Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

RURAL EMPLOYMENT

Information material

Rural youth employment and agri–food systems in Uganda

A rapid context analysis

INTRODUCTION

Uganda

Two–thirds of the world's youth live in poverty

In sub–Saharan Africa, 10 to 12 million new jobs/ year are needed till 2030 to absorb all new labour entrants

This rapid context analysis has been developed in the inception stage of the third phase of **Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Integrated Country Approach programme (ICA programme) for boosting decent jobs for youth in the agri–food system**.

The ICA programme supports countries in adopting and implementing youth–inclusive and employment–centred agri–food system development policies, strategies and programmes.

Aligning with country and regional priorities, the ICA programme proposes an integrated approach structured in five main outputs:

1. inception phase, mappings and priority setting;
2. knowledge generation for evidence–based policy development;
3. awareness raising and capacity development for youth–inclusive and employment–centred planning;
4. policy and programme development, with focus on agroterritorial processes of job creation;
5. boosting FAO tools and internal capacity to promote youth employment in agri–food systems in a gender–sensitive manner.

Since 2011, the ICA programme has been implemented in three successive phases. It is currently active in Guatemala, Kenya, Rwanda, Senegal and Uganda (2019–2022), with financial support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

Overall context and rural youth employment challenges

Uganda has experienced stable economic growth over the past 25 years and achieved the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target on halving the proportion of people suffering from hunger. However, also due to the very limited reflection of growth in employment generation and labour productivity (MGLSD, 2018), unemployment and underemployment remain big challenges in the country.

In particular, young people face serious challenges in finding decent employment. Notably, 95 percent of youth are employed informally (see Box 1: Youth school–to–work transitions). Addressing the needs of youth is particularly urgent given that 76 percent of the population is below 30 years (UN DESA, 2017 revision) and that the annual population growth rate is still among the highest in the world (3 percent). An additional challenge is represented by Uganda's refugee population, which has almost tripled since July 2016 and is currently around 1.35 million. While Uganda has a very inclusive refugee policy, with refugees enjoying access to social services and land, the continued refugee influx is straining host communities and service delivery. In addition, most refugees are not able to find decent and gainful employment and remain trapped in casual labour.

Uganda's agriculture sector plays a critical role in providing occupation to many Ugandan youth. Even using the stricter employment definition, thus excluding subsistence agriculture, the sector absorbs 54 percent of the 18 to 30–year–olds compared to 31 percent for those aged 31 to 64, followed by manufacturing (mostly agro–processing), wholesale and retail trade and other services (MGLSD, 2018). Outside agriculture, youth mostly work as welders, crafts makers, brickmakers, tailoring, fishmongers, butchers, food and beverage vendors, street vendors, boda (motorcycle taxi) riders and carpenters. This reflects the limited structured transformation of the economy and the low capacity of the private sector to generate gainful and decent jobs.

Box 1. Youth school–to–work transitions in Uganda

The vast majority of employed youth are undereducated for the job they are doing (79.5% in 2015). The youth labour underutilization rate was high at 67.9 percent in 2015, and the youth unemployment rate at 18.6 percent. Nearly two in three (64.5%) young Ugandans were employed in 2015, with too many working from a very young age; 17.2 percent of young adolescents aged 15–17 were out of school and working.

Nearly seven in ten (69.8%) youth remained in vulnerable employment in 2015 as own–account workers (43.1%) or unpaid family workers (27.7 %). At the same time, almost four in five (78.4 %) youth in paid employment were engaged without a written contract. The share of youth neither in employment nor in education or training (NEETs) is particularly high for women (18.6% vs 6.6% for young men), which is explained primarily by the inability of many young women to go to school and the early age of marriage and family formation in the country.

Source: ILO School–to–Work Transition Survey (SWTS) analysis (2013, 2015).

Nevertheless, the potential of the agricultural sector to create gainful employment has yet to be fully harnessed. Agriculture provides more than half of all exports (see Box 2: Agricultural exports), and is about one–quarter of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, the sector's performance in terms of production and productivity has been unsatisfactory, and **39 percent of the working population, and 31 percent of the youth, is still engaged in subsistence agriculture** (source: Uganda National Household Survey – UNHS). Farming is a labour intensive activity in Uganda, largely relying on family labour, while a negligible share of smallholders hires labour, mainly during harvest season. Although around25 percent of Ugandan smallholders receive extension services, most farmers still use rudimentary methods of cultivation like hand hoes, make limited use of agricultural inputs such as fertilizers (4.4 percent), and only 0.7 percent are motorized equipped, leading to low and poor quality yields. The average value of annual crop production is only USD 898 (see Box 3: Uganda's agricultural production systems). Agricultural infrastructure is not widely available – only 0.7 percent of the average households' farmland is irrigated, making agriculture highly dependent on rainfall. Moreover, the sector also faces significant gender inequalities, with only 27 percent of all registered land in Uganda owned by women (UNDP, 2015).

Box 2. Uganda agricultural exports

Agricultural products (primary and processed) account for more than half of total exports. Coffee is the major export commodity, followed by tea and tobacco.

After 2010, **non–traditional agricultural exports** began to dominate, and this trend is expected to grow. The largest category are fish and fish products (even though there are concerns of falling stocks and overfishing), while other expanding non–traditional exports include sugar and sugar confectionary, cocoa beans, vegetable oils and sesame seeds, cereals, hides and skins, beans and other legumes, flowers, and vegetables.
While most of Uganda's imports originate from India and China, exports mostly go to Kenya (22%) and the EU (20%), followed by United Arab Emirates, South Sudan, Rwanda and DRC. Yet, Uganda imports twice what it exports: USD 5.5 billion vs 2.9 in 2017–2018.

Source: World Bank, 2018; EU, 2019.

Box 3. Uganda's agricultural production systems

Small family farmers account for 89 percent of Ugandan farmers, delivering 80 percent of the annual total agricultural output. They hold around 1 ha of farmland on average, and are further shrinking – from 2006 to 2016, the share of household farms that were less than two ha in size increased from 75 percent to 83 percent (FAO, 2018a; World Bank 2018).

Smallholders in Uganda primarily grow food and staple crops, mainly maize and beans, followed by cassava, sweet potatoes and groundnuts. A smaller portion of smallholders grows cash crops, mainly coffee and sugar cane, but also tea and cotton. Sixty percent of households raise livestock, with chicken being the most common form (FAO, 2018a; WB, 2018).

Farming systems vary across the country, influenced by climatic and soil conditions as well as cultural practices. In the Central and Western regions and along the shore of Lake Victoria, bananas, coffee and staples are grown due to relatively stable and bimodal rainfalls of up to 1500 mm per year, but also due to a better access to secondary and tertiary towns. Much of the Northern and Eastern regions depend on one rainy season, and pastoralism is widespread. Fishing plays an important role given large lakes and water streams (WB, 2018).

Diversification and growth out of subsistence farming into more market–oriented farming has been concentrated in Uganda's Central, Eastern and Western regions. In Northern Uganda, the region with the highest poverty levels, a few large–scale commercial farms were established which are largely devoted to grain and pulse production for sale to the World Food Programme (WFP) and for other exports to South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). These commercial farms have been developed by foreign investors over the past decade, while smaller farms – 10 to 200 ha – are mostly developed by Ugandans (WB, 2018).

The Agriculture Sector Strategic Plan (ASSP) (2016–2020) prioritizes 16 commodities: banana, beans, maize, rice, cassava, tea, coffee, fruits and vegetables, dairy, fish, livestock, meat, cocoa, cotton, oil seeds and oil palm.

Beyond production, the sector's growth and job creation potential is hindered by numerous challenges **including underdeveloped value chains, limited post–harvest handling and processing capacity, inadequate market information services, high market volatility, high cost and risk of investment, inadequate access to credit, poor savings habits, and limited connectivity to markets and suppliers due to weak infrastructure and lack of transportation.** Hence, 85 percent of farmers sell their crops directly to the public at local markets accepting potential income losses (FAO, 2018a).

In spite of these numerous constraints, Uganda's agri–food system development has potential to induce more job–rich growth. The government has prioritized agriculture as one of the key economic sectors in the country's transition into a middle–income country and has emphasized the importance of value addition, commercialization, and building resilience to climate change. Both domestic and regional demand for agriculture commodities is rising, notably for more processed food and protein due to the rapidly increasing urban population (WB, 2018).

By 2050, about 105 million people will live in Uganda (UNDESA, 2017), providing massive opportunities for the country's agri–food system. Already, food processing represents 40 percent of manufacturing activity in Uganda and diverse agribusinesses, particularly along the dairy, maize and coffee value chains, have developed in recent years, linking farmers to inputs, markets and finance (WB, 2018).

Current response

Uganda's overall policy framework (see Box 4) **is very conducive to decent rural youth employment promotion.**

In particular, the adoption of the **National Strategy for Youth Employment in Agriculture (NSYEA) in 2017** offers a promising framework for boosting policy and programmatic coordination.

Multiple youth-targeted initiatives are in place, some of which specific to agriculture, initiated either by the Ugandan Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) or its development partners (see Box 5 for details). Most of youth programmes target youth aged 18 to 30, providing vocational and business training, access to loans and entrepreneurship support. Some are nationwide, while others are focused on specific regions. For those programmes providing loans, training is usually a prerequisite for youth applicants (usually outsourced to partner institutions like Enterprise Uganda).

Based on existing reports, **common challenges identified** across the different programmes include inadequate funding and delays in the disbursement of funds, short project cycles, weak group dynamics, and graduation issues: youth beneficiaries apparently have not yet started earning decent incomes from their investments and remain trapped in informal occupations.

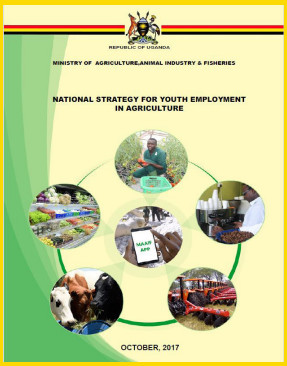
The situation seems to be slightly better for youth engaged in agribusiness or youth groups in urban areas, who tend to start with fairly larger initial outlays and have access to better infrastructures (roads, electricity, ICTs, markets) (FAO, 2017).

Moreover, **most youth initiatives focus on the economic dimension of youth livelihoods**, while broader decent work aspects remain overlooked, such as Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), or labour standards.

©FAO/Petterik Wiggers

Box. 4 Policy context relevant for rural youth employment in Uganda

- **National Development Plan (NDP) II (2016–2020)** prioritizes employment and investment in agriculture, and promotes decent employment, with youth and women as target groups.
- **National Employment Policy (2011)** sets the rural and agricultural sectors among its main action areas.
- **National Youth Policy (2016)** makes specific commitments for the agricultural sector, ex. in terms of finance for agriculture.
- **National Agriculture Policy (2013)** commits to employment generation and improved working conditions in the sector.
- **Agriculture Sector Strategic Plan (ASSP) (2016–2020)** adopts gender and youth as crosscutting issues, and plans for a wide range of activities aimed at enhancing youth and women productive engagement, including training, funding and empowerment. Under measure 3.2.4.2.8, a dedicated youth communication campaign is planned, via social media platforms, blogs, and SMS.
- **National Agriculture Extension policy (2016)** includes specific youth/gender provisions (Policy area 4.2).
- **National Fisheries and Aquaculture policy (2018)** makes a commitment to address the needs of both women and men, youth, children, the elderly and Persons with Disabilities (PWD).
- **National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS) (2017–2022)** focuses on three priority areas: women; youth above 15 years old; and the rural populations (p. 25).
- **Uganda Green Growth Development Strategy (2017–2030)** commits to decent green jobs creation in selected focus areas, including: i. sustainable agriculture production and value chains; and ii. natural capital management and development, which focuses on tourism development, sustainable forestry, wetlands and optimal water resources management.
- **The National Strategy for Youth Employment in Agriculture (NSYEA) (2017)**, under the overall coordination of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), prioritizes the following intervention areas:



1. strengthening the enabling environment for the youth employment;
2. supporting youth–oriented agricultural extension;
3. improving youth education and learning;
4. supporting youth entrepreneurship;
5. adaptation to and mitigation of agribusiness risks and uncertainties.

Source: Public policy documents retrieved from FAO DRE database at http://www.fao.org/rural-employment/policies/results/en/.

Active youth participation in governance and social dialogue processes is a reality in Uganda, including for the development and revision of national agricultural policies and strategies.

The Uganda Youth Network (UYONET) has a decentralized structure of youth organizations, while more recent organizations, like the National Youth Farmers' Association (UNYFA), and the Young Farmers Champions Network (YOFCHAN) advocate for youth needs and participation in agriculture. Finally, the incipient network of MAAIF/FAO–promoted Youth Champions in the agricultural sector represents an additional opportunity for enhancing youth empowerment and networking.


©FAO/Isaac Kasamani

©FAO/Edward Tanyima

Box. 5 Main ongoing initiatives on rural youth employment promotion

- **The Youth Venture Capital Fund (YVCF) (2012–now)**, nationwide, was established to operate through commercial financial institutions (initially Stanbic Bank, DFCU and Centenary Bank; since 2016 only Centenary bank) to provide subsidized credit to young entrepreneurs at a 15 percent interest rate. Since its inception, the YVCF has had mixed results, mainly due to the stringent requirements that were set to access credit, which ranged from having a trustworthy guarantor backing up the loan, to owning an already well–established business at the time of the application. As a result, the YFCF did not support the start–up of new enterprises, but business expansion, even though with very limited effects on jobs creation for young people (Ahaibwe and Kasirye, 2015). Furthermore, due to a diffused, yet incorrect perception on the part of young entrepreneurs that the YVCF's money represented in fact grants from the Government, the non–repayment rate has been quite high.
- **The Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) (2013–now)**, nationwide, implemented by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), is a community demand–driven programme, which equips youth with vocational skills and a revolving fund of up to UShs 12.5 million to procure start–up kits. Also, loans up to UShs 25 million may be given only under special consideration. Before funds are disbursed, the groups are subjected to orientation and training in financial management, accountability, and vocational training – mainly through Enterprise Uganda. The funds are advanced by the local governments to the Youth Interest Groups (YIG) in form of a Revolving Fund (groups of 10 to 15 youth, in the 18 to 30 age bracket, unemployed, poor/vulnerable, 30% must be females), who will either run a group enterprise, or will work to support one another in the development of their respective enterprises. Around 20,000 projects have been supported so far, totaling 237,395 beneficiaries, of which more than 55 percent in agriculture, agro–forestry, related trade or agro–processing. Main challenges identified have been the groups' size (plans are in place to reduce the minimum from 10 to 5) and the limited business orientation.
- **Other governmental initiatives** addressing the youth among its beneficiaries are the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) extension programme, Operation Wealth Creation (OWC), and the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP). Also, several incubators and incubation programmes support youth engagement in agribusiness, including the Consortium for University Responsiveness to Agricultural Development (CURAD), which is a public–private partnership initiative for agribusiness incubation promoted by Makerere University, the National Union of Coffee Agribusinesses and Farm Enterprises (NUCAFE), and National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO); Afribanana; AFRISA on livestock; the Uganda Industrial Research Institute (UIRI) in Kampala and its established value addition centers across Uganda, with peanut–processing facility in Lira, Mushroom Training & Resource Center in Kabale, the Fruit Juice Processing Center in Nabusake, and the Potato Processing Plant in Kabale.
- **Youth–specific initiatives by development partners include** USAID/Chemonics international Youth Leadership for Agriculture (YLA), 2015–2020, Heifer International East Africa Youth Inclusion Project (EAYIP), 2016–2021, MasterCard/Techno Serve (NGO) Strengthening Rural youth development through Enterprises (STRYDE) (2014–19) and the Driving Youth–led New Agribusinesses and Micro–enterprises (DYNAMIC) programme, the adaptation in Uganda of the regional AFDB–promoted Enable Youth Programme, 2018–2019 implemented by the Ministry of Water and Environment (MWE), Skilling Youth for Employment in Agribusiness (SKY) project, ICCO programmes on Agri Business Skilling for Youth in Refugee context (ABSYR) and High Flyers, and FAO's Integrated Country Approach (ICA) for promoting decent rural youth employment.

Source: Programme documents retrieved from FAO DRE database at http://www.fao.org/rural-employment/policies/results/en/.

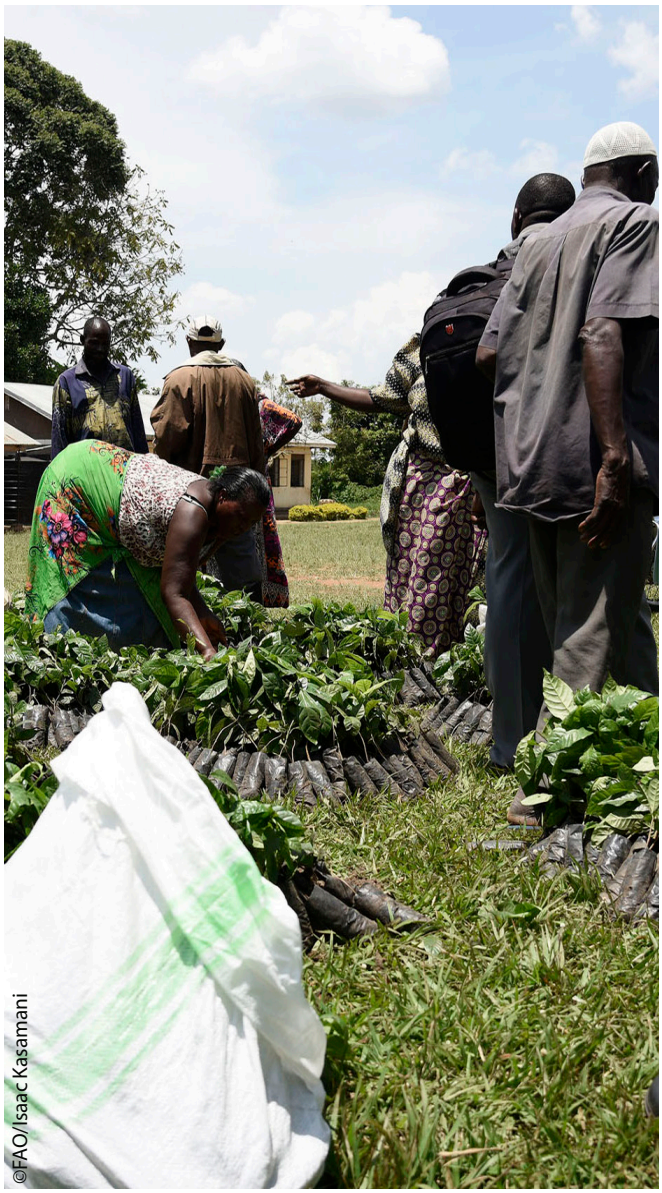
Results and lessons learnt from FAO's work on decent rural youth employment in Uganda

In addition to the support provided to the development of the NSYEA, FAO's work on youth employment in the country[1] has contributed to identify lessons learnt and set up successful models that are worth upscaling.

A quick overview is provided below:

- **Since 2015, several youth–specific assessments have been conducted**, which have informed the development of the NSYEA. In particular, evidence was generated on the many decent work deficits and challenges faced by younger youth in the 14 to 17 group, and on the need to promote interventions that target school dropouts with education and skills development support, financial literacy and labour protection (see appendix 2 of this country analysis).

- **In 2017, FAO collaborated with MAAIF in the Youth Inspiring Youth in Agriculture initiative**. The initiative was also supported by other government MDAs, such as Bank of Uganda. Through an award application process, 25 youth were selected across the country for having developed innovations in agricultural value chains after a nationwide contest that attracted over 500 applicants and which involved field visits. The awarded Youth Champions received further training, were connected among themselves and received national visibility. The youth champions were empowered to act as roles models in their communities to inspire other young people through their agriculture and agribusiness enterprises. The process enhanced their connections and visibility within their territories of origin, as well as their skills in sustainable agricultural practices, agribusiness, entrepreneurship, OSH and decent work, and leadership. After participating in the initiative, the Youth Champions started to train other peers and are currently acting as mentors, with important cascade effects. They also became reference models for other actors, such MAAIF and local government, who recur to them for local trainings.


©FAO/Isaac Kasamani

- **FAO supported and implemented a number of fisheries and aquaculture interventions** in the districts of Lira, Gulu, Arua, Adjumani, Kibuku, Soroti, Mbarara and Buliisa and Buikwe. Youth were specifically trained in the construction and management of fish production systems including ponds, cages and hatcheries. FAO also provided training and inputs, namely fish fingerlings and feeds, to youth groups that were involved in table fish production. The interventions contributed to increased productivity of fish farming, and created income–generating opportunities for youth in pond construction and cage making.

1 List of relevant projects: Integrated Country Approach (ICA) for promoting decent rural employment programme, Phase 1, 2015-2017; Project "Enabling rural youth aged 15-17 to access decent work" , 2017-2018; ASTF-funded project "Promoting Sensitive Agricultural Diversification to Fight Malnutrition and Enhance Youth Employment in Eastern Africa" 2015-2019; The African Root and tubers project. (2014-2019); Partnership for Sustainable Rice Systems Development in sub-Saharan Africa, 2016-2019

- **Youth are also among the beneficiaries of the project "Partnership for Sustainable Rice Systems Development in sub–Saharan Africa"** funded by Venezuela in the districts of Nwoya, Oyam, Alebtong, Butalejja and Luwero. At least one youth group comprised of 50 members has been supported in each district, with 250 youth supported in total. The youth groups have been specifically supported to acquire and operate farming equipment and rice intensification technologies, such as walking tractors and milling machines, and have been trained in machine operation, maintenance and group dynamics. As a result, communities hire their services, such as walking tractors to plough their gardens. The youth are now using the revenues generated from offering services to procure more equipment.

- **In addition, FAO has a long–standing experience in the implementation of the Farmer Field Schools (FFS) and Junior Farmer Field and Life–skills Schools (JFFLS)** (for more information visit http://www.fao.org/rural-employment/work-areas/youth-employment/skills-development/en/) in Uganda. The JFFLS approach in particular has been successfully implemented in settings of mass displacement during the rebel insurgency in Northern Uganda and in handling refugee influxes from DRC in West Nile and Bunyoro–Kitara region. The methodology uses agriculture skills as springboard to enhance life skills that are crucial for holistic rural communities. After the trainings, even those school dropouts who did not return to school acquired farm and non–farm income generating skills and attitudes that made them champions of social transformation in their localities. Between 2009 and 2014, 80 JFFLS (each consisting of around 20 young people) were established and implemented in the districts of Kaberamaido, W.Nile and Karamoja. Furthermore, since 2016, under the KARUNA project, FAO has established 32 JFFLS (each consisting of around 30 young people) in 8 districts of Karamoja region, benefitting a total of 960 members.

- **FAO also implemented the Global Climate Change Alliance Project (GCCA) from 2012 to 2016** which aimed at increased adaptation and mitigation of climate change through the use of drought tolerant crops, small and medium scale irrigation, alternative climate resilient livelihood enterprises and tree planting interventions and youth are among the beneficiaries of the project. The GCCA project established 168 FFS, benefitting in total 4,172 farmers, of which 15–20 percent youth (e.g. 5 to 6 youth in each group of 30 people). In addition, the project had specific capacity building events for the youth, like a national youth conference on climate change, a youth school Farm Camp on climate smart agriculture, and a Masters' Degree level training on Climate Change.

- **Finally, FAO is implementing the Saw log Production Grant Scheme project (SPGS III), under which 15 nurseries are managed by youths and employ over 150 employees**, of which many are youth specifically trained in seedling production. In addition, 25 forest contractors are youth who engage in forest work in plantations and around 10 percent of the grantees are young people carrying out commercial forestry.

Future priorities for FAO's work on decent rural youth employment in Uganda

Based on a desk review of available assessments and programme reports, as well as on exchanges held with key stakeholders in the agricultural sector in Uganda, the following priorities have been identified for FAO to further contribute to boost decent rural employment for the Ugandan youth.

At normative/policy level:

- **Continue to promote policy coherence** among agri–food, employment, youth development, social protection, and refugee and migration interventions, including diaspora engagement.
- **In the frame of the implementation of the NSYEA, support MAAIF and other relevant stakeholders in establishing a programmatic coordination platform** to harness synergies among existing interventions, as well as for joint future planning, while also seeking improved coordination with agricultural/rural sector–wide programmes.
- In the frame of the implementation of the NSYEA and related policies and strategies, advocate for the need to enhance **the skills of the youth for them to contribute to the transition to sustainable food and agriculture.**
- In the frame of the implementation of the NSYEA and related policies and strategies, **advocate for due attention to specific categories of youth, such as young women and younger youth between 14 and 18 years of age.**
- **Advocate for the introduction of incentive provisions** for youth investment and for responsible agri–food investments with expected high job creation impacts, including by attracting diaspora engagement in agribusiness.
- **Contribute to generate evidence and facilitate policy dialogue on youth–employment and entrepreneurship potential in specific value chains,** as well as on youth–adapted business models.


©FAO/IsaacKasamani


©FAO/Filipe Branquinho

At programmatic level:

- **Continue to support MAAIF/YOFCHAN, in the identification of a broader network of *youth champions in agriculture***, further structuring the initiative as a national agripreneurship and mentorship programme.
- **Enhance the capacity of youth champions and other young agripreneurs to carry and benefit from responsible investment in agriculture food systems and specific value chains**.
- **Provide technical support and capacity development to MGLSD/YLP and MAAIF/NAADS and other national flagship initiatives, for them to promote agriculture as a business**, while integrating additional life and occupational skills, including OSH in the curriculum.
- **Support MDAs, in partnership with the private sector and youth champions, to enhance the provision of agribusiness incubation, labour maket information and orientation, and business development services for the rural youth**, including value addition and marketing services.
- **Provide technical support for the identification of innovations in access to agri–finance**, including through revolving agricultural funds, low interest agricultural loans, and digital financial services. Further, FAO could promote risk management strategies, including climate–smart agriculture, weather–indexed insurance, and contractual production.
- **Advocate for increased attention to promote and monitor labour standards**, for instance by introducing incentives for registering and upgrading youth enterprises to formal status, a national minimum wage policy, or sensitizing young workers about dangers and risks in agriculture.

Annex 1. The 14 to 17 age cohort and their contribution to the agricultural sector in Uganda

In Uganda, the existing youth–related programmes and interventions have largely focused on the age cohort of 18 to 30 years, leaving out the younger persons of the 14 to 17[1] age group who, according to the Uganda's Employment Act of 2006, are eligible to work. The assumption is that these young persons are at school benefiting from education programmes.


© FAO/Isaac Kasamani


© FAO/Isaac Kasamani


© FAO/Edward Tanyima

However, the results from a study conducted for FAO by the Economic Policy Research Center (EPRC) indicate that the percentage of **people aged 14 to 17 that are out of school is high** (up to 20 percent) (EPRC, 2017) (see Box 6 for more details). As they are still children, younger youth can easily succumb to child labour[2] and face additional challenges in accessing education, decent employment opportunities, productive resources and services.

FAO, through the project "Enabling rural youth aged 15 to17 to access decent work" (2017–18) contributed to generating knowledge on the many challenges faced by youth in this age group when entering in the labour market. This included, the l**egal barriers faced by Ugandan rural youth in the 14 to 17** cohort who experience **limited protection and support** in accessing decent employment (see Box 7). Furthermore, an **OSH Assessment** was carried out, which established that the 14 to 17 cohort are particularly vulnerable to risks and hazards in the dairy, maize, forestry and fisheries sub–sector and value chains[3].

Box 6. Employment situation and engagement in agriculture of out–of–school young persons (14 to 17 years) in Uganda

- **Challenges in paying school fees** is the main reason for school dropouts.
- Up to 55 percent of those out of school did not complete primary education, and therefore lack the specific skills required in the formal job market.
- **Most of those out of school (95%) are contributing family workers.**
- Those employed are mainly involved in low paying petty and irregular jobs, often as casual laborers in agriculture. In regions with specific cash crops, boys were reported to be working on plantations. For instance, in Eastern Uganda, planting and harvesting of sugarcane was a major activity reported, while in the Central Region it was coffee harvesting and in West–Nile it was cotton picking and working in cotton factories. Other activities that the boys in the 14–17 age cohort are involved in include pottering on construction sites, brick laying, quarrying, fetching water for a pay, collecting firewood for a pay, carrying bananas to urban centers for sale, working in restaurants, cattle rearing, charcoal burning and to a lesser extent, riding boda bodas (motorcycles).
- On the other hand, it was reported that **most girls are at home without any income generating activities.** Only a limited share of girls are employed as maids in major towns, they serve in restaurants and salons, while few work as casual laborers in agriculture.
- Over 96 percent of the youth aged 14–17 who reported to be working for a pay in rural areas are employed in agriculture; and yet they are deprived of some critical inputs and services, particularly land and financial service.

Source: EPRC, 2017.

1 In fact, in Uganda, the 14-17 years cohort does not fall under the government's definition of youth, which includes those from 18 to 30 years old
2 When children below the age of 18 are engaged in hazardous work they are considered in child labour even if the child is of legal working age (14-17).
3 Based on the reporting of a national workshop in 2017 led by FAO to identify agricultural value chains where younger youth were greater at risk to hazardous work.

Box 7. Legal barriers for rural youth aged 14–17 in accessing decent employment

- The Ugandan Law states that **youth under 16 cannot enter into legally binding contracts**, which often leaves youth at risk of exploitation.
- The Employment Act, which is the principle legislation on employment, largely focuses on the formal sector, while the majority of younger rural youth are engaged in the informal sector.
- The **National Social Security Act, which is responsible for social security in Uganda, mainly protects workers in formal employment** where five or more workers are employed, leaving younger rural youth unprotected as the agricultural sector is largely informal in nature and the majority of the 14–17 age cohort are contributing as family workers.
- The majority of working youth are **not entitled to non–wage/salary benefits**, very few paid employees benefit from services such as transport/transport allowances, meals/meal allowances, paid leave, pension, end of service payment, overtime pay, medical insurance coverage, or occupational safety (such as provision of protective equipment and clothing).
- The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, the Employment Act, and the Children Act conflict on the conditions of work for children and the minimum age of employment, which has negative consequences for children and youth at work, as well as creates negative implications of policy action seeking to prevent and reduce child labour and create decent youth employment.
- Youth aged between 14–17 **cannot open a bank account without an adult**.
- The Labour Union Act does **not allow youth under 18 to form or join labour unions** and the Cooperatives Societies Act does not allow youth under 18 to serve as committee members of cooperatives.

Source: EPRC, 2017.

The following **priorities have been identified for FAO**:

At normative/policy level

- raise awareness among government and other relevant stakeholders on the existing **legal discrepancies** affecting younger youth, including:
  - the lack of coherent legal minimum working age amongst the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, the Employment Act and the Children Act;
  - the limitations for younger youth to fully participate in labour unions and cooperatives;
  - the limitations with formal contract eligibility and access to financial services;
  - the gaps in coverage of family based agriculture in several Acts such as the Employment Act, the Labour Unions Act and the National Social Security Act;
- **sensitize stakeholders about OSH in agriculture** and support the development of an **OSH in agriculture policy.**

At programmatic level

- assess livelihood and decent rural employment generation potential for the 14–17 age cohort;
- **advocate for the inclusion of rural youth aged 14–17 years** in youth employment programmes, but also develop dedicated programmes for out–of–school rural young people, especially girls;
- build **capacity amongst rural youth organizations, extension service providers and labour inspectors**, on specific hazards and risks that young workers in agriculture are facing and the dangers of child labour;
- support **mainstreaming of the 14–17 year olds in data** collection tools;
- advocate for increasing younger youth access to financial services, including by promoting the development of products that cater for their needs;
- advocate for the **enforcement of formal employment contracts for the 14–17** age cohort;
- in collaboration with partners, advocate for **maintaining youth in school** until they have successfully completed and attained some employable skills, which includes addressing the many issues that lead younger youth to drop out.

Annex 2. Migration, youth and agri-food system development in Uganda

Migration has been an integral part of Uganda's history, since the colonial period, when laborers moved from the northwest and southwest regions to the sugarcane plantations in central and eastern Uganda. The colonial government encouraged rural–to–rural migration notably through a resettlement programme from the densely populated southwest corner of Uganda into the Bunyoro area of west–central Uganda. Subsequently, the industrialization processes in urban centers started to attract seasonal laborers such as bricklayers, carpenters, builders, porters, who migrate mainly to Kampala for a limited period of time (Mulumba and Olema 2009). According to the 2002 census, internal migrants move mainly from the Southwestern and Southeastern regions of Uganda, as well as parts of the Central region, to Kalangala district, Kampala and the peri–urban Wakiso district.

To date, Uganda is acting as origin, transit and destination country. Better employment and life opportunities as well as environmental risks are the main divers of migration. High youth unemployment rates, lack of attractive employment opportunities in rural areas as well as demand for skilled and unskilled labour are among the main factors. This is especially relevant where it concerns tertiary–educated individuals, making Uganda the 12th highest country for highly skilled expats in OECD countries (IOM, 2013). The top destination countries of Ugandans abroad are Kenya, South Sudan, Rwanda, the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada, as well as Scandinavian countries.

As destination country, **Uganda is Africa's largest refugee hosting country** with over 1.4 million refugees as of April 2018 (UNHCR), the majority of whom originate from South Sudan and DRC, followed by Burundi and Somalia. With an unanticipated influx of over 74,000 refugees from the DRC between January and April 2018, a further increase is expected in 2018, mainly as the civil unrest and human rights violations continue to be reported in DRC's Ituri province and in North and South Kivu in the eastern part of the DRC.

With regard to the **country's migration governance**, the National Citizenship and Immigration Board and the Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control (DCIC), within the Ministry of Internal Affairs, are responsible for border management, while the Diaspora Services Department within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the dedicated government agency responsible for engaging with the Ugandan diaspora. Furthermore, a National Coordination Mechanism on Migration (NCM), led by the Office of the Prime Minister, has been established in 2015 and is comprised of key government agencies, international organizations, migration–related civil society organizations, and academia.

As regards refugees' related matters, the Refugees Act (2006) enumerates the rights of refugees, such as access to social services for refugees and members of their families, as well as their obligations in Uganda. As for migration, the Government of Uganda is in the process of drafting a comprehensive National Migration Policy as well as a National Diaspora Policy. Furthermore, Uganda has ratified numerous international conventions and frameworks including the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, the Supplementary Provisions of the ILO Migrant Workers Convention, and the Conventions on Statelessness.

Quick Information

International migrants from Uganda in 2017: **1.7 million** (UNDESA, 2017)

Percentage of international migrants from Uganda 19 years and younger in 2017: **38.8%** (UN DESA, 2017)

Refugee population in Uganda in 2018: **1.4 million** (UNHCR, 2018)

Remittances sent to Uganda in 2018: **USD 1.2 billion** in 2016 (World Bank,2019)

©FAO/Petterik Wiggers

To date, Uganda's migration management and UN Agencies development agenda has focused mainly on refugee response and protection programmes. The FAO Refugee and Host Community Response Roadmap (2018–2020) is a direct complement to the Refugee and Host Population Empowerment Strategic Framework (ReHoPE), a strategic document guiding Government of Uganda and UN interventions in support of refugees and host communities, in describing how FAO will use its comparative advantage to support refugee and host communities to achieve sustainable resilience and food and nutrition security.

The Roadmap is built on three pillars, namely I. Livelihoods stabilization; II. Socio–economic empowerment; and III. Enabling the environment. The second pillar in particular aims at engaging refugees and host communities in market–oriented agriculture production, together with the private sector, throughout agriculture value–chains, and with a special focus on youth and other extremely vulnerable groups. So far, FAO's interventions have focused mainly on farmer groups' formation, knowledge transfer and social cohesion, skills trainings in market–oriented agricultural production, and conflict prevention to reduce forced displacement.

The following priorities have been identified for FAO:

- **enhance synergies among short–term livelihoods stabilization and development interventions** centred on decent rural (youth) employment promotion for refugees and host communities;
- **mainstream the migration component into the implementation of the recently launched NSYEA**, including by assessing the needs of rural youth in migration–prone areas, generating knowledge on rural labour mobility, and promoting diaspora engagement to support the NSYEA implementation, in collaboration with the Diaspora Department;
- **facilitate and support Ugandan diaspora engagement in the agricultural sector with the aim of promoting youth agri–entrepreneurship and job creation in rural areas**, including by assessing diaspora engagement mechanisms in place, Ugandan diaspora's challenges and propensity to invest in agri–business, and facilitating the setup of a diaspora network for agribusiness.

©FAO/IsaacKasamani

References

Ahaibwe, G., & Kasirye, I.,. 2015. *Creating Youth Employment through Entrepreneurship Financing: The Uganda Youth Venture Capital Fund*, Research Series 206130, Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC).

EU. 2019. *Supporting Job Creation and Economic Growth In Africa, Jobs and Growth Compact for Uganda*. Brussels.

FAO. 2017. *Analysis of existing approaches for rural youth employment in Uganda*. Uganda. 8 pp. (also available at: http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7484e.pdf)

FAO. 2018a. *Small Family Farms Country Factsheet*. Rome. 2 pp. (also available at: http://www.fao.org/3/i8359en/I8359EN.pdf)

FAO. 2018b. *FAO's value chain support for Uganda. Moving from subsistence to sustainable agricultural livelihoods through technical capacity building and innovation*. Uganda. 2 pp. (also available at: http://www.fao.org/3/ca1337en/CA1337EN.pdf)

FAO. 2019. E*mpowering youth to engage in responsible investment in agriculture and food systems: challenges, opportunities and lessons learned from six African countries (Côte d'Ivoire, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Uganda)*. Rome. 37 pp. (also available at: http://www.fao.org/3/ca2877en/CA2877EN.pdf)

Government of Uganda – Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development (MFPED). 2014. *Uganda poverty status: Structural change and poverty reduction in Uganda*. Kampala. (also available at: https://bit.ly/30jUlZN)

ICCO. 2018. *Uganda: Youth Entrepreneurship in Agribusiness Conference* [online]. Kampala. (also available at: https://bit.ly/2Z5uFmN)

Institute of Development Studies. 2017. *Uganda's National Youth Policy and Job Creation for Youth*. UK.

International Labour Organization. 2017. *STWS country brief*.

Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD). 2018. *Employment diagnostic analysis report*. Kampala.

UBOS. 2018. *Statistical abstract*. Kampala. (also available at: https://bit.ly/2FAHyJQ)

Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Youth Affairs (UPFYA) together with Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) and Centre for Policy Analysis. 2017. *State of the Youth Report 2017*.

UN DESA. 2018. *2018 revision of world urbanization prospect*. (also available at: https://bit.ly/2KwBaDE)

UNDP. 2018. *Human Development report data Uganda and note.* (also available at: https://bit.ly/1ubidfP)

UNDP. 2015. *Uganda Country Gender Assessment*. Kampala. (also available at: https://bit.ly/2ZdlP1L)

United States Agency for International Development (USAID). 2014. Y*outh and agriculture in Uganda: An assessment combining agriculture improvements and youth development*. Washington, DC. (also available at: https://bit.ly/2MoSOy5)

World Bank. 2009. *An Assessment of the Investment Climate in Uganda* [online]. Washington, DC. sitesource. (also available at: https://bit.ly/2P6hJsn)

World Bank. 2014. *Uganda's employment challenge: An evaluation of Government's strategy* [online]. Kampala. (also available at: https://bit.ly/2NjRmwt)

World Bank. 2018. *Uganda Economic Update, 12th Edition: Developing the Agri–Food System for Inclusive Economic Growth* [online]. Kampala. (also available at: https://bit.ly/30kTZC7)

Annex 1

Economic Policy Research Center. 2017. *Employment situation and engagement in agriculture of out–of–school young persons (14–17 years) in Uganda*. (unpublished).

FAO. 2017a. *Analysis of existing approaches for rural youth employment in Uganda*. Uganda. 8 pp. (also available at: http://www.fao.org/3/a-i7484e.pdf)

FAO. 2017b. *Study on the legal barriers for children in the 14–17 age cohort in accessing decent work in the agriculture sector and its sub–sectors of crop farming, livestock, forestry, fisheries and aquaculture as well as all processes in the value chains that form the business of agriculture (agribusiness) in Uganda*. (unpublished).

World Bank. 2014. *Uganda's employment challenge: An evaluation of Government's strategy* [online]. Kampala. (also available at: https://bit.ly/2NjRmwt)

Annex 2

African Development Bank (AfDB). 2019. *African Economic Outlook 2019*. Tunis. (also available at: https://bit.ly/2ZgjZgr)

Bertelsmann Sifting's Transformation Index (BTI). 2018. *Country Report Uganda*. (also available at: https://bit.ly/33QpO87)

IFPRI. 2012. *Rural–urban transformation in Uganda* [online]. Washington. (also available at: https://bit.ly/2PfpkEW)

International Organization for Migration (IOM). 2018. *Migration Governance Profile: Republic of Uganda* [online]. Geneva. (also available at: https://bit.ly/30qFFYU)

International Organization for Migration (IOM). 2017. *World Migration Report 2018* [online]. Geneva. (also available at: https://bit.ly/2jD8UmP)

International Organization for Migration (IOM). 2015. *Migration in Uganda: A rapid country profile 2013* [online]. Kampala. (also available at: https://bit.ly/2KKx5i3)

Maastricht University. 2017. *Study on Migration Routes in the East and Horn of Africa*. Maastricht.

UNDESA. 2017. *International Migration Report* [online]. New York. (also available at: https://bit.ly/2TJx4B6)

SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

More information on the programme available at:
http://www.fao.org/rural-employment/work-areas/youth-employment/ica-programme/en/

Cover photos:
© FAO/Isaac Kasamani
© FAO/Edward Tanyima

fao.org/rural-employment

decent-work@fao.org