their respective regions (IFAD, 2017b). More recent grant support for strengthening FOs in the region included the Farmers' Organizations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (FO4ACP) and the Asia Pacific Farmers' Programme (APFP).

In the Asia and the Pacific region, the experience with MTCP2 has shown that FOs are: (i) reliable partners able to deliver results; (ii) efficient users of funds whereby operational costs are lower due to relative proximity to the field and farmer-friendly rates and implementation arrangements; (iii) accountable not only to donors but also, more importantly, to the farmers who are their members; and (iv) a key exit strategy ensuring sustainability (AFA, 2019a). MTCP2 also demonstrated that small catalytic funds can go a long way in encouraging and supporting FOs in applying for publicly available funds intended for farmers. The success of the two financing mechanisms led to the development of new phases – FO4ACP (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific) and the Asia Pacific Farmers' Programme (APFP) – co-funded by the European Union/Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States and IFAD, while AgriCord agri-agencies have been utilized to build the business capacities of local FOs.

The FFP/ASEAN or Farmers Fighting Poverty/Food Security Initiatives of Farmers' Organisations in a Regional Perspective partnership was forged in 2015 between IFAD and AgriCord, a global alliance of agri-agencies mandated by FOs (AgriCord, 2019). The financing from the European Commission is channelled to AgriCord through IFAD as the management agency. FFP-ASEAN supports FOs based in six ASEAN member countries (Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, the Philippines and Viet Nam) to evolve into stable, performing, accountable organizations that are able to effectively represent their members, advise farmers in their farming enterprises and deliver good-quality economic services to their members. FFP-ASEAN strengthens the FOs by applying a holistic approach that supports the value chain integration of the FOs. By the end of 2019, 58 national and subnational FOs and their members, and a regional FO, had received financial support and advisory services through the programme. Gender and youth inclusiveness is mainstreamed as a cross-cutting concern within FFP-ASEAN and represents an important focus area for the advisory services provided by the agri-agencies. The partnerships between the agri-agencies and FOs are aligned with current trends in European Union policy for development cooperation, focusing on building in-depth partnerships.

Another financing mechanism that is co-implemented by FAO, IFAD, WFP and the World Bank – the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program's Missing Middle Initiative (GAFSP-MMI) – has supported FOs to provide economic services to their members. One pilot project in Mali (Inclusion of Rural Youth in Poultry and Aquaculture Value Chains) enabled FOs to train young people between the ages of 18 and 30 years, 50 per cent of whom were women, in poultry and fish farming and processing, and enable them to supply local villages and other markets (World Bank, 2020b). Young people with a guarantor are able to receive start-up loans. In addition, support funds have been provided for childcare centres so that more women can attend the training.

The UNFFF is the culmination of nearly 15 years of a broad-based campaign spearheaded by FOs and hundreds of other civil society organizations working around the world. In 2006, the World Rural Forum initiated a campaign that aimed to urge the United Nations to declare an International Year of Family Farming (AFA, 2014a). In the Asia and the Pacific region, the forerunners of the campaign were AFA and the Asian

Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia (AsiaDHRRA). In December 2011, the United Nations officially proclaimed 2014 as the International Year of Family Farming, which was later extended into a decade-long celebration. The UNDFP aims to promote country-driven, inclusive, bottom-up, multi-stakeholder collaboration to develop and oversee an integrated approach to support family farming. The UNDFP Global Action Plan, which includes support for youth and ensuring the generational sustainability of family farming, reads: "To ensure generational renewal in family farming, it is essential to organize and bring youth together, and to improve their capacities for collective action. The effective participation of aspiring and young farmers in policy processes has the potential to reframe society's perception of family farming as a dynamic sector with constant renewal capacity." FOs and their civil society organization partners also promoted the establishment of country-level multi-stakeholder mechanisms in the Asia and the Pacific region, such as the national committee of family farming. Currently, national committees of family farming exist in the Philippines, Nepal, Indonesia and India, and have members from government (except in India), FOs and civil society organizations.

7.

PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

Working with rural youth calls for a differentiated approach that factors in the range of dimensions involved in enhancing their agency, reduces barriers to their productive capacity, mentoring and skills development, and offers them remunerative and sustainable livelihood opportunities. FOs need to build their organization, operations and strategy for engaging with rural youth based on the following principles.

- **Inclusivity.** Recognizing the heterogeneity of rural youth and the different levels of access they have to resources, decision-making and opportunities will underpin efforts to achieve inclusivity. Inclusivity of rural youth needs to be embedded in the mission, operations, structures and strategies of FOs.
- **Innovation.** The pursuit of innovation will attract the interest of youth and keep them effectively engaged.
- **Remunerative employment.** Youth need to be allowed to earn an adequate income through remunerative employment that offers them stability and a sense of purpose and belonging.
- **Strategic partnerships.** In working towards better outcomes of policy reforms, sustainable rural development and cost-effectiveness, strategic partnerships will be instrumental.
- **Sustainability.** The core incentive in attracting investments and international/regional technical expertise from development partners is the sustainability of outcomes.

8.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are provided to strengthen efforts by FOs to empower rural youth to participate in agriculture and the rural economy in a profitable and sustained way. It is important to recognize that investing in youth not only empowers the young people themselves but also benefits the FOs in terms of: (i) ensuring the sustainability of FOs; (ii) bringing about innovation and change; and (iii) building the capacities of future food producers and agri-entrepreneurs in rural communities.

PROMOTE AND STRENGTHEN MECHANISMS FOR ENGAGING RURAL YOUTH IN FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS

It is important to strengthen the mechanisms for engaging rural youth in FOs by establishing youth-sensitive policies and programmes. Such policies should ensure **inclusive governance that involves youth as key active stakeholders in FO governance structures**. Accordingly, youth leadership and organizational skills should be strengthened through training, mentoring and exposure, among other approaches, based on the interests and aspirations of rural youth. At the policy level, the following action is needed.

- **Develop youth policy guidance/strategies/action plans.** Within the internal mechanisms of FOs, youth sensitivity needs to be ensured not only in leadership and management but also in the programmes and services available to members. Policies that **promote increased youth engagement in FOs** may include: setting up quotas for youth membership and recruitment; prioritizing youth in education and training activities; encouraging the formation of youth-led groups in the FO with their own work plan and budget; allocating seats for youth representatives in decision-making bodies in the FO; assigning a focal person for youth concerns.
- **Strengthen the voice of rural youth and promote youth-responsive sectoral policies.** It is important that young people have scope to voice their needs and aspirations in public policies and in decision-making mechanisms at local/community, national and global levels. In their role as drivers of agriculture-related policy dialogue, FOs should not only influence policymakers to see the value of investing in empowering rural youth to strengthen and sustain the foundation for agricultural transformation but also advocate for youth-sensitive sectoral policies.

CREATE DECENT AND REMUNERATIVE EMPLOYMENT

FOs should support the creation of decent and remunerative employment for rural youth and support sustainable and profitable enterprises.

Knowledge and skills development for rural youth needs to be supported through relevant training and innovative methods, such as peer-to-peer learning exchanges, farmer-to-farmer mentoring, immersion programmes, study tours or exposure visits to cooperatives or demonstration farms, and technical and vocational education and training (TVET). FOs should support job-oriented skills development programmes for young women and men, and internship or apprenticeship programmes with cooperatives and/or other private sector partners. Opportunities for promoting intergenerational knowledge-sharing within FOs should be promoted. Promoting the capacity of rural youth for agripreneurship would enable them to engage in agriculture as a business through improving agricultural productivity, online marketing, food processing, agro-industrial occupations, developing business plans and adding value to their products. Several incubation and start-up models, as well as business training modules, are available for adaptation/adoption by FOs. Several training and capacity-building models for youth have been cited in this study.

EMPOWER YOUTH THROUGH DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

FOs should harness advances made in digital technology to strengthen their organizations while at the same time attracting youth membership. To this end, FOs should: (i) support the closing of digital technology knowledge and skills gaps; (ii) promote wide use of technology in marketing, extension and finance; (iii) engage youth to promote innovation through digital technology; (iv) lobby and advocate for improved ICT infrastructure and the closing of the digital divide; (v) link tech-savvy youth with older farmers for improved access to information such as weather updates, market prices and where to buy inputs.

SUPPORT RURAL YOUTH'S ACCESS TO FINANCE AND OTHER PRODUCTIVE RESOURCES (INCLUDING LAND)

- **Facilitate youth access to land and other productive resources and services** available under both public and private programmes. FOs' strong role in policy advocacy and lobbying could contribute much in this area.
- **Promote financial inclusion of rural youth** by supporting the development of financial products that are youth-friendly (such as non-asset collateralized loans); encouraging a savings culture among rural youth; promoting comprehensive approaches that combine financial or non-financial and business development services with supportive family and social networks; tapping into migrant remittances as source of financing for youth agri-enterprises.

FOSTER STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION AROUND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

In order to address youth issues holistically, there is a need for FOs to work in collaboration with development partners and other like-minded organizations to achieve strategic objectives such as knowledge exchange and lesson-learning, as well as to leverage resources to support youth empowerment initiatives. Some examples of strategic partnerships have been cited in this study, such as PIFON's partnership with the Tutu Rural Training Centre in Fiji for youth training and capacity-building. The Tutu model is being replicated in other parts of the Pacific, including the Napil Rural

Training Centre in Vanuatu. IFAD's FO grant programme offers an opportunity for FOs to address youth issues.

ADDRESS YOUTH'S NEGATIVE PERCEPTION OF AND ATTITUDE TO AGRIBUSINESS BY REBRANDING THE IMAGE OF THE FARMER

Initiatives that aim to attract young people into agriculture and retain them should address the key challenges young people face in the sector, as discussed in this paper. Young people view agriculture as hard work that is not lucrative. Making agriculture less laborious (through mechanization and other innovations), while ensuring profitability, could help to reverse young people's negative attitude to agriculture. FOs can also use media, ICT and social media (which is cost-effective) to portray a better image of agriculture and facilitate sharing of information and experiences between young people and young farmers. The use of youth role models in the sector is important in ensuring that youth are aware of the economic opportunities in agriculture. As in other industries where people are celebrated for their contributions, there is a need to recognize young people who are successful in agripreneurship and make room for them to tell their stories in order to inspire other young people in the sector.

STRENGTHENING YOUTH RESILIENCE IN THE FACE OF SHOCKS (SUCH AS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC)

As FOs take on activities to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, the need to involve youth in such activities is clear. At the same time, FOs need to target disadvantaged youth, such as migrant returnees, for support during the pandemic. This can be done both by supporting ongoing government efforts to monitor the number of young people who have returned and those who want to stay and be absorbed into the local economy, and by mapping their existing skills/competencies to enable them to be linked to relevant skilling/job opportunities. Another approach would entail building resilience to increase the capacity of youth to withstand shocks and disturbances, and maintain their agriculture-based livelihoods. This is particularly important given that the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened the unemployment situation in the Asia and the Pacific region, with disproportionate impacts on youth.

PROGRAMMATIC INPUTS IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Development organizations working on sustainable rural development can strengthen FOs by providing technical inputs, establishing partnerships and providing results-based grant financing to FOs. At the same time, development partners supporting FOs should require them to mainstream youth issues in their programmes. The effectiveness and sustainability of rural development programmes can be enhanced by continuous dialogue and feedback with FOs on the design and implementation of strategies/interventions and the monitoring of projects. The inclusion of FOs in various advisory committees and governance structures of initiatives/platforms developed by international development agencies to further rural youth empowerment will ensure that youth have agency, voice and representation in rural development programmes.

9.

CONCLUSION

The need to invest in and empower rural youth is widely acknowledged. The vastness of the youth population calls for attention now. Investing in rural youth is a good move not only to improve their livelihoods but also to further agricultural production and rural development in the wider sense. With the average age of the labour force in family farming estimated at 65.8 years, youth are the future for food security. This is a reflection of the urgency to address the plethora of challenges facing rural youth, a role that FOs are well placed to undertake given their centrality in agriculture and food security through the services they render to their membership. This paper has detailed strategies that FOs in the Asia and the Pacific region are using to facilitate the full participation of rural youth in agriculture and rural development and, by the same token, the pitfalls to avoid. Strategies to empower rural youth include those that facilitate employment creation, give youth a voice to influence policy, institute youth-sensitive policies, facilitate access to resources including land, finances and digital technology. One theme that runs throughout the strategies is capacity strengthening and training, coupled with the building of partnerships to benefit youth empowerment. For development agencies with a focus on youth empowerment, partnering with FOs can help deepen the impact of their work.



ANNEX A

GUIDE QUESTIONS/SURVEY

STRENGTHENING FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS (FOs)²⁴ FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL YOUTH²⁵

A. Basic information about FO

1. Please provide a brief description of your farmers' organization (FO) – name, year founded, vision/mission/goals, membership, reach/areas covered, sector(s) represented, membership in local/national/regional/international bodies, etc.

2. Based on how youth is defined in your country, what percentage (%) of your members are:

Young men? _____

Young women? _____

Members belonging to indigenous/marginalized communities?

3. Does your FO have a policy on rural youth empowerment? If yes, please state/ share the policy document. _____

B. Youth representation and participation in FO

4. Is there a platform for youth representation in your FO (e.g. youth committee, focal person, platform, etc.)? If yes, please describe the platform. _____

5. Is there an allocation for youth representation in your Board of Directors or a quota for youth participation in the FO's projects and activities? If yes, please state the allocation or quota. _____

6. What percentage of your staff/managers are young men and women? _____

²⁴ Farmers' organizations (FOs) are autonomous membership-based professional organizations of smallholders, family farmers and rural producers, including pastoralists, artisanal fishers, landless people and indigenous people, that are beyond the grass-roots or community level, at the local, national, regional and global levels, on either a commodity or a territorial basis. They include all forms of producers' associations, cooperatives, unions and federations.

²⁵ For statistical purposes, the United Nations defines youth as persons between the ages of 15 and 25 years, although countries often adopt different definitions.

7. What challenges have you encountered in recruiting youth into your FO? _____

8. What strategies do you employ to target youth? _____

9. Is there a differential approach required for young men, women and youth belonging to marginalized/indigenous sectors for participation in your FO? If yes, please elaborate. _____

10. What are the benefits to farmers' organizations of having youth members? _____

C. Role of FO in rural youth employment and engagement

11. Please indicate if your FO is providing any of the following services for rural youth. (You may tick more than one box.)
- Capacity-building, agricultural skills training and education, mentoring
 - Gender-responsive training, capacity-building and mentoring
 - Access to land, water and other productive resources
 - Access to finance, financial services
 - Value chain and agribusiness enterprise development, business development services
 - Access to markets
 - Access to ICT, digital technology
 - Policy advocacy, facilitating rural youth participation in policy dialogue
 - Response to COVID-19 pandemic
 - Others (please mention) _____
12. Briefly describe the service/s provided above. _____

13. Are these stand-alone projects or components of a larger programme? _____

14. Please state the nature of capacity-building or mentoring aimed at youth for their participation in FOs. _____

15. Do you employ youth-specific tools and methodology/technology? If so, please share an example. _____

16. What are the benefits to rural youth and rural development as a result of the services provided above? _____

17. What should be the role of FOs in empowering rural youth? Please provide an example. _____

D. Challenges and lessons learned from empowering rural youth

18. What are the key challenges to rural youth employment and engagement? Please elaborate and/or provide an example. _____

19. What are the facilitating or driving factors in empowering rural youth? _____

20. What are the constraints or challenges in empowering rural youth? _____

21. What do you recommend as good model/s of rural youth employment and engagement? _____

22. What should be the guiding principles in working with FOs towards rural youth employment and engagement? _____

C. Strengthening FOs and partnerships to empower rural youth

23. How can institutions like IFAD support FOs to empower rural youth? _____

24. How should IFAD or other agency programming adapt/change to create better dividends for youth? _____

25. What financing instruments within IFAD and other agencies are available to achieve this? _____

26. Give examples of regional and Global South partnerships where FOs have been able to facilitate youth towards remunerative and empowering occupations? _____

27. Are there untapped partnerships and forums that could further strengthen FOs to empower rural youth? _____

F. Others

28. Please provide other remarks. _____

ANNEX B FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES CONSULTED

REGIONAL FOS

Ms Maria Elena Rebagay, Policy
Advocacy Officer

**Asian Farmers' Association for
Sustainable Rural Development (AFA)**

Mr Kyle Stice, Manager Director
Ms Lavinia Kaumaitotoya,
Program Manager
Ms Illeyah Draunidalo, Communications
Officer

Ms Angela Biiirch, Monitoring &
Evaluation Manager
**Pacific Island Farmers Organisation
Network Limited (PIFON)**

Mr Balasubramanian Iyer,
Regional Director
**International Co-operative Alliance
Asia Pacific (ICAAP)**

BANGLADESH

Golam Sorowor, Finance Secretary
**Bangladesh Agricultural Farm Labour
Federation (BAFLF)**

Shibli Anowar, General Secretary
Labour Resource Center (LRC)

INDIA

Ms Reema Nanavaty, Director
**Self-Employed Women's Association
(SEWA)**

Ms Sudha Varghese, Secretary
**Nari Gunjan (Women's Voice)
Farmers Organisation**

NEPAL

Mr Rabin Rai, General Secretary
**Central Tea Cooperative Federation
Ltd. (CTCF)**

CAMBODIA

Mr Sopheap Pan, Executive Director
**Farmer and Nature Net Association
(FNN)**

**Federation of Farmer Associations
Promoting Family Agriculture
Enterprise in Cambodia (FAEC)**

**Cambodian Farmers Association
Federation of Agricultural Producers
(CFAP)**

LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

Mr Phouthasinh Phimmachanh,
Secretary-General
Lao Farmers Network (LFN)

MYANMAR

Ms Tichia Tedim
**Agriculture and Farmers Federation
of Myanmar (AFFM)**

VIET NAM

Mr Mai Bac Mai, ICD Director
Viet Nam Farmers' Union (VNFU)

Mr Ronny Novianto, Director
**Sekretariat Pelayanan Petani nan
 Nelayan – Hari Pangan Sedunia
 (STPN-HPS)/Secretariat Services
 World Food Day Farmers and
 Fishermen**

PHILIPPINES

Ms Melissa Alamo, Young Farmers
 Focal Person
**Pambansang Kilusan ng mga
 Samahang Magsasaka (PAKISAMA)**

**Gubat Saint Anthony Cooperative
 (GSAC)**

Luna corner Quezon Streets, Gubat,
 Sorsogon

**Sibulan Ancestral Domain Organic
 Producer Cooperative (SADOPCO)**

**National Guthrie Plantation
 Incorporated ARB Multi-Purpose
 Cooperative (NGPI-MPC)**

**DEVELOPMENT
 PARTNERS**

Mr Frew Behabtu, Youth Focal Person,
 South Asia Hub
IFAD-Asia Pacific

Mr Kaushik Barua, Country Director
 Mr Pattivong Soulivanh, Country
 Programme Officer
**IFAD – Lao People's Democratic
 Republic**

Ms Ranjana Topno, Manager
 Community Institution & Gender
JTELP – India

Mr Raju Gartaula, Economic Inclusion
 Officer, also supporting M&E and KM
RERP – Nepal

Mr Ken Lohento, Sr Programme
 Coordinator
**The Technical Center for Agricultural
 and Rural Cooperation (CTA)**

Ms Jeongha KIM,
 Programme Officer (Green Jobs) and
 Ms Seong Young Lee, Consultant
 Decent Rural Employment Team
 Social Policies and Rural Institutions
 Division, Economic and Social
 Development Department
**Food and Agriculture Organization of
 the United Nations (FAO)**

Mr Drew Gardiner, Youth Employment
 Program (YEP) Specialist, Headquarters
 Mr Felix Weidenkaff, YEP Specialist,
 Bangkok Regional Office
**International Labour Organization
 (ILO)**

Mr Chris Morris,
 Mr William Lucht
Asian Development Bank

**FARMERS' ORGANIZATION
 NETWORKS**

Ms Katya Vuori, **AgriCord**

Ms Gudrun Cartuyvels,
TRIAS-Philippines

Mr Elvie Gayosa, **TRIAS-Philippines
 Agriculteurs Français et
 Développement International (AfDi)**

Ms Emma Freycon, **Supagro-France**

Ms Laura Lorenzo, Director
World Rural Forum (WRF)

ANNEX C

OTHER YOUTH-FOCUSED PROGRAMMES AND POLICY PROPOSALS FROM FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Farmers' organizations (FOs) that are members of the Asian Farmers Association (AFA) have initiated or proposed various programmes and policies to attract rural youth into agriculture (AFA, 2014). These proposals are described below.

BANGLADESH

Kendrio Krishok Moitree (KKM) has proposed a policy that will: (i) establish model cooperative farms by organizing smallholders through integrated, ecological and local resource-based farming systems with consumer-linked marketing channels; (ii) develop the skills of rural youth through agricultural education and field-based and practical training; (iii) establish agricultural research centres and universities; (iv) introduce "land banking" where medium- and large-scale farmers will deposit their land with the bank to be lent to smallholder cooperatives; (v) ensure availability of agricultural credit to young farmers' cooperatives at low-interest rates and on easy terms and conditions; (vi) promote sustainable and eco-friendly mechanization of agriculture; (vii) conduct awareness campaigns to motivate young farmers to go into farming and grow respect for farming; (viii) engage more educated youth in agriculture; and (ix) ensure responsible investment in sustainable agriculture to promote integrated family farming.

CAMBODIA

Farmer and Nature Net (FNN) has established a youth committee, which has representation on the FO's board. Young farmers are trained to be young leaders and farmer entrepreneurs through exposure to demonstration farms and good farming practices, such as building a fish pond, growing organic rice, applying multi-purpose farming, raising livestock and using manure to produce biogas. FNN is proposing a policy to prioritize an agricultural education programme for youth and to develop programmes for youth in agriculture in conjunction with NGOs and the private sector. Young people and the public at large must be encouraged to recognize the importance of the role of agriculture in the economy and for food security.

INDONESIA

Aliansi Petani Indonesia (API) has initiated several programmes: (i) Share knowledge among farmers, youth and elder farmers through *musyawarah* (popular discussions), which is an important part of family farming; (ii) develop young farmers' organizations and encourage more participation by women and youth in family farming; (iii) network among farmers' organizations at the national level and host exchange/learning visits; (iv) promote the role of women, for example reading the Koran together, training on finance; (v) handle pests and diseases of vegetables and tobacco using farmers' own methods; (vi) provide product profiling and market information; (vii) invite extension officers relevant to agricultural policy; (viii) promote policies beneficial to tobacco farmers; and (ix) promote participatory local seeds development.

JAPAN

AINOUKAI (2014) has recommended a policy that reflects the voice of young organic farmers and that will: (i) encourage newcomers to agriculture; (ii) provide financial incentives and payments to young farmers to achieve stable incomes for the first 3-5 years of farming; (iii) help young farmers secure markets, acquire agricultural skills and shift to organic farming; (iv) raise awareness of the quality and safety of organic food; (v) promote cooperation among young farmers and support from the local community through food purchase schemes; and (vi) promote such schemes as Family Management Agreements, where family members agree on their roles and tasks in the farming operations, young farmer successors are given more incentives to farm and better knowledge of farm operations, and women's roles as partners in overall farm management are advanced.

REPUBLIC OF KOREA

The Korean Advanced Farmers' Federation (KAFF) has suggested a policy that will: (i) ensure succession in family farms by providing endowment, technological support and education to promote a better ecosystem of farmers; (ii) replace or exempt young farmers from military service; (iii) provide financial support to young farmers by lowering interest rates from the current 3 per cent to 1 per cent and adopting a credential recognition system; (iv) enable members of the Youth Farmers' Association to actively participate in KAFF activities; and (v) maximize social responsibility of young farmers and develop their capacity as local farming leaders.

KYRGYSTAN

The Union of Water User Associations (UWUA) has initiated the following programmes: (i) set up agricultural training centres at the local level; (ii) trained young farmers in crop-growing techniques, prepared business plans and accessed capital; (iii) broadened exchanges among farmers; (iv) ensured admission of youth, especially women, in agricultural universities; (v) improved the sociocultural life of the rural population; (vi) created conditions to lighten the work done by women in agriculture; (vii) created conditions to keep youth in rural areas; (viii) set up links with professional training centres and refresher courses; and (ix) enhanced farmers' awareness. It is also supporting the formation of youth organizations in rural areas.

MONGOLIA

The National Association of Mongolian Agricultural Cooperatives (NAMAC) has proposed a policy that will protect young herders' and farmers' social security, improve their living and working environments, and increase their household incomes through (i) exploring research opportunities to equip unemployed youth with transferable herding/animal husbandry skills; (ii) conducting large-scale research and data collection on the problems faced by youth in the agricultural industry, and identifying ways to solve them; (iii) promoting the movement New Generations of Herder Volunteers, described in the *National Programme for Support on Youth Development*; and (iv) boosting the dignity and leadership of youth in agriculture. Several NGOs are working on youth issues, such as the Mongolian Youth Federation (MYF), which is the largest NGO in Mongolia and aims to be a voice for the advancement of youth and protection of youth rights. The Mongolian Young Herders' Committee was established in 2013 to protect the interests of young herders, and has been working on a national-level survey questionnaire about young herders. The Young Cooperators Club was established in 2010 and successfully organized the First Meeting of Cooperative Young Leadership in Agriculture in 2013.

NEPAL

The National Land Reform Forum (NLRF) advocates investing in young people through training and capacity development, together with facilitating access to and encouraging the use of appropriate technology. NLRF is proposing a policy that will: (i) increase investment in family farming; (ii) extend research on the situation of family farming in Nepal; (iii) involve youth in ensuring farmers' rights in the new constitution; (iv) create a new network of young farmers for a collective voice; and (v) create more public awareness of the importance of family farming.

PHILIPPINES

Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka (PAKISAMA) has trained young farmers in integrated diversified organic farming systems to expose them to organic farming. The young farmers are also trained in family farm planning, which is an inclusive and participatory system of planning adopted by parents/elders and young family members in the development and management of their farms. PAKISAMA has also proposed a *Magna Carta of Young Farmers* to promote, protect and encourage the participation of young farmers aged 15-40 years, with the overarching objective of putting pride and dignity back into farming. The proposed law will (i) define discrimination against young farmers as any age-based distinction that excludes or restricts young farmers in the recognition and promotion of their rights and their access to and enjoyment of opportunities, benefits or privileges; (ii) provide for programmes for young farmers, such as an agriculture-sensitive educational curriculum and broader scholarships for all agriculture-related courses; (iii) institutionalize young farmers' representation in all agricultural policymaking bodies and other agencies that have reserved seats for youth; (iv) strengthen existing programmes for young farmers; and (v) introduce innovative programmes such as farm takeovers to incentivize young farmers by providing capital to enable them to buy their parents' lands.

TAIWAN

The Taiwan Dairy Farmers' Association (TDFA) and Taiwan Wax Apple Development Association (TWADA) have proposed a policy to provide support to young farmers through projects such as the New Farmer Programme that will: (i) encourage new farmers to participate in agriculture, focusing on agricultural construction work for city governments; (ii) recruit young people to join and make use of farming system information and agricultural banking to activate fallow land; and (iii) help new farmers to expand production-scale agriculture and promote sustainable agriculture.

THAILAND

The Farmer's Federations Association for Development (SORKORPOR) has allocated seats in its local and national governance structures to youth representatives. SORKORPOR is also proposing a policy to develop a new generation of young farmers to: (i) establish, expand, promote and develop a group of young farmers in elementary school, middle school and the community continually; (ii) develop knowledge, create young farmers' organizations and leadership networks; and (iii) create incentives for young farmers towards agricultural entrepreneurship.

VIET NAM

The Viet Nam Farmers Union (VNFU) has provided technical training for young farmers and urges the government to implement policies supporting young farmers in Viet Nam. Although there are many programmes for youth, there are few programmes targeted at rural youth. A programme called "600" encourages 600 young students to live in rural areas after they graduate. VNFU is proposing a policy that will: (i) establish cooperation among farmers to improve market capacity; (ii) provide training and technology transfer on sustainable agriculture through "learning by doing" or "farmers train farmers" methods; (iii) provide long-term investment and credit support; (iv) organize exchange visits for rural youth, and encourage participation in trade fairs, exhibitions and competitions on farming techniques; (v) develop and expand the models on production and business for rural youth; and (vi) build respect for farmers by raising awareness of the important role of farmers and agriculture. The Viet Nam Youth Union is the representative organization for youth in Viet Nam, with the aim of reducing youth unemployment. The Movement on Volunteers to the Countryside encourages youth in urban areas to go to rural areas to help in agricultural production, stay with farmers and transfer their knowledge to build local infrastructure. The Movement on Youth in Good Production and Business encourages rural youth to apply technology, biotechnology, innovative thinking and knowledge-sharing, and to participate in new rural construction.

ANNEX D

IMPACT STORIES FROM THE MEDIUM TERM COOPERATION PROGRAMME WITH FARMERS' ORGANIZATIONS IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC, PHASE II (MTCP2) (SAMOA, VANUATU AND FIJI)

Promoting a “value chain way of thinking” in the Pacific. Value chains have become widely accepted as a principal tool in understanding and improving agriculture over the past five years. The Pacific Island Farmers Organisation Network (PIFON) and Koko Siga Pacific published the *Agricultural Value Chain Guide for the Pacific Islands* to make value chains accessible and relevant to farmers. At its heart is the need to involve farmers, buyers, processors, exporters, quarantine officials and agricultural extension officers in the process of developing value chains. This has led to a series of value chain analyses, which provide in-depth insights into agricultural commodity production and significant improvements to farming practices, farmer incomes and export revenues. A key impact of value chain training comes from the changed mindset of value chain actors, who developed a new perspective on their roles and a more critical way of thinking about the business of agriculture, which resulted in improved relationships, better collaborations and often increased supplies of produce. PIFON and FOs have developed considerable in-house value chain expertise, which they then provide as an additional service to their members and generate income for the FO.

Participatory value chain training leads to trust among farmers and buyers in Vanuatu. In 2014, PIFON and the Farm Support Association organized a value chain training course in Vanuatu, which was attended by organic pepper farmers of Malo and an organic pepper buyer. The farmers were given a better understanding of all the steps and costs that were involved after the pepper left their farms, and why they received only a small portion of the final retail price. They were also able to make the buyer aware of all the difficulties they faced in producing the pepper. Together, they worked on how to improve the quality of the pepper on the farm, which would lead to less risk for the buyer and more money for everyone. By getting to know each other as people in open discussions, trust had started to grow among them. Back on their farms, the farmers worked with fresh enthusiasm because they no longer felt that the buyer was ripping them off and six weeks after the training, the buyer saw a marked improvement in the quality and quantity of peppers he was being supplied with. This new level of understanding and respect between farmer and buyer resulted from a participatory approach to conducting the value chain analysis.

Developing an FO-led regional breadfruit programme in Tonga and Fiji. Pacific farmers produce breadfruit for many reasons – it is highly nutritious; it can be used as an import substitute for wheat, rice and potatoes, and there are untapped export markets; it is resilient to natural disaster and climate change; and there is an expanding body of knowledge on growing, agroprocessing and end-product development that farmers can now access. In 2016, Pacific Island FOs coordinated their work plans and resources to develop a regional breadfruit programme on their own. In Tonga, MORDI Tonga focused on technical aspects of breadfruit propagation and growth, while Nishi Trading focused on processing and GroFed on establishment of orchards and SMART farms where breadfruit is intercropped with other plants that meet the daily domestic needs of the grower and their family. In Fiji, the Tutu Rural Training Centre developed a thriving cottage industry around breadfruit flour and breadfruit chips, which led to the crop becoming more integrated into farming systems and becoming lodged in the minds of Pacific farmers. In 2017, MORDI Tonga and Nishi Trading entered into a partnership with the Government of Tonga and secured a US\$3 million, five-year breadfruit and nutrition project through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Although breadfruit is still considered by most Pacific islanders to be a “cyclone food” or food of last resort, this attitude is starting to change and breadfruit is starting to become a “cool” crop.

Farmer-to-farmer technical exchanges develop champion farmers in Samoa.

The Samoa Farmers Association has been organizing farmer-to-farmer technical exchanges, which have focused on off-season pineapple production, papaya production, soil management, floriculture, dragon fruit production and agroprocessing. One of the key findings is the importance of the careful selection of participants in initial exchanges to establish a small number of local champion farmers who can implement what they learn on their own farms, apply the technology and build their own expertise. Follow-up exchanges are important to reinforce the initial training and to provide additional knowledge and skills. The local champion farmer can then start to train and mentor local farmers using the skills learned and their farm as a visible, working example to other farmers.

Building a national farmers’ platform in Fiji. In August 2017, the Fiji Crop and Livestock Council hosted the Fiji Farmers Forum, the first-ever national Farmers Forum in Fiji, attended by 50 participants from FOs across the Fiji agricultural sector, the Fiji Ministry of Agriculture, and various NGO and development partners. Aside from a venue providing farmers with direct access to government officials, the two-day event showed that there were common issues shared by farmers across the country, one example being a *dalo* farmer on the island of Taveuni and a dairy farmer from the Naitasiri hinterland. The FOs realized that by working together and presenting a unified farmers’ voice, the government would be more likely to listen. This has heralded a new era in cooperation between FOs in Fiji and coordination in their representation to influence policy.

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International Fund for Agricultural Development

Via Paolo di Dono, 44 - 00142 Rome, Italy

Tel: +39 06 54591 - Fax: +39 06 5043463

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