



Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations



RURAL YOUTH AGED 15–17



*The right season
to seed the future*

EXPERT MEETING

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES FACED BY
RURAL YOUTH AGED 15 TO 17 IN PREPARING
FOR AND ACCESSING DECENT WORK

DOCUMENTED RESULTS

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Documented results

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Abstract

Rural youth are the future of food security and rural poverty reduction. They are also the present as there are more young people today than ever before – 1.8 billion between the ages of 10 and 24 – most of them living in less developed countries and in rural areas. However, youth in rural areas of developing countries face enormous challenges in preparing for and accessing decent work, including in agriculture. These challenges are even greater for youth under the age of 18.

Considerable work has been undertaken on understanding the challenges and solutions facing rural youth. However, youth are a heterogeneous group, and attention needs to be paid to youth under 18 who have reached the minimum age for employment. This stage in life is typically decisive in how youth will transition from school to work and for the likelihood of transitioning out of poverty. Youth under 18 also face specific barriers and vulnerabilities: they can easily succumb to child labour and face additional challenges in accessing decent employment opportunities, productive resources and services. Facing such barriers, many youth are migrating out of the rural economy. At this stage in development, they are also particularly vulnerable to a number of life risks that can affect their future.

This document features the results of the Expert Meeting on Addressing the Challenges Faced by Rural Youth Aged 15-17 in Preparing for and Accessing Decent Work. The expert meeting took place from 25 to 28 October, 2016. It contributed to the identification of feasible and effective policies and actions to enable rural youth aged 15-17 to prepare for and access decent work. The agenda was organized around three main phases to reach three overarching objectives: (1) preparation for decent employment through education, skills development and life skills; (2) assessment of decent work opportunities in the rural economy, in particular related to agriculture; and (3) factors that enable youth to access decent work in agriculture and rural areas.

The workshop consisted of three working days and was organized in both plenary and parallel working groups. Through 21 working groups, 45 participants from 30 different countries collectively discussed and drafted problem statements and recommendations based on key identified themes. FAO provided secretariat support throughout the meeting and compiled all problem statements and recommendations, which are presented here as written by participants.

The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the official policy, position or work planning of FAO in this work area. On the other hand, they help to build understanding among practitioners. Examples of countries, projects or initiatives within this publication serve only to illustrate an idea or a proposal. These examples are neither endorsed nor commended by FAO, nor condemned or opposed.

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Acronyms

Bunyad Literacy Community Council (BLCC)
Central African Republic (CAF)
Desarrollo y Autogestión (DyA)
Economic Policy Research Center (EPRC)
Education Development Center (EDC)
European Commission (EC)
Fairtrade International – Coordinadora Latinamericana y del Caribe de Comercio Justo (FLO-CLAC)
Fédération National des Jeunes Ruraux (FENAJER)
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
Global Youth Initiative (GYI)
International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
International Labour Organization (ILO)
Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS)
Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)
Ministry of Culture (MoC)
Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD)
Ministry of Fisheries (MoF)
National Alliance against Hunger and Malnutrition (NAAHM)
National Smallholder Farmer Association of Malawi (NASFAM)
Nanyoije Community Development Organization (NCDO)
Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
Réseau international Formation Agricole et Rurale (FAR)
Save the Children (SC)
Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA)
United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)
Zimbabwe Farmers Union (ZFU)



Highlights of discussion

Throughout the expert meeting, several highlights and cross-cutting ideas were identified:

The importance of focusing on the 15-17 age group:

- Only few programs and policies focus on youth 15-17 as contributors beneficiaries.
- In order to feed the growing population, there is a need to harness the innovation potential and energy of this age group.
- There is potentially a high return on investment for this demographic. It is more cost effective to invest in them early than to try and assist them later and repair the potential damage including rural-out migration, unemployment, and even illicit activity.
- The age range represented by this group constitutes a very short time frame, therefore policy targeting needs to begin before and continue after the 15-17 age group.

Marginalized groups

- The aspects of female youth further compound the challenges faced by this cohort. Gender discussion is not only related to girls but also includes the challenges faced by boys.
- Out-of-school youth represent a key marginalized sub group of youth aged 15-17.
- 15-17 year old youth in conflict zones need special attention. Their neglect in terms of learning and access to services could continue to be a serious problem in many parts of the world. Therefore, the design and implementation of targeted support programs are necessary.

Legal issues

- As youth in this age group are below the legal age of an adult, they encounter major barriers in access to resources, services, employment opportunities, and markets.
- The age of majority varies by country and context.
- The majority of youth in this age group are involved in the informal sector, therefore they are often unable to access decent working conditions or appropriate social protection (i.e. insurance, fair wages, employment contracts, safe working conditions etc.).
- There is a lack of understanding of and compliance with laws and policies (this includes ILO and UN conventions) on legal working conditions and minimum age, as well as a lack of enforcement.

Exclusion from participation

- This age group is generally excluded from participation with regards to government policy and program design, but also excluded from decision making within their family, local organizations, development initiatives and more. Therefore, in order to properly understand their challenges and needs, it is crucial to create mechanisms that ensure their voices are heard and recognized and that they are part of the decision making process with regards to programs and policies that affect them.

Multi sectorial partnerships and cooperation/approaches

- High level of vulnerability requires multi sectorial partnerships, cooperation and dialogue. Different types of actors that should cooperate include: various ministries and levels of governments, private sector, NGOs, civil society, international organizations, producers, workers, employers, academia and consumers.

Family and community

- The family dynamic for this cohort is especially important given that most decisions for these youth are made by their families. Therefore, it is necessary to work with the family unit to raise awareness and gain support for programs targeting this cohort.
- The same should be done with communities, religious leaders, guardians etc.

School-to-work transition

- There is a need to introduce or further emphasize agricultural topics in school curricula in order to better equip this age group if they wish to pursue agricultural/rural livelihoods. Moreover, there is also a need to incorporate practical learning in education.
- Soft skills development: this is a critical age of physical and mental development and combining cognitive and non-cognitive skills will build confidence necessary to become entrepreneurs or continue to higher education.

Agriculture is seen as an unattractive employment option

- Agriculture is associated with poverty and seen to have high risks and low returns. For agribusiness to be attractive, value addition is needed and youth need to be involved in different stages of the value chain.
- There is a general negative perception of agriculture in schools. It is even used as a form of punishment.

Advocacy

- There is a need to disseminate good practices that currently exists, which can be a tool to drive advocacy. Advocacy and awareness raising should be done on the political level, with NGOs and INGOs, with families and communities as well as with youth directly, demonstrating to them the potential of employment in agriculture

General lack of knowledge and data on this age group

- There is a clear lack of both qualitative and quantitative data on this age group and their needs.

Cultural context and sensitivities programs

- Approaches need to be context specific and coherent with cultural identity (indigenous people, age definition groups).
- We cannot deny the fact that rural-out migration will always occur but youth should have access to opportunities to gain important life skills so they are generally less vulnerable.

Working group round 1: Preparation for decent employment

The first round of working groups focused on the early stages of decent work preparation including compulsory and secondary education, skills development, the obtainment of basic life skills and the identification of life risks.

- Compulsory education -

Problem statement 1:

While education, in particular primary education, is compulsory in most countries, it does not ensure that children in this age bracket are indeed in school for secondary school. Access to education can be hindered by household poverty, hidden costs, long distances to school, poor quality of education and perceptions of irrelevance of curriculum to local life styles and needs. Retention of youth in school can also be negatively affected by traditional gender roles, cultural norms, some religious beliefs and child labour. For low income families, sending children to school presents a high opportunity cost in the form of foregone income, because these children could be working and supporting the families.

Recommendations 1:

1. There is a need to integrate and strengthen basic education on agriculture in school curriculum (adapted to the community and local way of life) and to follow the agricultural calendar of the community to provide opportunities to students to nurture their talents.
2. The school curriculum should integrate life skills.
3. There is a need to make the agricultural sector more attractive through education by providing entrepreneurship skills opportunities and by introducing certain attractive mechanisms into learning, such as ICT. Skills provided to this age bracket should also involve the upper segment of the value chain such as agro-processing and marketing, which has higher returns than primary agricultural production. *Potential idea: Have the private sector involved, introducing students to skills demanded by the market and cooperative farming.*
4. Partnerships among governments, UN agencies, private sector and civil society should be made/strengthened to improve the quality of education in schools.

Action oriented recommendations:

5. Cash transfer and school feeding should be carried out when needed, including take-home rations to boost school completion rate.
6. Community needs assessments should be conducted and updated regularly so that schools can properly adapt to the different needs of the populations in question, e.g. nomadic populations may need mobile schools.
7. Where there is a need, community-based schools should be established in order to strengthen the communities'

ownership and involvement. In this respect, parent associations for students could be more involved. (Example of a community-based school in rural Pakistan: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PNzUM_G9bUo)

Awareness-raising and advocacy:

8. In order to combat gender inequality in the education system, there is a need to raise awareness on gender issues and to introduce measures such as separate toilets and distribution of sanitary towels.
9. Where elementary education is not compulsory, there is a need to advocate to make it compulsory.
10. Intra community advocacy is needed; graduates from the communities may be given a task to motivate their native communities to create awareness regarding the importance of education by sharing their experiences.
11. Awareness raising is needed particularly regarding certain cultural norms such as the prevention of Female Genital Mutilation FGM, cleansing practices etc. *Potential idea: This can be done through social media campaigns, advocacy through civil society and grass root organization, advocacy from community leaders, having victims invited to share their stories and more.*
12. Although the meeting was about rural youth 15-17, suburban and urban youth and their needs should not be neglected, especially those in slums and informal settlements. Urban agriculture is profitable for youth because of the big urban demand for food, and should be encouraged.

- Secondary education -

Problem statement 1:

In secondary school, which is not compulsory in all developing countries, education is:

- a) Too formal/theory heavy (not enough applied learning)
- b) Disconnected from the current or future employment opportunities or industries

Recommendations 1:

1. Secondary education needs to incorporate curriculum that is both theoretical and practical and it needs regular updating. This may include the building of new curricula, and their regular revisions, that will be more hands-on and adapted to the local context. *Potential idea: hands on learning can be in collaboration with cooperatives or the private sector.*
2. The integration of extra-curricular activities primarily related to agriculture should be incorporated into school curricula.
3. There is a need for greater emphasis on Vocational Education and Training (VET) within secondary schools.
4. Curricula should also be revised to integrate life skills.
5. The public and private sector, media, trade unions and cooperatives should participate in curriculum development, to make them more demand based.

Problem statement 2:

Agriculture is related to poverty and is seen as unattractive and not profitable.

Recommendations 2:

1. Overall, change is needed in the value system to show that working in agriculture can be productive and prestigious.
 - In the short term, it can be demonstrated that agriculture is attractive via meetings with successful farmers (role models), visits to productive farms (hi-tech or those with established value chains).
 - A long-term solution is changing the perception of people so that agriculture is seen not only as a source of money but also as important for food security and as a global common good.
2. Local media needs to be involved in awareness raising activities.
 - Assessment of potential engagement of youth 15-17 along the value chain, not just in primary production, should take place. This includes the promotion of youth employment in agricultural marketing and processing. *Further analysis: Out-of-school youth are primarily involved in production, which is less rewarding.*
 - Agribusiness should be treated like all other business; business plans and models should be easily accessible to those interested, while at the same time special targeting of places and media of interest to the 15-17 age groups to grab their attention. These business briefs should show relevant viability of agribusiness ventures.

Problem statement 3:

The quality of secondary education is generally poor due to:

- a) Teachers' outdated knowledge and skills (technical and didactic)
- b) Insufficient allocation of resources in education

Recommendations 3:

1. There is a need for regular teacher training programs and refresher courses (mainstreaming agricultural knowledge).
2. Collaboration between private and public sector organizations, universities and civil society should take place to help adapt curricula to incorporate more locally-relevant demand-driven skills development. The establishment of partnerships can also tackle the issue of limited resources.
3. Public-private partnerships in education should pay particular attention to groups of interest such as those in conflict areas, street children and the very poor, who are highly vulnerable. Education interventions should be complemented with rehabilitation programs.

Problem statement 4:

Safety issues exist for young people when school is a long distance from their homes (especially for girls).

Recommendation 4:

1. The introduction of mobile schools when necessary.
2. Safe and efficient transportation systems should be established for students. This may also involve the introduction of mobile safety services for healthcare.
3. The option of adequate boarding facilities for students should be applied when relevant.

Problem statement (typical conflict situation) 5:

If schools are not government-supported and attending school is not compulsory (or if there are insufficient numbers of schools or qualified teachers, it limits access to education and this may expose young people to anti-social or illicit activities.

Recommendation 5:

Actions towards enforcement should be identified and supported.

Problem statement 6:

Situations of permanent conflict affect the ability of youth aged 15-17 to continue education after social services have been disrupted. Some of these youth may already possess certain basic life skills, unfortunately when conflict persists, these youth are not able to complete their training, because of lack of teachers and critical safety issues in the countryside.

- Skills development in rural areas -

Problem statement (demand side) 1:

Youth, in general and including the 15-17 age group and their families, are losing interest in agriculture as a profession, often preferring to migrate and searching for jobs in urban areas.

Recommendations 1:

1. There is a need to invest in an innovative communication strategy (ex. mobilizing local role models, community leaders and successful young agripreneurs) in order for youth, their families and even rural communities in general, i) to change their negative perception of agriculture and ii) to raise awareness on the potential socio-economic opportunities.
2. There is a need to include agricultural subjects in the curricula of primary, elementary and secondary education. This includes the introduction of the agricultural value chain approach for job opportunities, value-added production, product placement, packaging, marketing, agri-business development and farming as a business.
3. There is a need to ensure that agricultural strategies and sectoral planning engage youth and their organizations and give priority to the need to make the sector more youth-friendly, productive, economically profitable and modern, especially for small-scale producers.
4. At the household level, family members need to be involved - including youth aged 15-17 - in the visioning and decision making of the household objectives, as an empowerment tool, and also discuss the intergenerational transition within family farming.
5. There is a need for more in-depth studies that provide information on future labour demand and growth potentials along the whole agricultural value chain.

Problem statement (demand side) 2:

Young girls, especially in the 15-17 group, face additional barriers in accessing skills development opportunities,

due to social and cultural norms, and tend to limit their interest in traditional skills or simply abandon their learning path early.

Recommendations 2:

1. There is a need to ensure a gender-based analysis is conducted when designing skills development programmes in order to identify and address the constraints faced by young girls in accessing skills development.
2. Local innovations and incentives should be identified that might facilitate the acceptance of families and young girls themselves in attending skills development trainings. Development programs should sensitize village leaders and spokesmen as well as youth association leaders about the importance of involving, empowering and facilitating girls' access to skills development opportunities (basic education, technical training, entrepreneurship etc). Volunteers and/or youth association leaders could be motivated with non-monetary items such as training and material (literacy or entrepreneurship guides, starter kits, materials and equipment needed for an income generating activity, and even mattresses, mosquito nets and torch lights). *From experience: Working through existing youth associations and a corps of local volunteers has proven to be an effective way of bringing about social behavior change at the community level.*
3. Please refer to gender recommendations.
4. Introduce the use of *proximity trainings* whereby trainers go to the villages to conduct trainings and post-training monitoring onsite, instead of expecting youth, especially young girls, to commute long distances to neighboring villages or larger cities. *From experience: This strategy was found in Mali to not only increase the number of young girls who participated in project activities, but also increased the number of women who actively took part in and benefitted from trainings.*

Problem statement (demand side) 3:

Illiterate, very poor or out-of-school rural youth find additional barriers in accessing TVET and technical schools, and other skills development opportunities.

Recommendations 3:

1. Provide illiterate and out of school youth with basic functional literacy and numeracy skills (preferably in their mother tongue) in order to equip them with the necessary basic education needed to find and succeed at work or skills development opportunities.
2. Implement holistic and integrated youth development models that specifically target out-of-school youth in rural areas and seek to empower them through entrepreneurship.

Country case study: *The Mali Out-of-School Youth model provides basic education, including reading, writing, math (in mother tongue), French, entrepreneurship training, technical training and post-training monitoring within an income generating activity. Professional trainers conduct proximity trainings whereby they travel to the respective villages to train youth thereby minimizing youth's commute time and maximizing time spent in training and at the site of the income generating activities. Basic education and technical training content is loaded onto basic cell phones that are given to youth which enables them to study independently outside of the classroom. The youth are given start up kits consisting of the basic necessary equipment and materials needed to launch an enterprise. They are taught to start savings through internal lending groups and are introduced to local microfinance institutions to learn about access to credit. Youth who are still struggling to launch an activity are paired up with local entrepreneurs in the same trade as theirs (e.g. grain cultivation, livestock fattening or market gardening) in order to get additional hands on experience. The project works through a corps of local volunteers and youth associations to ensure sustainability.*

3. Promote innovative systems, like Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS), apprenticeship and training within cooperatives, that might be more adapted to the needs of youth in rural areas, especially those already engaged in farming activities.
4. Advocate for the recognition and certification of skills gained in trainings, informal apprenticeships and other informal settings to help enhance youth employability and eventual mobility, as well as their access to further learning opportunities.
5. Identify local innovations that might facilitate the engagement of the more vulnerable categories of youth in training. For example, project implementation should be avoided during the rainy seasons and calendars could be adapted to the seasonality of agriculture. Additionally, it is important to create incentives for the poorest households to be included. *Potential idea: Work and implement project activities through a corps of youth volunteers from the respective villages or regions. Using youth volunteers to help and target youth beneficiaries is a means of promoting positive youth development. Training older youth to give classes, monitor activities and mobilize community members develops their capacity to lead, serve, effect change and be role models.*
6. Establish and work through existing youth associations and corps of local volunteers.
7. Create innovation labs for this specific disadvantaged group to allow them to invent new technologies, create local innovations and create and experiment new ideas along the agro-value chain.

Problem statement (demand side) 4:

Youth, in general and especially in the 15-17 age group, i) do not fully understand and appreciate or ii) underestimate the importance of TVET and technical schools, especially for agricultural skills, and the impact it can have in easing their access to the labour market.

Recommendation 4:

Encourage governments to value and enhance vocational courses as part of formal education.

Problem statement (demand side) 5:

Youth in the 15-17 age group are still developing their aspirations and are less mature and more vulnerable than older youth.

Recommendations 5:

1. Facilitate and support opportunities for rural youth to meet with their peers and discuss with role models and successful young entrepreneurs, for instance through the establishment of internships, young farmers groups, clubs, and exchange programs etc.
2. In addition to skills development support, promote coaching and mentorship programmes in schools and through non-formal education so that youth in the 15-17 age group can enter smoothly into the world of work (i.e. by engaging local youth leaders, agripreneurs and cooperatives).
3. Provide special support (one-to-one counseling) to the disadvantaged groups (girls, poor youth, disabled, etc.)

Problem statement (supply side) 6:

The TVET system is poorly funded, developed and equipped, and not innovative enough to attract the youth, especially in rural areas.

Recommendations 6:

1. Mobilize resources to increase the availability of additional and differentiated (formal, non-formal, short-term and long-term) youth training opportunities in rural areas and move from a project-based approach to a more programmatic approach, through advocacy with stakeholders (government, NGOs, development agencies, youth themselves).
2. Further engage associations and cooperatives in the provision of skills development opportunities and transfer technical and soft skills to youth, such as leadership, marketing, communication, negotiation, civic engagement etc.
3. Better equip rural training centers with the needed equipment and material to enable youth to learn a trade and exercise income generating activities.
4. Further develop and promote offline modern ICTs in programming for rural youth (Ex. *Stepping Stone Application* enables audio-visual content - modules, videos etc. - to be loaded onto basic cell phones and tablets. The Education Development Center (EDC) has successfully used *Stepping Stone* in Mali, Zambia and the DRC).
5. Evaluate the quality of TVET and technical schools and their impact on getting job competencies.
6. Improve the quality of TVET and technical schools to match labour market demands and needs.

Problem statement (supply side) 7:

The TVET system and technical schools are not well linked to the labour market, especially with regard to agricultural skills and other skills that are relevant to the needs of rural areas.

Recommendations 7:

1. Design and implement TVET and other skills development opportunities that respond to youth aspirations and follow integrated approaches, including, for example, technical skills for sustainable agriculture, soft and life skills, entrepreneurship and business skills, ICT skills and cell phone technology, and that also provide more general support in terms of group cooperation and access to inputs and productive resources.
2. Enhance the linkages between the TVET system and the labour market, by involving the private sector and by assessing existing economic opportunities in rural areas to inform the design of curricula.
3. Give priority to skills development opportunities that enhance youth skills in order to harness the potential of local farming system (e.g. food heritage) and increase value addition.

Problem statement (supply side) 8:

Institutional coordination among public and private actors remains weak in terms of addressing the skills development needs of rural youth and the specific needs of youth in the 15-17 age group.

Recommendations 8:

1. Develop a business case to make explicit the need to transition from hazardous child labour into decent youth employment. Enhance engagement and collaboration among the public and private sector, civil society and community institutions and leaders, in skills development for rural youth, including girls, especially in the 15-17 age group.
2. Enhance coordination on skills development programmes among line ministries and in particular with the

Ministry of Agriculture, Education, Labour and Youth through committees and working groups;

3. Ensure that countries have Youth Strategies in place that address the specific needs of the rural youth and in particular of the youth in the group 15-17, and that clearly spell-out the role of different stakeholders, with incentives and an M&E system in place.
4. Encourage and support engagement of associations and cooperatives in the provision of training for youth, such as through internship opportunities. *Potential idea: Such opportunities may include methods for education in work-linked part-time training where the youth also partially work in the cooperative, which would ease their work transition and eventually facilitate youth access to membership or jobs in the cooperatives themselves.*

- Basic life skills and life risks -

Problem statement 1:

Rural young people aged 15-17 are ill-prepared for the transition into adulthood.

Recommendations 1:

1. Basic life skills education should occur earlier than 15-17. This applies both to formal and informal education settings. Even in non-training settings, there should be programmes or campaigns used to share basic life skills in 'fun' environments where the youth aged 15-17 could become engaged. Programmes on life skills, survival skills and risk prevention should cover key areas such as health, nutrition, literacy, numeracy, civic education, rights, self-confidence and communication skills.
2. Integration of sufficient life skills training that is especially relevant to agriculture should be incorporated in formal training centers, educational institutions, and community based trainings. Moreover, training should be arranged with the collaboration of public and private training institutions.
3. Life skills should be integrated in agricultural training. Some good examples exist such as the JFFLS. There are also Farmer Field Schools (FFS) that allow others beyond the 15-17 age group to have access to agricultural information, but also help those under aged to become sensitized on agricultural values.
4. Provide sufficient opportunities for young people aged 15-17 to practice life skills.

Problem statement 2:

The enabling environment often does not sufficiently address issues related to youth aged 15-17. There is a lack of access to relevant life skills training in formal school systems. Among youth there is a lack of awareness on existing capacity building services. There is a lack of policies targeting youth aged 15-17.

Recommendation 2:

In order for the enabling environment to better address issues related to youth aged 15-17:

1. There is a need to build the capacity of community networks in order to ensure the buy-in of parents and communities.
2. There is a need to disseminate best practices and comprehensive life skills curricula (i.e. such as the curriculum used in the JFFLS).

3. Provide opportunities for young people to voice their opinions about their challenges and risks, as well as relevance and needs regarding life skills training.
4. Policy makers must be sensitized on the specific needs of 15-17 age group.

Problem statement 3:...

There is a lack of a global measurement tool for life skills.

Recommendation 3:

Existing measurement tools and legal frameworks should be catalogued to develop a harmonized and holistic set of indicators, allowing the measurement of specific life skills and the impact of acquired life skills on the livelihoods of young people aged 15-17.

Working group round 2: Professional opportunities in agriculture

The second round of working groups focused on the different categories of employment options for young people. This includes waged work, innovative professions such as green jobs or those utilizing information communication technology (ICT) and finally entrepreneurship, which often requires access to finance, land, markets and business development services.

- Waged work -

Problem statement 1:

Rural youth aged 15 to 17 are more vulnerable to exploitation in the labour market due to their lack of skills, low bargaining power, and because they often end up in the informal sector of the economy. The reasons are:

1. Employers may be reluctant to employ them formally due to:
 - The lack of harmonization of legislation (e.g. young people may be allowed to work but not allowed to sign a formal contract.) as well as the unintended effects of legislation prohibiting the employment of children under 18
 - Negative perception regarding their ability to work
2. Employers may take advantage of this age-group and deny them an employment contract, pay them a low wage or have them work under bad working conditions due to their vulnerability as "young workers" unaware of their rights.
3. Related labour legislation is often not enforced.

Recommendations 1:

1. Awareness raising and training of employers is needed for employers to understand the mutual benefits of investing in employees' skills development in order to retain employees. Employers should also be trained on specificities of this age group (i.e. legal aspects related to contractual arrangements, hazardous tasks).
2. Incentives are needed for formalization of enterprises and measures to recognize the employment relationship between the employer and a young employee from this age group (if a formal contract cannot be issued due to the employee's age, other bilateral legally binding arrangements should be introduced).
3. Micro insurance schemes should be promoted and made available also for the 15-17 age group.

Problem statement 2:

The types of wage employment typically found in rural areas can be seen by some as "dead end jobs" which may

discourage young people from this type of work. However, youth in the 15-17 age group are forced to take these jobs because of the lack of alternatives.

Recommendations 2:

1. Help and mentor young people to develop individual development plans so that the wage work can become a means to gain experience toward a meaningful job.
2. Gender-sensitive opportunities along the value chains (transformation, marketing etc.) as well as related services should be created.
3. Provide incentives for enterprises to respect labour standards and install work and production places in rural areas as a condition for operating in the country and accessing capital and markets – to improve job prospects in rural areas.

Problem statement 3:

Gender aspect: Boys and girls from this group tend to perform different tasks:

- Boys are often found in hazardous tasks
- Girls tend to work longer hours or perform low or unpaid work

Girls usually have fewer opportunities due to community perception and expectations (i.e. early marriage, domestic and family caring tasks, mobility constraints). They usually have less control over the income they earn, are exposed to more risks and have lower retention of jobs (due to early pregnancy, sexual harassment etc.)

Recommendations 3:

Any intervention towards job creation, social protection or other should be gender-sensitive.

Problem statement 4:

There are insufficient data regarding the accessibility to decent and/or formal jobs in rural areas and the employability of rural youth aged 15 to 17.

Recommendations

1. Create or reinforce adequate channels and tools to inform youth on job and training opportunities. Mechanisms will be context dependant but can include radios, televisions and mobile phones.
2. There is a need to advocate with legislators to formulate policy for decent work in agriculture.
3. Institute a data collection exercise on youth employment in rural areas. Moreover, invest in data collection and analysis in order to understand the employment status of out-of-school youth.

- Green jobs -

1. Information, knowledge and TVET

Problem statement:

Given that green jobs is an emerging policy area, a main challenge is the low level of information regarding technologies, practices and sustainable (including organic) methods. Furthermore, in rural areas, knowledge regarding agricultural practices is usually passed on from older generations to the younger, but since this is an emerging field, the traditional transfer of skills or knowledge is compromised.

Recommendations:

Note: The main advantage regarding green jobs training is the capacity of young people (15-17) to be educated and shaped into a sustainable, green mindset. If they absorb this information from an early age, they can become agents of change who in turn will educate future generations in a sustainable manner.

1. As a concrete step to create capacities for young people and to meet the demand for future green job opportunities, setting up centers of excellence for skills development and training will be essential.
2. Additionally, given young people's mobility and their interest in ICTs, there is a need to create networks of young people who are already involved in green value chains, so that they can exchange information about projects, initiatives and activities in which they are already a part.
3. Finding innovative ways to share good practices and upscale such practices is also important.

Country case study: *In one project in Zimbabwe, parents and children received land plots at schools to implement conservation agriculture. Both groups competed at the national level during a field day, and then they got rewarded. This is an example of on-the-job training that can be further upscaled and adapted to different contexts.*

4. In terms of knowledge sharing and enhanced dissemination for business purposes, we should promote initiatives where youth aged 15-17 hold or contribute to trade fairs promoting climate smart practices.

2. Long-term activity

Problem statement:

A main challenge in embracing green agriculture is the fact that it is a long-term process and young people cannot harness the results of their work immediately. Switching from "business as usual" agriculture to sustainable agriculture can take a number of years, and for youth aged 15-17 who want to have immediate results, that can be a frustrating process. Furthermore, it requires initial financial investments, and the payback is slow. It is a delayed gratification versus instant gratification process.

Recommendations:

1. In order to turn this situation around, grants or in-kind contributions can be provided to young farmers to motivate them to get involved in green jobs. Due to legal hindrance of giving grants to the 15-17 youth group, they can be coached and mentored by someone who is of legal age on how to use the income generated from green activities.
2. In order to address the issue of sustainable agriculture being a long-term prospect, promoting change at the policy level is necessary to ensure that green jobs in agriculture are included in national development plans, strategies and programmes, showing a firm long-term commitment towards this cause. Also, young people

(15-17) can be directly targeted if green education and information about green jobs is introduced in the school curricula from an early stage (primary and middle school).

3. Access to markets

Problem statement:

The markets for organic agricultural products are small in developing countries and, consequently, so will be the opportunities for investing in green jobs.

Recommendations:

1. There is a two-pronged approach towards addressing this. First, interventions will be required in order to develop the domestic markets for organic products in developing countries. Second, it will be important to increase the access to niche export markets (in developed countries) by making green certification schemes more accessible for young people (innovation and ICTs). It is important to look into available, affordable and local materials and resources to create job opportunities.
2. As a general consideration, for marketing purposes, it will also be essential to rebrand green activities for the 15-17 age group in order to make agriculture more attractive and to convince them that it can be a profitable activity and a viable career path. There is considerable potential in attracting young people to green jobs, given that it is an emerging, dynamic sector that uses technology and that is marketed as "cool".
3. Agricultural processing and marketing should be enhanced so as to support green production. This will attract youth into agricultural value chains.

- Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) -

Problem statement 1:

The 15-17 age group has limited access to modern ICT because of inadequate infrastructure and the high cost of technology.

Recommendations 1:

1. We should not neglect the use of traditional media such as radio when including ICT in programming in rural areas, since not all teenagers have access to computers.
2. Governments should build national programs that improve access to ICT in rural areas, providing infrastructure for TVET and technical institutions working with youth in the 15-17 age range.
3. Government and private sector should support the use of telecenters (internet cafes) to allow those who can't access individual computers or handsets to use the Internet.
4. While the work on infrastructure and affordability of smart ICT devices is in progress, it is important to keep in mind that there are other ICT services and devices that can utilise technology without internet connection, such as the use of SMS, USSD and satellite connection. These can assist gradual uptake of ICT in general and eventually make way for the usage and uptake of more "traditional" ICT.

Problem statement 2:

ICT devices distributed by programmes are not always used productively and correctly by youth. Internet can be a dangerous place for underage users.

Recommendations 2:

1. Awareness raising programmes should be tailored to the 15-17 age group so that they can use ICT appropriately and productively. This should include code of conduct and safe internet software for underage users.
2. Lecturers and teachers should be trained on how to use ICT to train youth.

Problem statement 3:

Skills for youth do not always enhance opportunities in rural areas for the 15-17 age group and do not take into account that this cohort constitutes the drivers and beneficiaries of the agriculture of the future.

Recommendations 3:

1. Different types of engagement in ICT require different types of skill training (i.e. coding or programming to create an app requires a certain level of literacy, whereas using a simple app with icons can be done also by illiterate or very young users).
2. ICT should be paired with entrepreneurship and agribusiness skills in order to serve a purpose (not just ICT per se) through connecting them with agribusiness private sector companies and mentoring them.

Country case study: *In Botswana, AgriBusiness Forum Botswana has done an ICT awareness program (through AMEWI) and has paired it with entrepreneurial and agribusiness skills learning in order to show the relevance and practicality of the technology in the direct improvement of agriculture and not just for ICT training on its own. This has proven to increase uptake of the technology as you also teach someone how to actually apply it in their everyday life. The programme is to expand to include youth aged 15-19 in 2017.*

Problem statement 4:

ICT has the potential to make the agricultural sector (including fisheries, livestock and forestry) more attractive to 15-17 age group in rural areas, but there is need to exploit it further.

Recommendation 4:

1. ICTs should be integrated in school curricula from a very early age, making it compulsory and ensuring quality content. This requires financial investment and rural infrastructure development (eg. electricity).
2. Agriculture could become more attractive through audiovisual programs, videogames, applications, etc. that give a good image of agriculture by tailoring or adapting these tools to the 15-17 age range (and in different languages). For example, AGRIman Adventures comic that serializes a food security superhero.
3. It is also important to have available offline tools that can be used when there is no reliable internet connection.

- Access to finance -

Problem statement 1:

Youth aged 15-17 face tremendous barriers to accessing the range of financial services they may need. There is a lack of profitable and scalable models for formal financial institutions to serve the 15-17 years old in general, but in particular in the rural areas. Being below 18 years of age represents a major legal barrier to accessing financial services. Young youth often also do not have full control over their income and capital and have limited experience managing money in a systematic and intentional way.

Recommendations 1:

Note: Youth and youth aged 15-17 are a heterogeneous group with various specific needs. Moreover, recommendations should not be limited to formal or informal markets.

1. There is a need to build good market and financial habits among youth. This type of learning can occur within schools, where youth are taught financial literacy, covering the components of budget, savings, investments and loans. Financial learning can also occur by engaging youth in household financial matters.
2. There is a need to build awareness of rights and the social environment (statutory and customary laws) including amongst families. Moreover, there is a need to amend the laws, where applicable, to enable rural youth to access the financial institutions on the basis of their basic legal documents. *Potential idea: A revolving fund and micro-credit schemes should be introduced or expanded for rural youth.*
3. Awareness raising activities should be provided for parents in order to include girls in financial programs.
4. Financial capability should be built to facilitate their inclusion in the formal financial system when they become legal majors.
5. There is a need to assess and understand the needs of the different segments in order to find out how to address them.
6. Multistakeholders coalition is needed partnering both at the local and national levels to promote access to youth inclusive financial services
7. Youth membership in producers' organizations and cooperatives should be promoted in order to enhance youth's access to financial and other services from these organizations. Such support can be facilitated by linking them to formal micro-deposit taking and lending institutions, informal village savings and credit associations (VSLAs), and rotational savings and credit associations (ROSCAs).

- Access to land -

Context: Youth in general, and especially the 15-17 age group, experience many challenges in accessing land, certainly with ownership but also with its use. On the other hand, when they get an opportunity to own land, their immediate and plausible option is to sell it and go to urban centers. Some of the challenges include:

- High population density, land fragmentation, declining land fertility

- Land conflicts and land grabbing, which greatly affect women and youth
- Insecure land rights in general
- Aging of rural populations which creates gaps in land use for production because it is mainly old people who practice agriculture
- Corruption in the land sector

Problem statements 1:

1. Females aged 15-17 are excluded from land inheritance. For countries that follow patrilineal systems, land is passed on from fathers to sons. Men traditionally inherit property and women inherit nothing, leading to the feminization of poverty.
2. Women and youth are only allocated small and poor quality land.
3. There is a lack of intergenerational planning on land use and management.
4. The age group is not considered relevant in agriculture. Youth aren't decision makers, they are only helpers or workers, normally supervised by land owners (parents).

Recommendations 1:

1. Create space for youth and women to dialogue on land: Country example: Government mechanism in Mali: Communities including men and women can advocate for their share of land.
2. Youth should be connected to community based institutions and use that opportunity to lobby (models used in Rwanda and Burundi). Organize youth in groups so that they can lobby for land (state land) or lease land.
3. Community structures should be used to help curb land conflicts.
4. If young people work their land, they need special assistance and advice to make some money out of their agricultural work.

- Access to markets and business development services -

Problem statement 1:

Most 15-17 entrepreneurs are "necessity" entrepreneurs, the majority of whom are girls in some countries; they are not "entrepreneurs by choice". Therefore, we must question whether we are promoting the real spirit of 'entrepreneurship' by encouraging entrepreneurship at any cost (i.e. including necessity entrepreneurship).

Recommendations 1:

1. There is a need to create learning spaces to learn about the potential of business development services (BDS). It is important to consider within these learning environment that many entrepreneurs will not be able to take on much risk. When it comes to eLearning, platforms can be created that assist in the development and support of entrepreneurship, e.g. a platform that takes a 15-17-year-old youth through the design thinking process in a manner already accepted by the youth.

2. Youth aged 15-17 can be mentored by cooperatives to learn about production, value-added product development, marketing, and business development.
3. Local authorities should provide a physical space (land and/or shop) for youth to have access to markets.
4. Marketing schemes could be introduced, such as "Made by a Young Entrepreneur" label.
5. Special support to 15-17-year-old girls should exist, who are often already entrepreneurs. Promote girl cooperatives, associations with profitable linkage to other cooperatives so that girls can be more competitive.
6. It is also important to provide mechanisms where this age group can access microfinance.
7. The establishment of innovation labs is also an option that would allow youth aged 15-17 to propose new ideas, services, inventions, ways of looking at agriculture and ICTs. Provide small funds or competition awards (using "gamification": the process of including game-like elements in a non-game context. *Note: It has successfully been used to get people to do more and participate as well as raise awareness, so it would be very relevant for the age group 15-17 as it is within their interest*).

Problem statement 2:

Many youth are willing to engage in entrepreneurship but the majority are in the informal sector. Regulations and lack of information on market opportunities hinder youth from accessing and exploring new opportunities.

Recommendations 2:

1. Regulatory authorities (national and local) should consider special programmes for 15-17-year-old entrepreneurs: access and training to information about food standards, product regulations, and special fees.
2. Extension services and cooperatives should provide training on production and business development, marketing and product placement in the value chain, targeting youth aged 15-17.
3. NGOs, extension services, cooperatives and other stakeholders should facilitate the access to direct local and international markets.
4. Youth should form "youth" cooperatives to increase the bargaining power of young people.
5. ICT should be utilized to access market prices and trends and to sell online.

Problem statement 3:

Youth aged 15-17 are very young and often still part of families. Thus, they often do not make their own financial decisions. Therefore, understanding family dynamics is essential in grasping factors contributing to varying outcomes among entrepreneurs within this age group. At the same time, some 15-17-year-olds are already parents and thus have a greater level of autonomy regarding their financial and business-related decisions.

Recommendations 3:

1. BDS programmes should involve all family members to avoid conflict in decision-making for the business.
2. BDS should take into account the diversity among youth aged 15-17 and cater for special needs (i.e. young parents).

Miscellaneous problem statements:

- There exists a lack of infrastructure in order to access markets.
- Youth can be further exploited by middlemen in the value chain.
- Youth aged 15-17 can be excluded from cooperatives and associations as direct members, which impedes their ability to access markets and business services.
- Youth tend to have limited access to information about BDS, financial services, markets and prices.
- This age group is vulnerable to price volatility.
- Young people in rural areas, without education, often do not have the luxury of thinking about entrepreneurship.

Miscellaneous recommendations:

- Contract farming can ensure benefits to families and youth.
- NGOs can provide mentoring to support youth and involve local leaders and parents so they understand possibilities and challenges.
- Collaboration between NGOs and governments can bring agricultural training through producers' organizations.

Working group round 3: Accessing decent employment

The third round of working groups focused on important factors that enable decent work. This includes access to trade unions, cooperatives and other producer associations, access to political participation and programme design, safe working conditions and social protection. Moreover, this round also included the cross-cutting theme of gender.

- Access to trade unions, cooperatives and producers' organizations -

Problem statement 1:

Rural youth aged 15 to 17 are often excluded from trade unions, producers' and workers' organizations, cooperatives and other forms of associations.

This exclusion may take different forms:

- Legal: minimum legal age for membership usually set at 18 years.
- Social: intergenerational gap, lack of trust in maturity of young people in this age cohort, seniority rule which prevents young people from speaking up and participating in the decision making etc.

Recommendations 1:

1. Create opportunities for social intergenerational interactions (football matches, interest groups etc.).
2. Raise awareness among the adult members/leaders of unions and other organizations about the importance of involving of this group and investing in their capacity.
3. The creation of youth policies within the organizations should also be promoted.
4. Organizing informal groups of rural youth aged 15 to 17 is needed so that they are prepared to join the formal unions, cooperatives and other organizations when they become 18. Modalities may differ according to the age but may include learning activities for younger groups and shadowing and mentoring by organizations' leaders for the older.
5. Building on existing youth groups is required (social capital groups, informal networks).
6. Create youth groups in schools and integrate organizational capacity building into the educational curricula in a form of "pre-cooperatives" (school gardens, school feeding).
7. Invite producers' organizations to schools to share their experience, talk about climate change and resilience, showcasing good practices etc.
8. Ensure best conditions so that the different subgroups within this cohort express their views freely (grouping

young people by age, gender etc.). Mechanisms should be provided that give this cohort a voice so that they can express themselves freely and without suggestions from the adults. Letting them think "out of the box" and come up with their own solutions.

9. Including leadership and life skills training, as well as soft skills, also in group dynamics

Country case study: *In Malawi, a good practice that is used to attract young people in organizations' leadership positions within organizations is through youth friendly elections guidelines.*

- Access to political participation -

Problem statement 1:

In many cases, youth are given limited space to engage in policy dialogue, especially youth aged 15-17. Youth are mostly brought in only when convenient.

In hierarchical societies, youth are not expected to voice their opinions and this is even more so for young girls and youth under the age of majority. Leaders tend to cling to power depriving youth from the opportunity to prepare for future leadership. When given an opportunity to express themselves, youth can be easily influenced by others.

Youth tend to better express their views when discussing amongst peers. However, youth organizations typically do not have a lot of bargaining power and resources.

For practicality reasons, when you are engaged in policy processes, it is often in urban areas, while rural youth are left out.

Recommendations 1:

1. Introduce a pairing system where youth "shadow" older leaders and receive mentorship.
2. Encourage champions for young people who will insist on a youth agenda until things change.
3. Create junior membership in these groups.
4. Create and work through a corps of youth volunteers who will be trained to lead peers (life skills trainings, public speaking etc.) as part of project activities.
5. Train youth to articulate ideas and advocate for themselves.
6. Encourage youth to join cooperatives so they have a voice as well as access to markets, which may incentivize them and be a source of motivation.

Advocacy and awareness raising:

7. Where possible, encourage producers' organizations (fisheries, livestock and farmer associations/organizations etc.) to work together with the young in order to create space for them to better exercise their negotiation power.
8. More actively remind governments of the implications of non-action (insufficient youth involvement), given the short timeframe (15-17 year olds).
9. Advocate for governments to include the voice of youth aged 15-17 in policy.

10. Emphasize community sensitization on the importance of youth participation so that, over time, change is achieved.

- Safe working conditions -

Problem statement 1:

Youth aged 15-17 are exposed to unsafe working conditions, due to the intensification of agricultural production coupled with inappropriate agricultural practices

Recommendations 1:

1. Training on sustainable agricultural practices, safety, and proper handling of agricultural chemicals should take place for all farmers with an emphasis on those below 18.
2. The list of hazardous child labour activities should be integrated into agricultural and rural development policies.
3. Lobbying and advocacy by consumer and producer groups (including peasant groups such as Via Campesina) is needed to promote the purchasing and consumption of ethically- and safely-produced products.

Problem statement 2:

Youth aged 15-17 are exposed to unsafe working conditions, due to the lack of coverage, enforcement, and compliance with policies. There is a particular lack of coverage for safe working conditions in high risk sectors (e.g. artisanal mining, fisheries, and livestock).

Recommendations 2:

1. Develop specific approaches for labour inspection for specific sectors e.g. (fisheries, livestock) with emphasis on youth occupational safety and health. Moreover, workers unions and youth groups should be sensitized on the hazardous effects of unsafe working conditions and relevant policies.
2. Integrate the list of hazardous child labour into agricultural and rural development policies.
3. Lobbying and advocacy is needed.

Problem statement 3:

Youth aged 15-17 are exposed to unsafe working conditions, due to insufficient data and information on the actual situation (the magnitude of the problem, the players involved, use of pesticides and other hazardous practices, etc.)

Recommendation 3:

1. Situational analysis and assessment on working condition for youth in different sectors is needed.
2. Moreover, enforcement of relevant laws is needed. This may include the need to advocate with the government to enforce the formation of vigilance bodies, comprising public and private sector actors.

Problem statement 4:

Youth aged 15-17 are exposed to unsafe working conditions, due to the socio-economic and cultural context that pushes the youth into work.

Recommendation 4:

1. Promote good cultural practices, models and lessons learned within communities (e.g. by extension workers) or among this age group (e.g. via the school curriculum).
2. Awareness-raising and information-sharing is needed (e.g. media campaigns).
3. There is a need for tailored communication for different stakeholders.
4. Social protection measures are needed to reduce incentives for this youth to work in hazardous conditions (i.e. cash transfers).

Problem statement 4:

Youth aged 15-17 are exposed to unsafe working conditions, due to their lack of representation in farmers groups, trade unions, political parties and civil society organizations.

Recommendation 4:

There is a need to advocate for youth participation in trade unions and other organizations (crosslink with working groups on trade unions)

- Gender -

Problem statement 1:

Girls aged 15-17 living in rural areas are subject to high risk of school drop-out. This occurs because of various reasons, including early marriage and adolescent pregnancies. In a similar way, inadequate attention to girls' practical needs, such as the supply of sanitary towels, has a negative impact on girls' school attendance. This, in turn, prevents this youth group from acquiring essential skills to access decent employment. Policies designed to guarantee girls' school attendance, and to facilitate young mothers' return to school after childbirth do exist, but are often not enforced. An additional factor that needs to be taken into account is that many girls do not want to go back to formal school once they have had a baby.

Recommendations 1:

1. A multi-sectoral approach is needed to implement and enforce policies on girls' school attendance by key stakeholders at all levels: national, community and household level. Girls age 15-17 are embedded in a social context (family, community) that needs to be targeted by national policies. Moreover, a strong political will is needed.
2. Programmes that ensure accountability are essential.

Country case study: *In certain regions of Kenya, school teachers are held accountable for all students and any possible drop-outs, a system that allows for close monitoring of individual cases.*

3. Programmes should target parents in order to overcome discriminatory social norms against girls.
4. Programmes need to be tailored to suit the specific needs of girls (i.e. adolescent mothers) who are unable to come back to school, to allow them to acquire skills needed in the rural labour market.
5. Empirical studies on this age group to understand discriminatory social norms at country level (disaggregated by different categories of girls, i.e. nomadic, pastoralist, wealth, ethnicity) are needed. This work can be done in partnership with local universities, research centers and international organizations. *Note: This can be done, because data such as OECD SIGI currently exist and can be used to provide evidence based policy recommendations.*

Problem statement 2:

Gender stereotypes affect career choices as well as the selection of school curriculum for youth aged 15-17.

Boys between the ages of 15-17 are often restricted in their career options because of high expectations from their family and society. This often includes a high pressure towards professional success.

In specific cases, i.e. when the father or head of household passes away, it is mainly the first son who is expected to take over family responsibilities (including earning enough income to feed the household).

Gender stereotyping can also heavily influence the career aspirations of girls aged 15-17. This can limit their choices and they often have a tendency to be lower paid.

Recommendations 2:

1. There is a need to create awareness on the negative impacts of gender stereotypes on both girls and boys. Career counseling for both girls and boys should be provided when possible, including within technical colleges. It is important to also target families, schools and communities to provide guidance.
2. Mass media campaigns and youth-friendly programmes (games, comics) need to be designed and launched, promoting alternative role models and unconventional gender roles. The objective is to sensitize youth aged 15-17, as well as society at large, on the diversity and multiplicity of career options for both boys and girls.
3. Programmes that are targeting youth should avoid addressing issues touching girls and boys in isolation. Programmes should encourage youth initiatives to focus on creating positive relations between genders, underlining the mutual benefits deriving from gender equality.

- Social protection -

Problem statement 1:

Youth aged 15-17 are often unskilled workers carrying out hazardous jobs. They hold informal contracts, therefore they do not have rights to social protection or social security. Moreover, they often have low bargaining power.

Recommendations 1:

1. Assessment is needed in order to determine where youth 15-17 are located.
2. Programmes must be targeted to the different situations of the youth: (1) orphans and street children, (2)

working children, (3) child-led households and young parents, (4) herders (5) commercial sex workers (6) child soldiers and those involved in militia, (7) children recruited into terrorist groups.

3. Promote learning and re-insertion into education through: 1) school feeding programmes that will potentially increase school enrollment, 2) cash transfers (soft conditions) conditional on school enrollment and attendance, 3) enhanced access to accelerated learning programs (ALP) to educate older children who never went to school or dropped out of primary school (alternative-based education), and 4) the creation of mobile schools for nomadic groups.
4. Promote employment policies that strengthen access to social protection:
 - The employers should be incentivized to formalize contracts. The minimum standards must be respected.
 - Promoting public work programmes specific for the 15-17 age group, mixing work with soft skills development as well as certification programmes to allow them to access better jobs after the programme.

Problem statement 2:

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is not respected. Traditional law determines when a young person becomes an adult (e.g. circumcision, or FGM). Early marriages of girls provides revenues for families.

Recommendations 2:

1. The ratification and the enforcement of the Convention on the Rights of the Child should be promoted.
2. Income subsidies to poor households should be promoted in order to discourage 'selling' girls for marriage.
3. Behavioural change should be pursued by communication campaigns in order to change discriminatory social norms.

Problem statement 3:

There is poor institutional capacity in many countries (by governments) to provide social protection services. A low public budget is allocated to social protection because it is a low priority in the government budget. At the same time, traditional social networks are no longer working. Governments are unable to offer (in lieu of tradition) substitute social safety nets.

Recommendations 3:

1. Increase awareness within government (esp. ministry of finance) on the importance of social protection.
2. Advocate for fiscal policy reform in order to improve the redistributive effect of taxes.
3. A single registry for social protection beneficiaries is a solution that could be promoted.
4. Coordination among donors, governments and NGOs on social protection service provisions should be improved.

Working group round 4: Cross cutting themes

The final round of working groups focused on cross cutting themes and resolutions. This includes policy implementation capacity, exclusion from youth employment programmes and marginalized groups.

- Policy implementation capacity -

Problem statement:

There is an inadequate capacity at technical, financial and political levels to formulate and implement policies for youth. In many cases, the political will to allocate resources and implement policies in support of the 15-17 year cohort seems to be absent.

There is an absence of harmony within and among policies intended to address the future of young people, which in turn prevents the realization of synergies. The lack of inter-sectorial coordination impedes the allocation of responsibilities and delegation of managerial responsibilities to the institutions or organizations best suited for the task. Moreover, there seems to be political, financial, and a lack of availability of information that hinder the formulation and implementation of optimal policies. Together, these represent an acute need for skilful holistic policy design competence, particularly with respect to our target group.

For socio-political reasons the cohort is excluded from informing the policy formulation and implementation, while data on the value of their participation in policy formulation is lacking. Even when policies do exist, the time lag for them to come into effect often takes too long and as a consequence does not address the fast transition time for this cohort.

Recommendations:

1. At global policy level, we advocate embedding the particular needs of this age cohort in SDG 8 at country level, and UN agencies' contribution to the global operation plan (ILO – FAO).
2. There is a need of improved coordination between international organizations in order to avoid duplication and make the best use of resources (ex. enhanced functioning of UN country team). *Potential idea: Joint work between UN agencies in each country must be improved to enhance chance of the 15-17 age group to be taken into account in policy formulation.*
3. To improve coordination between the ministries in policy design and implementation should be promoted, going beyond the traditional approaches towards a more holistic one. (ex. MoAFF in Cambodia).
4. In order to address the lack of a leading international agency for this age cohort, there is a need to establish a new inter-agency coordination mechanism especially dedicated to this age cohort, or have this age cohort specifically represented in a relevant existing inter-agency coordinating mechanism.

Design of better-informed policies:

5. Take steps to increase the competence in holistic policy design and implementation in authorities and organisations involved.
6. Engage the participation of 15-17-year-olds in policy formulation.
7. Enhance data collection and analysis to inform policy formulation on the linkages between this cohort and the rural economy.
8. Policy makers should bear in mind that time is of the essence for our target group. Therefore, programmes and projects for know-how and skill acquisition should be of comparatively short duration, and preferably dovetail into a suitable arrangement that would enable the youth to begin to earn a living, possibly supplemented by an allowance.

Better policy implementation:

9. Successful implementation of policy involves the design of optimal strategies and depends on having sufficient knowledge and the skills needed for the purpose, as well as certain material resources. A mechanism to rapidly pool and use the know-how and resources in countries where the situation is comparable may prove to be very useful here.
10. Regional and international workshops of sufficient duration would be a useful method to increase the competence of those who are entrusted with policy implementation with respect to the design of the strategies required.
11. Once the implementation strategy has been determined, it is put into operation. Its success depends on having a different raft of knowledge, skills and resources. These range from what is needed to plan and carry out various programmes and projects, follow them up and, most importantly, get the people to accept them as routines or practices of their own choice. Increasing competence in these areas before their introduction can be achieved with suitable types of workshops, funding to enable people to gain experience by doing, etc.
12. Gaining people's acceptance of new methods requires some change in their values or beliefs as well as their acquisition of new knowledge and skills. So, it is necessary to establish extended agricultural extension services, better infra-structure, and access to finances on fair terms, seeds and animal breeds, etc.
13. Utilize existing structures to facilitate the above process such as schools and technical and vocational education and training facilities, social services, etc.

- Youth aged 15-17 excluded from youth employment programmes -

Problem statement:

Most youth programmes target youth above 18. Moreover, there exist few professional opportunities for the 15-17 age cohort. Youth aged 15-17 are often ill-prepared to enter the labour market and have limited skills that will give them access to decent jobs.

Youth aged 15-17 are mostly operating in the informal sector due to an unclear labour-regulating framework, limited awareness of the framework, and lack of enforcement of this framework. Hence, they are more vulnerable to exploitation, often working in poor conditions with low pay. This can be further pronounced for girls. Finally, there is limited understanding of the difference between child labour, hazardous child labour and youth employment.

Recommendations:

1. Promote marketable formal and non-formal technical and vocational skills trainings and apprenticeships.
2. Once youth complete training, a system should be put in place where youth can access start-up support (cash, materials, equipment, etc.) combined with sustained mentoring and coaching.
3. The private sector and civil society should be involved in the design and implementation of training programmes for the youth.
4. There is a need to harmonize the child and youth employment laws.
5. Awareness raising is needed on the distinction between child labour and youth employment at national, community and household levels.
6. Labour inspection and law enforcement should be strengthened.

- Marginalized groups -

Different marginalized groups have been identified:

1. Illiterate populations
2. Out-of-school youth who have not completed basic education
3. Disabled individuals
4. Orphans
5. Child-headed households
6. Children from pastoral or nomadic communities
7. Young persons from indigenous communities
8. Girls living in communities that have negative or disempowering gender related practices (i.e. FGM, early marriage)
9. Young girls in hazardous or forced labor
10. Young refugees and displaced persons
11. Young persons or children affected by HIV or AIDS and/or living with relatives affected by HIV or AIDS
12. Young persons living with albinism
13. Children living and working in the street or in conflict with the law
14. Children from very poor families
15. Children and youth associated with armed forces or groups

Out of these groups, two were selected for detailed recommendations as follows:

Refugees and displaced young persons:

Refugees and displaced young persons aged 15-17 often face marginalization and, therefore, face challenges in accessing decent work due to a combination of factors including:

Issues:

- Lack of basic services, including education and TVET
- No legal status – no access to work or working in informal settings or underground
- Rejection and discrimination from the hosting communities
- Limited skills that match with hosting labor market
- Loss of human and social capital
- Psychological distress.

Recommendations:

1. Create specific programs for this target group or create mechanisms to incorporate this group into existing youth training programmes. Training and skills development programmes should integrate food production with life skills.
2. Carry out skills assessment among refugees and create a mechanism that enables their skills to be matched with existing labour demands of the hosting communities. Deliver training programs that cater for both hosting communities and refugees to increase integration.
3. Create spaces where young people (hosting and refugee communities) can develop new networks and relationships via clubs, youth producers' groups and religious groups as well as through sports activities and other recreational spaces.

Problem statement:

Girls living in communities that have negative or disempowering gender-related practices (i.e. FGM, early marriage).

Girls living in rural communities that have strong negative or disempowering gender related practices prevents them having equal opportunities for training and personal development in order to access decent work.

Recommendations:

1. Awareness raising with communities needs to take place demonstrating the missed opportunities of girls due to such cultural practices.
2. Awareness raising among families should take place, enabling girls to be seen as an important asset for the family, and not only for marriage. Families should be encouraged to set visions that encompass empowerment of girl children.
3. Campaigns should be held where champions of women and men are identified and speak on behalf of the rights of girls.

4. Safe spaces should be created where young girls can connect and talk about the issues they face.
5. Safe houses should be set up in order to house girls fleeing from such practices.
6. The mainstream media should be guided to highlight these problems and their solutions, to create wider awareness in the society.
7. In order to address FGM: Alternative rites of passages should be promoted that promote rituals without going through the cutting.

Goal statement

The expert meeting recommends the promotion of, commitment to and advocacy for providing the best possible opportunities through:

- **Increasing human capital** (formal and informal education) in order to enable young people (aged 15 to 17) in rural areas to make the best use of their capacities, taking into account the local context and conditions.
- **Channeling resources** towards rural youth aged 15-17 in order to enable them to equally access opportunities including education, information, power, infrastructure, markets, decent jobs, social protection and producers' organizations.

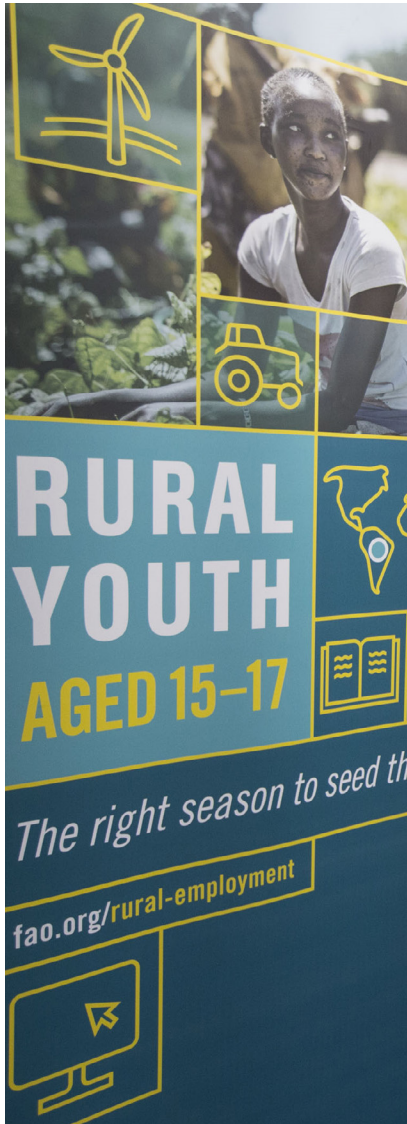
Options lying ahead:

1. The expert meeting recommends further exploration of the **importance of rural youth aged 15 to 17 identities** and what the main impediments to self-fulfillment are. The issues of identity for rural youth aged 15 to 17 are manifold and must be contextualized.
2. The expert meeting recommends the promotion of **community involvement** in order to facilitate a mindset change in favour of rural youth aged 15 to 17, and to promote recognition of their capacities and the role they can have in their communities.
3. The expert meeting recommends raising awareness about **the importance of this group among governments, policy makers, development stakeholders, and the private sector**, who will then make the case for the needed change. This will include promotion of a sectorial multi-stakeholder dialogue.
4. The expert meeting recommends that a clear distinction be made between what we want to eradicate (child labour) and what we want to promote (decent youth employment).
5. The expert meeting recommends the promotion and integration of the considerations related to this age group in data collection mechanism and the promotion of investments into research that look into youth's capacity to innovate. This would enable us to gain evidence for advocacy.
6. The expert meeting recommends a mapping, documenting and sharing of existing approaches and experiences.
7. The expert meeting recommends that all participants plan to channel the recommendations in their respective organizations and networks to the best of their ability (i.e. regional network in Latin America on the elimination of child labour).
8. The expert meeting recommends the preparation of a common statement advocating for rural youth aged 15 to 17 in view of the IV Global Conference on the Elimination of the Child Labour (fall 2017, Argentina).

9. The expert meeting recommends advocacy towards the private sector to invest in viable economic opportunities in rural areas.
10. The expert meeting recommends attempting to identify, within our group, the thematic areas and the respective organizations that can contribute, depending on their activities and capacities, in terms of:
 - Advocacy, data collection, information sharing, commitments to target rural youth 15-17 in programme design and implementation.
 - Identification of a communication platform (e.g. emails, WhatsApp, creation of a dedicated Facebook page, Adobe Connect). This would represent also a tool to share documents, policies, research, information etc. It would also constitute a concrete, simple and easy way to facilitate continuity of discussion and information sharing among the participants of the workshop.
11. The expert meeting recommends that awareness raising be carried out with the inclusion of youth from the 15-17 age group, consulting with them and including their voice.
12. The expert meeting recommends the development and updating of specific laws and policies in the agricultural sector that include child labour as a concern.
13. The expert meeting recommends that skills assessment and market research also concern the landscape of future jobs.
14. The expert meeting recommends establishing an action plan to address the main issues.
15. The outcome will be shared with participants of the FSN consultation.

Expert Meeting "Rural Youth Aged 15-17"

25-28 October 2016 - FAO Headquarters, Rome



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