

[2011]



# Activity report



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## Introduction

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With the UN International Year of the Youth culminating in August 2011, now is the critical time to ensure that youth remain on the agenda. The Young Professionals' Platform for Agricultural Research for Development (YPARD) is committed to keeping a focus on youth at the forefront of Agricultural Research for Development (ARD).

With an expected population of 9 billion by 2050 and declining interest of youth worldwide to remain in rural areas and take up agriculture, who will feed this growing population? Youth make up about one fifth of developing and emerging economies. While unemployment of adults in Least Developed Countries has hovered around 4% for the past decade, unemployment among youth has consistently exceeded 10%<sup>1</sup>. The number of young people of working age is increasing while this same group faces unemployment rates well above those of their older counterparts.

Increased investment in agriculture and rural development and an increased effort to attract youth to this sector could serve to create employment for youth and spur growth in an ageing sector. YPARD has stepped up to play a key part in bringing young people back to agriculture and building the capacities and visibility of those already involved.

The large numbers of youth provide an opportunity for economic growth through agriculture and poverty reduction, yet they are often ignored and undervalued when developing priorities in the agricultural sector. The economic recession is having further impact upon young job seekers everywhere with soaring youth unemployment rates, and fewer opportunities within traditional sectors. Thus, entrepreneurial possibilities within the agricultural sector are becoming a more attractive option for an increasing number of young people. YPARD is working to highlight the possibilities for youth and creating the links for them to have increasing access to this field.

Young professionals still face numerous challenges in the ARD sector, including making their voices heard and exerting influence in their field. Lack of youth involvement in ARD has negative implications for the sector, reducing the potential for innovation, inclusivity and future sustainability. A new approach is needed for engaging with young people, to use their insight to contribute to new and innovative approaches to problems. YPARD links with several different actors to promote and facilitate work related to youth and agriculture. Young people need to contribute to the creation of their own future and be instrumental in making it happen.

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<sup>1</sup> ILO (2011) Growth, Employment and Decent Work in the Least Developed Countries report. Fourth UN Conference on Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Istanbul, 9-13 May 2011.

# Activities

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## Some Highlights

- 3 annual regional plans developed and transfer of seed funds for implementation;
- Successful blog series with E-Agriculture on Youth, Agriculture and ICTs;
- Recruitment of a Web and Communications officer;
- Development and population of YPARD accounts on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn;
- Baseline study on mentoring and launch of a pilot peer to peer mentoring program;
- Conducting an e-discussion on youth in extension and presentation of the outcomes by YPs at the international extension conference in Nairobi;
- Several YPARD members actively engaging in ARD events;
- Support by the ISPC of the CGIAR for 12 young YPARD scientists to attend the CGIAR science forum;
- A YPARD representative elected to the steering committee of EFARD;
- A YPARD representative elected to the executive council of FORAGRO.

## Strategic objective 1: exchange of information and connecting YPs

### Database development

The new member database provides more information about Young Professionals in the network, including their country of work, gender and field of expertise. This enables YPARD to better target individuals within the network for opportunities and discussions according to region, gender and/or professional area of interest.

### Website development

The YPARD website (<http://www.ypard.net>) is the primary tool that YPARD uses to interact with and provide information to its members. The space allows YPs across the world to obtain information on capacity building opportunities, job and funding news, online discussions and events within ARD of specific interest to YPs. The updates provided by our partner Terra Viva Grants, is tailored to young professionals in ARD and the news comes directly to members' inboxes every two weeks. The website also serves to highlight activities and efforts related to youth and ARD in organizations all over the world, providing examples of exceptional youth in ARD and ways in which they work in a new and innovative agricultural sector.

2011 has seen a much greater increase of members being active on blogs and the forum, engaging in different discussion related to the challenges facing youth in ARD. Greater engagement has been achieved thanks to targeted invitations for contributions. The word has spread, increasing registration. From April to December 2011, there was an increase in over 200 new profiles on the website

In 2011 it was decided to move the website to a new host, as the current host was not able to provide YPARD with all of the services required to provide the best service for its members. Work thus began with a new developer to restructure the website for (1) better information dissemination and (2) a more dynamic on-line community.

### Website changes

- “YPARD News” section on the website has provided members with more communication on YPARD activities including calls for participation, sharing outcomes of activities within the coordination unit and activities in the region, including notably, YPARD activities in Kenya and Vietnam and YPARD LAC in action. Emphasis is placed on regions and country representatives posting their information for sharing.
- Improved information services for members on jobs, news and events as well as selective dissemination of information according to region/profession. Updates have further been made to static pages and improved RSS feeds to obtain information from sites from all over the web as well as better integration of links to social media.
- Bringing life to the blogs and forum spaces – getting YPARD members active in English and French. Examples include: [A la périphérie de Douala: un jeune investit dans l'agriculture et joue gagnant](#), Anne Matho, Cameroun ; [Academic and strategic retreats : willful isolation for better knowledge sharing](#)– Jo Cadilhon ; Julius Ingweye, YPARD delegate at the international conference on extension in November 2011, Nairobi: [extension conference 2011: my experiences](#)
- YPARD LAC conducted a survey during June in preparation of the development of YPARD LAC website: *Primeros pasos hacia el sitio web que queremos para YPARD LAC* . The results of the survey led to some changes on the website including the development of profiles of successful YPs, greater visibility of other members, emails where members can contact the regional reps and CU and more opportunities.
- Creation of the Showcase room for enabling more showcase opportunities for YPs: <http://ypard.net/showcase>

### Organizing online events:

YPARD has expanded its techniques of working online to maximize exposure and dissemination. This includes wide dissemination and promotion through other organizations’ websites and social media, promotion, development in French, second phase promotion, synthesis and production of informative products with the outcomes of online discussions. Some examples of online events this year include:

- Special series of blogs, running from June to August 2011 on **Agriculture, ICTs and Youth**, with **e-Agriculture**, with new blogs each week in English, French and Spanish. <http://ypard.net/news/youth-icts-and-agriculture-%E2%80%93wrapping-special-blog-series-1>
- **E-discussion on youth and extension** in collaboration with the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (**GFRAS**), which generated in-depth discussions. The outcomes of this were developed

into a summary document and presented and discussed by youth in extension at the Extension and Advisory Services conference in November 2011.

- Celebrating the **International Youth Day** by highlighting the achievements of the International Year of the Youth online: <http://ypard.net/event/international-youth-day>
- Online discussion and blogs to celebrate the **World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) 2011**: Better life in rural communities with ICTs. <http://ypard.net/event/world-telecommunication-and-information-society-day-wtisd-2011-better-life-rural-communities-i>

### Information Dissemination

- **Funding News Bulletin** is disseminated twice a month, with the support of Terra Viva grants.
- A monthly **Newsletter** provides information on the latest activities, hot topics and excerpts from the most interesting funding and job opportunities posted on the YPARD website.

### Mentoring Programme

YPARD recruited a consultant to examine the feasibility of a mentoring programme for YPARD members. The first step included a preliminary survey to determine the needs of YPARD members, which indicated that 93.5% of respondents were interested in joining a mentoring program.

Based on some of the programs identified, the consultant indicated that successful mentoring programs require a significant amount of human capacity to identify mentors and match mentors and mentees. As it was determined that YPARD was likely to have many more mentees than mentors, a pilot study was launched for peer to peer mentoring and whether this could be useful for YPARD members. The pilot peer-to-peer program will finish in February 2012, after which an assessment of it will take place.

<http://ypard.net/news/calling-ypard-members-ghana-and-kenya-join-ypard-mentoring-programme>

Preliminary results indicate that a more formal mentoring programme (mentor-mentee style) may be more appropriate for YPARD members. More information on this will be shared with the SDC in 2012.

## Strategic objective 2: opportunities for policy debate

### Inter-institutional linkages

YPARD is making strategic linkages to improve its visibility and link to related areas of focus while staying true to its vision and mission. Some key linkages that we are making include

- Expanding our networking online through creating more linkages and “dialogues” with other organizations on Social Media (eg. e-agriculture, GFAR, young enterprise, TUNZA),
- Linking up with other organizations on Rio+20 to make use of existing visibility and movement, to add the perspective of sustainable agriculture; and

- Discussions with the 4H club on engaging young professionals in upcoming consultations in sub-Saharan Africa, to make a continuum from their focus on children through to young professionals.

#### YPARD Africa

- **Regional Agricultural Information and Learning Systems (RAILS)** is a FARA-led initiative which *promotes the effective use of ICTs for content development, knowledge sharing and mutual learning*. YPARD is working with RAILS to encourage young team leaders in rural areas. YPARD sent a call through the network for applications with RAILS making the final selection. Some young members were selected as a result of YPARD's work who will now be engaged with the program <http://ypard.net/node/19769>. YPARD will follow on their progress.

#### YPARD Asia

- The **YPARD Sri Lanka** representative attended a FAO/Mijarc/IFAD young farmers mapping project regional meeting in Sri Lanka to explore ways to link YPARD young professionals with the young farmers for greater communication and exchange between the two groups. Some discussion in Sri Lanka has followed this meeting on possible follow up.
- **Platforms Project:** YPARD supported a young professional from the Asia to represent youth interests at regional exploratory meetings for the development of European-Asia platform. The outcome of YPARD's participation according to the organisation is that a youth voice is included and the existence of YPARD has increased through the participation in the workshops and e-consultations.

#### YPARD LAC

- The YPARD Peru representative was **appointed to the FORAGRO executive committee** as the official youth representative during the FORAGRO executive committee meeting in September 2011. <http://ypard.net/node/20099>
- A proposal was submitted to FORAGRO on activities **linking youth and FORAGRO's areas of focus** for the region for 2012. YPARD has further requested a space in the regional meeting in July 2012 to present its work and increase its visibility among stakeholders in the region. <http://ypard.net/node/20078>
- **Platforms Project:** YPARD supported a young professional from the LAC region to represent youth interests at regional exploratory meetings for the development of European-LAC platform. As indicated above, the outcome of YPARD's participation according to the organisation is that a youth voice is included and the existence of YPARD has increased through the participation in the workshops and e-consultations.

### Increase the visibility and the membership

YPARD has been working to increase its visibility as an organization, as well as increasing the visibility of youth issues in major discussions and debates. It has also focused on increasing its member base, specifically within the LAC region.

- YPARD contributed to the United States' governments' **feed the future e-discussion**, lobbying for greater focus on the capacity building of youth and better integration of the views of young professionals in ARD into the roll out of the US government's plan for spending in ARD. This led to a separate smaller group discussion about youth, enhancing its importance during the discussion. <http://ypard.net/node/20074>
- YPARD submitted an article to the youth issue of Farming Matters, on the importance of engaging with young people in agriculture. The coordinator received several positive emails from young professionals around the world, wanting more information on YPARD. The article was published in March 2011 and can be found here: <http://www.agriculturesnetwork.org/magazines/global/youth-and-farming/opinion-courtney-paisley>
- The New Agriculturalist featured YPARD in their youth featured newsletter <http://www.new-ag.info/en/focus/focusItem.php?a=1879> which was published online in March 2011 as well. The article on YPARD was viewed 524 times: 140 views via Google, 164 direct to the new agriculturalist and 39 from the YPARD website.
- The YPARD Coordinator was interviewed by a young agricultural journalist from Cameroun about the new website and doing more to engage with French-speaking youths. [L'organisation Young Professionals Platform for Agricultural Research for Development \(YPARD\), lance en 2012 un nouveau site web. Sa coordonnatrice, Courtney Paisley, nous en livre les principaux éléments, dont une version française.](#)
- Further efforts have been made to expand the francophone network. YPARD has been encouraging French bloggers, French contributions to e-discussions and French West African based NGOs. There were six new blogs posted on the website and an e-discussion in the forum during the youth and extension e-discussion that were both in French.
- New and updated communications materials were designed and printed for dissemination, including YPARD brochures, banners, posters and bookmarks.
- There has been increased visibility of YPARD on social networks and on-line in general.
  - YPARD on Twitter: from 36 followers in April 10 (41 tweets) to 181 followers in January 2012 (743 tweets)
  - Facebook: from 3 likes on April 28 to 135 likes at the end of 2011
  - LinkedIn : from 48 members in April to 279 members at the end of 2011
- A picture database is being created through the website where YPARD members can share their photos and YPARD can share photos of its events and members (currently only on Microsoft folders for now).
- YPARD coordination unit is further doing its best to stay on top of numerous emails concerning membership and requests for information. It shares information on how to get involved in YPARD activities and has developed a tutorial on how to write a blog and post it on the YPARD website.



## ARD events

### Science Forum

YPARD teamed up with The Independent Science and Partnership Council (ISPC) of the CGIAR to facilitate the attendance of 12 young YPARD scientists to the Science Forum in Beijing. The ISPC funded their participation and YPARD managed the call for proposals and produced a shortlist of candidates based on their knowledge in one of the six themes of the forum and their expressed desire to actively contribute. The participants provided a report on their experiences, outlining the key issues for young scientists.

Click to access the [full report of the sessions attended by YPARD Young Scientists at the Science Forum 2011, Beijing](#)

Some outcomes include:

- The report was shared with key members of the ISPC and the Science Team in the Consortium office who are closely connected with the CRPs.
- One YPARD member from Malawi who attended the conference has been subsequently sponsored to present his work at a conference in Hanoi, thanks to the contacts he made.
- Ken Cassman, the ISPC chair and moderator of the event congratulated the group for their strong participation. The ISPC has since expressed interest in having young participants for another conference they will be hosting in 2012.

**Share Fair:** During the ShareFair at IFAD in Rome, YPARD gave a session on “Giving a voice to young professionals through YPARD agricultural on-line events”, to find ways to engage more people in online activities. The discussion was dynamic with new ideas being shared. <http://ypard.net/node/20071>

**Conference in ICT4 Green Economy by IICD:** The YPARD intern, based in the Netherlands, represented YPARD, tweeting many of the activities to the YPARD network and registering more youth for the European region. <http://ypard.net/news/machteld-ypard-web4knowledge-intern-represented-youth-ard-s-voice-conference-ict4-greener-econo>

**World Food Prize:** With the theme of 2011 as ‘The Next Generation’, YPARD was represented with a booth at this years’ world food prize. There was interest from other youth based organizations as well as the US private sector, which YPARD is following up on. The blog on this can be found at: <http://ypard.net/node/20105>



**Global Consortium of Higher Education and Research for Agriculture (GCHERA):** YPARD presented a paper at the GCHERA conference on “Formal higher agricultural education: working towards a new generation of Young Professionals in ARD”. This presentation enabled YPARD to make several relevant

contacts for its study on the subject, as well as discovering several existing studies on similar areas which greatly informed its research. The blog on this can be found at: <http://ypard.net/node/20073>

The **UNESCO Youth** Forum invited YPARD to their meeting in October with observer status. YPARD met with several active youths from around the world. Agriculture was vastly underrepresented among interests and areas for concern at the meeting. While YPARD attempted to get it onto the agenda, they were unsuccessful. The blog on YPARD's participation can be found at: <http://ypard.net/node/20077>

**International Conference on extension and rural advisory services:** YPARD had a very successful booth at this conference, generating a great deal of interest from the youth who attended as well as organizations present. This conference was key to expanding the YPARD member base to include different stakeholder groups, namely, young people active in extension work. It also further built upon the e-discussion by YPARD and GFRAS on youth and extension, found here: [http://ypard.net/sites/ypard.net/files/synthesis\\_outcomes-e-discussions-extension.pdf](http://ypard.net/sites/ypard.net/files/synthesis_outcomes-e-discussions-extension.pdf) which was made into posters for the event and served as the basis for a discussion organised by YPARD on [Youth in Extension: Are we making the most of our young assets?](#)

This session included two YPARD members, active in extension who were supported to attend the conference (they were selected from CTA's conference list of those youth who had applied to the conference but were not selected to receive support). They provided a lively contribution to the discussion on their experiences and how they felt youth could become more engaged in extension. Both participants spent time talking to attendees at the YPARD booth and one provided a very engaging and detailed blog on his experiences at: [extension conference 2011: my experiences](#)

The conference was a success for YPARD which was also mentioned in the keynote speech by Michael Hailu, executive director of CTA, as well as by Xiangjun Yao, the director of the Office of Extension and Knowledge (OEK) in FAO. Both confirmed the need to work with youth organizations such as YPARD to further engage the youth in this area.

#### *YPARD Asia*

**YPARD Awareness in Sri Lanka:** The YPARD Sri Lanka representative engaged in an awareness raising campaign for YPARD at the University of Ruhuna in Sri Lanka to offer University students and faculty the opportunity to engage in YPARD related activities in Sri Lanka and South Asia. It also provided a platform for University of Ruhuna students to network with other students of YPARD member nations, faculty, and the agricultural community.

When organizing the meeting, the YPARD representative surprised organizations in ARD she contacted by requesting that they send only youth between 30-40 years. They protested and said that they preferred to send older, more experienced people with more expertise. This was a change from 'business as usual' for these institutions. The outcomes from this event can be found on the blog: [Brief - YPARD awareness campaign- University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka-09.11.2011](#)

#### *YPARD Africa*

**AfricaAdapt:** Understanding the appeal of climate change issues for youth in ARD, YPARD proposed that it co-sponsor 3 YPARD-Africa members with AfricaAdapt to participate in the Symposium on Climate Change and Adaptation Strategies, March 2011. A call for expressions of interest was disseminated through the YPARD network. Final candidates were selected by a team of YPARD Africa members. The attendees initiated discussions on the role of young professionals in addressing issues related to climate change in ARD.

The three candidates reported that the networking opportunities they obtained during this conference led to additional career opportunities which include involvement on a project on weather forecast and indigenous knowledge, a conference where one participant gave a lecture on web 2 tools and the writing of a joint proposal. The attendees confirm that the opportunity enabled them to “raise their professional profile and leave a professional footprint online.” A report was developed and disseminated with the wider ARD community:

[http://ypard.net/sites/ypard.net/files/ypard\\_african\\_representative\\_climate\\_change\\_symposium.pdf](http://ypard.net/sites/ypard.net/files/ypard_african_representative_climate_change_symposium.pdf)

**Food and Fortification Workshop :** A YPARD-Africa member created awareness about YPARD among young professionals in West Africa during a food fortification and entrepreneurship work organized by West African Food Science and Technology (WAFoST) in Dakar Senegal. <http://ypard.net/news/ypard-nigerian-representative-introduces-ypard-students>

A forum was organized for all the Postgraduate students in University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, **Nigeria** for **awareness creation** and in encouraging the students to join YPARD.

Participation in the **Nigeria Leadership Initiative Seminar Series** for the talented youths; May 28 – 30, 2011. The representative highlighted YPARD’s activities and made links for a possible collaboration on using video to highlight agro-entrepreneurship activities in Africa. <http://ypard.net/news/role-african-youths-improving-governance-and-driving-agricultural-development-discussed-8th-nli>

The YPARD coordinator submitted an **abstract** which was selected for presentation with the YPARD Africa coordinator for the **youth food and farming conference in Accra in March 2012**

#### *YPARD LAC*

The YPARD LAC coordinator presented YPARD to young students undertaking a masters degree in agricultural sciences at a Colombian University.

[“La idea es buena, pero qué gano yo, concretamente hablando, si me uno a YPARD-LAC?”](#)

#### **GCARD 2**

- YPARD began preparing to contribute to the GCARD 2012 by submitting a proposal for a youth pre-session following on the young scientists forum from GCARD 1 with a ‘how are we doing’ event. This event is expected to bring discussions on specific capacity development strategies to feed into the GCARD plenary. YPARD is also working to include more youth social reporters for the conference.

- YPARD has been included in the ‘capacity development’ portion of the agenda of the GCARD, under: Attracting young people into agricultural innovation with reward and value systems, curricula changes (YPARD).

## Strategic objective 3: promote agriculture among young people

### Curricula Development

#### The study on agricultural curricula

This study was commissioned by YPARD to contribute to the agricultural curriculum and policy reform discussion through uncovering those skill sets that are required in today and tomorrow’s agricultural-related fields, which are not adequately being addressed in tertiary level agricultural education.

YPARD sought to provide new insight into this area with input from young professionals. Young professionals were asked to provide feedback on their recent and current experiences of how their agricultural education has prepared them for the job market, what they believe could have been done better and how we can better prepare future graduates.

This initiative was presented during the Challenges & Innovative Processes for Capacity Strengthening in Agriculture for Development 2 (CIPCAD2) meeting and the Global Consortium for Higher Education and Research for Agriculture (GCHERA) 2011. Feedback from individuals involved in these initiatives indicate that this study fits well into the broader aims of these collaborative efforts and several persons expressed an interest in either supporting the implementation of the study or learning from and building on the results. Furthermore, discussions with representatives from Ruforum and FARA indicate that the results of this study will help to inform on a planned programme to work with Universities on the tracking of agricultural graduates.

This study was ongoing throughout 2011, with the final report due in early 2012. During this time a questionnaire was developed, targeted to young professionals starting their careers and recent graduates. It was shared with YPARD members, IAAS alumni and Ruforum sponsored MSc and PhD students and responses were analysed. The report will be shared with SDC.

### Promoting agriculture as a career path

“**Showcase room - Portrait of YP**”: YPARD has launched a series of portraits of charismatic young professionals who want to share their story in agriculture. There are already several portraits in English, Spanish and French. <http://www.ypard.net/showcase>. Below is the beginning of one example:

#### “YPARD was my gateway, for you it could be”



I first entered the YPARD website in early 2011 through a link from CTA’s Knowledge for Development web portal which I explore often. I always see the YPARD logo/icon on the site but continued to ignore it since I did not know what doors it could open for me.

After finishing what I was doing on that fateful day, a thought flashed my mind to click on the logo/icon and see what it meant.

More at <http://www.ypard.net/node/20119>

#### YPARD LAC

- The LAC Coordinator has conducted and published several interviews of young professionals in ARD from LAC: <http://www.ypard.net/showcase>

## Strategic objective 4: access to resources and capacity building

### Access to capacity building

#### YPARD Africa

- YPARD East African sub-region was supported to organize a workshop on ‘Young Entrepreneurs Working in East African Agriculture.’ Local fundraising efforts successfully obtained additional funding from JICA for this event.  
[http://www.ypard.net/sites/ypard.net/files/workshop\\_for\\_east\\_african\\_young\\_entrepreneurs\\_in\\_agriculture.pdf](http://www.ypard.net/sites/ypard.net/files/workshop_for_east_african_young_entrepreneurs_in_agriculture.pdf)
- YPARD-Africa funded the Uganda representative’s training in the **Web 2.0 Learning Opportunity**, College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda, 18-22 July 2011. It is expected that the representative will use her skills in the development of YPARD Uganda.
- YPARD-Africa members were supported to participate in the **CTA Workshop on the ‘Opportunities in Agriculture and Rural Areas for Youth in Times of New Information Technologies’**, 7 May 2011, and contributed to the communiqué on youth and agriculture. Visit: [http://www.ypard.net/sites/ypard.net/files/young\\_and\\_proudly\\_agriculturist\\_ghana\\_experience.pdf](http://www.ypard.net/sites/ypard.net/files/young_and_proudly_agriculturist_ghana_experience.pdf)
- **YPARD and ACTS** – the African Centre for Technology Studies organized a **mapping training** for Kenyan YPs, from 29th August to 2nd September 2011. There was a positive response in the initial workshop assessment and follow up has included an online group sharing information on opportunities and information. Ideas for follow-up include a follow up training, providing more specialized skills and potentially supporting the trainees to start a mapping consultancy, where funds could enable them to promote themselves at agricultural fairs, etc. <http://www.ypard.net/node/20104>



- Establishment of the **YPARD-Café in Ivory Coast**. The café is intended to facilitate local networking among youth active in ARD, enabling young people to express their ideas on certain subjects. However, it has faced difficulties and is currently stalled.  
<http://www.ypard.net/news/ypard-c%C3%B4te-divoire-working-implementing-ypard-caf%C3%A9>

#### *YPARD Asia*

A capacity development Workshop was held on “Young scientists for agricultural development in Vietnam” at Nong Lam University in Vietnam” on 16.09.2011, and a round Table Discussion on "Participation of youth in ARD Activities". This activity introduced YPARD to the University and looked at youth issues in ARD: <http://ypard.net/node/20116>

*No specific capacity development activities were taken up in the LAC region in 2011*

## YPARD Evolution

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#### *YPARD Global*

- Creation of a web and communications officer position in the coordination unit at the end of March 2011
- Welcomed an intern in Web4Knowledge in September to share more information on-line, particularly to support the posting of more YP featured job offers and news

#### *YPARD LAC*

- Selection of the candidate for the YPARD LAC coordinator was done by CIAT, the hosting organization, in February of 2011
- YPARD has identified some areas of CIAT’s work for a YPARD-CIAT joint partnership. The development of a concrete action plan for this region has been slow, but things are picking up.

#### *YPARD Africa*

The Africa coordination unit has welcomed three YPARD-Africa representatives to promote YPARD activities at the country levels, in Zambia, Ghana and Zimbabwe. As the YPARD Rwanda representative became SC member, he designated a new representative. The YPARD Uganda representative has reached the age limit and a new representative will be elected from the existing Ugandan members. The current representative will then become an advisor.

#### *YPARD Asia*

The Asia coordination unit welcomed three new YPARD Country Representatives in China, Vietnam and Sri Lanka.

### *Steering Committee*

Three new steering committee members have been recruited to replace the three original SC members who stepped down

### **Regional Expansion**

The **Central Asia and Caucasus region** is one that YPARD is keen to work towards a greater empowerment of youth. For this reason the coordinator attended the CACAARI Regional Brainstorming meeting, Tashkent, Uzbekistan, November 29-30, 2011 and is in discussions with the CACAARI on identifying active youth to take forward youth initiatives in the region. More information at:

<http://ypard.net/node/20106>

YPARD submitted a proposal to the European Forum for Agricultural Research for Development (EFARD) for a YPARD representative to sit on the **EFARD Steering Committee**. The proposal was accepted alongside YPARD's decision to create a new YPARD Europe region. More information on this will be available soon.

## **Challenges and lessons learned**

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Some challenges were faced by YPARD in 2011. Some are new and unique and some are ongoing. Many of these also provided lessons learned which will enable YPARD to improve its efficiency and outcomes. Some of these challenges and lessons learned include:

**Communications:** As a global network, YPARD struggles to ensure a constant and effective communication strategy among all members. A stronger communication strategy and plan is being developed for facilitating better and more regular information sharing between the Steering Committee, the Coordination Unit, Regional Representatives, Country Representatives and the whole YPARD community. A lot of informal communication is being formalized to be shared with the community and external organizations, in order to give more visibility and recognition to YPARD and its activities. Communication and work flow within YPARD has not always been integrated and effective, but it is being enhanced by changes in the workflow. One example of this is that gathering information for monthly newsletters has become easier.

**Website:** The website instability and lack of technical support led to the decision of implementing a new website with Drupal, a widely used system with an active community of users who can provide technical support. This gives more perspectives for effective development of the platform, in order to create optimized information services, more interaction and involvement of the members. This includes dynamic activities on blog and forum spaces, developed features on their profiles etc.



Technical problems on the platform had limited opportunities for people to register, which is a serious impediment to YPARD's work. The development of the new website is projected to enhance registrations and improve the system.

**Language:** Language challenges continue to limit the amount of involvement that some members can have. Challenges expressed in 2010 of limited contributions by hispanophones and francophones has been targeted through the implementation of website interfaces in these languages. The resources for the youth in ARD in these two languages are limited and there is a continued risk of not getting sufficient "food" for feeding YPARD website information services. Efforts will be made for mobilizing networks in French and Spanish.

**Hosting institutions:** Working through hosting institutions provides several benefits, but also several challenges. This is particularly evident with the three regional coordinators in Africa, Asia and LAC who were selected by the hosting institutions to work with YPARD, but whom were all already engaged in full time employment with their respective hosting institutions. While their YPARD coordination duties are outlined as part of their workload, in reality, with the physical distance involved, YPARD duties are sometimes pushed aside in favour of more immediate and pressing responsibilities in their roles. This becomes an additional burden on the coordination unit, and creates a bottleneck for communications. The CU will seek additional funding to examine the possibility of hiring of support in each region to help the regional coordinator undertake the necessary duties to ensure that communications and activities are able to flow smoothly.

**Internet Connectivity:** YPARD continues to struggle with reaching young people who have limited internet connectivity. This was again apparent during the workshop in Sri Lanka, where several attendees did not have their own email accounts and were thus, unable to register with YPARD. The YPARD Sri Lanka representative will look into ways that the group can receive the newsletter and pertinent information through other means.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

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There are a number of monitoring and evaluation methods that will be used to assess the effectiveness of YPARD activities and obtain feedback from the network. These include:

1. General satisfaction surveys from the YPARD network to assess web based services and activities at global and regional level. This also includes calls for suggestions on improvement of YPARD services;
2. To provide an analysis of online participation, data will be obtained on the number of hits on the website and number and quality of comments on the website;



3. To assess the utility of e-discussions, data will be obtained on number of people who are viewing the e-discussions and the number and quality of comments provided;
4. To determine the effectiveness of publicity, data that will be obtained on the number of new members who have signed up to the YPARD website after a specific publicity event (e.g. if there was a new event in Laos, keeping track of the number of new members from Laos during and immediately after the event)
5. Activities undertaken at a regional level, such as capacity building trainings, will be assessed through surveys. These will be disseminated immediately after the training and six months post the training to assess its effectiveness and change in behavior. For activities which include supporting YPs to represent youth issues at meetings, efficacy will be assessed through the blogs that each YP who attends an ARD event must write on the website, which detail what benefits they received from participation. Further follow-up with these individuals will assess the any longer term impacts and will also be used to obtain suggestions about future activities.
6. Medium term and final progress reports will be developed by each region, and sent to the global coordination unit. These will be included in the YPARD regular reporting requirements and sent to SDC on a bi-annual basis.

## Conclusion

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2011 has been a very busy year for YPARD with many exciting and eventful opportunities. Youth issues are becoming more central to the agenda and thus, YPARD is growing in recognition in the ARD arena, as an organization central to the youth issue. YPARD has increasing influence to include youth on the agenda, and to push people to act on their concerns.

The regional coordination units are starting to make their mark, responding to regional issues, but they still require a lot of support from the coordination unit. Members are very keen to be active, and undertake activities at the local level. When doing so, they are also looking for guidance on how to use their energy to be active in YPARD. The coordination unit and regional coordinators are working to provide clear paths to enable this energy to be constructively used in the right direction.

YPARD has made an impact in 2011 with its members, the ARD community and advancing the youth cause. With a strong list of successful activities from 2011, better recognition and a stronger structure, YPARD is set to make a strong impact in 2012, increasing its members, giving them a truly valuable service, increased advocacy and working towards an improved ARD.

# Annexes

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## Annex 1: Annual plan for 2012 – in brief

### Strategic objective 1: exchange of information and connecting YPs

#### Database and Website development

Further develop the new multi-lingual website in Drupal, with more information resources and interactive components including:

- Picture and video galleries;
- E-library on youth and agricultural resources globally
- Enhanced member profiles which include options for uploading their CVs which can be viewed by potential employers and organisations looking to engage more young professionals in their workshops and conferences;
- Greater support from regional and country representatives and members to populate the website with more regionally and locally focused information.
- Solicit YPARD representatives to initiate their own online activities with support of the CU;
- More monitoring and evaluation of online presence and activities (what is most popular) and better use of Google analytics in providing indicators.

#### Mentoring Program and Database

The pilot project for the mentoring programme ended in February 2012. In order to scale this up and roll it out on a global scale, more capacity will be required. This will be the focus of a new fundraising campaign

- Recruit a part-time mentoring coordinator with experience on implementing mentoring programmes in mid to late 2012, when more funding has been secured;
- Develop a comprehensive mentoring strategy with clear guidelines for mentees;
- Focus on a two-way mentoring process where senior mentors also benefit from junior mentees (information on social media, new perspectives on their work);
- Work with web developers to better integrate mentoring requirements into the website which include ability to search peer mentors by region and discipline;

### Strategic objective 2: opportunities for policy debate

#### Inter-Institutional Linkages

- Better linkages with youth organisations working in ARD as well as more general food/agricultural related issues both regionally and globally such as OYIP, Digital Green and EcoAgriculture. YPARD can offer these groups a link to a base conversant in agricultural issues,

which may be lacking from their member bases. Linking with such organisations with high levels of active young members will allow YPARD to tap into a livelier youth discussion and register members from beyond the traditional research sector;

- Linking with the GFAR regional fora, by identifying youth focal points and encouraging youth in those regions for priority setting for youth in those regions;
- Lobbying for a youth representative sitting on advisory committees/executive committees of GFAR regional fora;
- Better integration and awareness of YPARD and youth in the CGIAR system, particularly with leaders of the CRPs and the link to gender mainstreaming.
- YPARD as the selection method of choice for greater inclusion of youth to meetings and conferences worldwide;
- Develop a strategic plan for partnerships. This may include a broader network of linkages with different types of institutions, beyond the research organisations (eg. GFRAS, CSOs, etc);

### **Increased Visibility**

- New types of publicity materials will be developed for YPARD to support better visibility of YPARD during ARD events;
- Greater presence online. The coordination unit will work on strengthening the Social Media strategy and getting regional units started with social media reporting; publishing about YPARD on different platforms (Wikipedia etc) and joining online communities;
- Continuing with the newsletter and improving its distribution by sending it out through the new content management system in html;
- Harmonizing the graphic design of YPARD products from the different regions;
- Liaise more with local media in the regions and global media from the CU;
- More emphasis on “get involved” on line and on the ground and create degrees of involvements..

### **ARD events**

- Lobby ARD organisations to provide a space for youth and facilitate their participation at ARD events that they organise;
- Liaise with participants on representing YPARD and sharing information via blogs and social media.
- *Youth Session in the Global Conference in Agricultural Research for Development (GCARD2)*: This preparatory session is intended to follow up on the outcomes of GCARD1, build upon the momentum and bring a youth focus to the global arena, leading the way for other conferences to follow. This meeting will provide opportunities for young professionals active in ARD to network, become more engaged with international ARD and provide their input into high level discussions, for which they rarely have the opportunity to take part. Outcomes will be fed into the GCARD plenary. Further funding for this activity is being sought.

### **Strategic objective 3: promote agriculture among young people**

#### **Curricula development**

Move the skills study further by sharing the study with Universities, policy makers and organisations involved in policy development. Further link with a University to examine the possibilities of a practical implementation of the results of the study into an actual curriculum and document the process.

#### **Promoting agriculture as a profession**

Initiate a contest for the creation of youth aspirational videos in ARD. The video would increase the visibility of YPARD and build the capacity of YPARD members in video skills and production.

1. The first stage would be to submit a storyboard for a short video (30 secs max). 2. A panel of judges would select the best 6 to be put into films. Each finalist will receive some small funding to create the video which could be used towards renting of equipment, editing support, etc. 3. These finalists will receive an online tutorial on short film making and editing

Ideal deadline should be GCARD (October) so that the videos can play at the YPARD booth in the marketplace.

### **Strategic objective 4: access to resources and capacity building**

#### **Access to capacity building**

- Partner with youth and/or ARD focused organisations to jointly support capacity building initiatives that are targeted to the needs of young professionals in ARD;
- Ensure that the selection process for participants follows specific criteria, ensuring it is equitable among members;
- Lobby other organisations to include young professionals in their own capacity building initiatives and increase focus on those areas of need for young professionals;

#### **Support to Regional Coordination Units**

- Seek additional funding (possibly at regional level) to recruit support for regional coordinators;
- Develop a set of criteria for applying for funding for capacity building initiatives at a regional level;
- Develop a tutorial for new representative to enable them to learn about YPARD and how they can become an active supporter;
- Examine the possibilities of having more targeted regions ( Europe is underway and also explore the feasibility of Middle East and North Africa, Central Asia, North America)

## Annex 2: YPARD Presence Online – review of 2011

### YPARD WEBSITE

#### Registrations

There were 1958 members' profiles at the end of January 2012, against 1 300 profiles middle of 2010 and 1 700 in January 2011. There were 1744 profiles in April 2011, before the creation of the Web and Communications officer position. Hence, we count 258 new subscriptions in 2011, including 1.6 times more registration from April (17% of new subscriptions in 3 months before April and 83% after April in 9 months). This makes an average of 1 subscription per working day from April (the traffic during the weekends is small).

Of the total number of 1958 members' profiles, 501 are female and 1146 are male. Note that 311 members didn't specify their gender.

We also register 3801 *subscriptions* (process of registering on the website, may it be followed by the creation of a profile or not) and therefore a gap of 1843 profiles. This might be due to the fact that people have not updated their registration when the website migrated and/or a failure in registering. This will be paid much more attention in the future.

1876 members have chosen to receive the e-mailing by YPARD (near 96%).

#### Visits

We observe 687 visits in March 2011 against 2557 visits in January 2012. We note a drastic peak from March to May, culminating in July (2640) and the number of visits maintained above around 2200 visits from that time.

The creation of the Web and Communication position end of March seems to have supported the increased number of visitors.

The peak in July might have been facilitated by the online event organized with e-agriculture from beginning of June. This series of blogs on "ICT, youth and agriculture" was run on e-agriculture website but might have increased YPARD visibility.

The number of new visitors follows approximately the same progress as the number of visits. In June, when the total number of visits was lower, the number of new visits was, however, higher (59% of new visitors against an average of around 50% of new visitors the other months).

## Location

YPARD website visibility covered **159 countries** in 2011.

End of 2010, views were mainly from India, Germany, the Netherlands and Italy. Italy shows now the most views followed by India and Kenya which battle from end of 2011 for 2<sup>nd</sup> place. In 2010, Kenya was the 6<sup>th</sup> country with the most views in 2010. **United States and the Netherlands show increased views from end of 2011. Germany and Ghana** are then still following, from beginning of 2011. There are increasing views and particularly increasing new views in **Nigeria and Uganda**, from April. **Views in Ethiopia and South Africa** have slowed down, comparatively.

Hypothesis: YPARD presence at the GCHERA in June 2011 and at the World Food Prize in November 2011 was an opportunity to meet many Americans. YPARD Web and Communications intern from September is a very active citizen from the Netherlands.

Considering continents, YPARD visibility is the highest in Africa (eastern Africa, with Kenya mainly and Uganda, the western Africa, with main presence in Nigeria and Ghana), then Europe (western) and Asia (south Asia, with great presence in India). Visibility is limited in LAC, which illustrates considerations to provide more efforts to make YPARD more visible in South and Central America.

## Pages the most viewed

Pages the most viewed besides the home page and register/login page are:

- The page of YPARD members: 3562; 2150 unique views.
- Job opportunities: 1817 unique views and funding: 1613 unique views on 2372+2243 total views
- information about who is YPARD : 1269 views; 887 unique views

We could assume from this that YPARD seen as a community of people is fundamental to its existence. The information services, particularly those focused on giving opportunities are of great value. From April, there are more views on funding than on jobs. This might be due to the fact that we have more funding offers than jobs announcements.

There are more visits on the forum space (in comparison to other news), which shows the relevance of carrying on with more interaction on the website and the organization of on-line events.

## Key words

Even though key words of research are not particularly significant: "Farming matters", "YPARD ASIA", "mentoring" are the key words for searching. YPARD itself is the main key word of research.

## Views from external sources

Facebook, member mailing lists and LinkedIn are the main doors to YPARD Website.

Ypard.net has been also viewed via the website of different other organizations; this shows the relevance of partnering and particularly organizing events/activities together for increasing YPARD visibility:

- Ardyis has automatic links to YPARD website on its blog
  - E-agriculture is a close partner with which we organized online events, and YPARD can publish directly on their platform
  - ACTS, our partner for the mapping training in Kenya has also driven views on YPARD website
- As well, Agrinatura, Agtrain, VIT, ring.ciard. aaa.africa, lct-km, are also doors to the website.

## **SOCIAL NETWORK PLATFORMS**

YPARD channels through Facebook followed by LinkedIn and then by Twitter are generating traffic on the website. From January to middle of August 2011, we have 1482 visits from Facebook (501 in August), 421 from LinkedIn (212 in August), and 109 from Twitter (95 in August). A social media strong strategy will be implemented in April to boost these numbers.

YPARD is regularly active on these channels: every time a new article: news, event, or jobs is posted on the website.

### **Twitter**

YPARD on twitter went from 36 followers on 10 April 2011 to 98 followers in 31 August and 182 in January 2012. (41 tweets, 358 tweets, 783 tweets)

### **Facebook**

YPARD Facebook corporate page went from 3 “like” in April 28 to 71 “like” in August 31, in 5 months, 134 “like” in January, with more and more contribution: likes on post, comments, direct posting by individuals or partners, people talking about it.

YPARD has also a FB group: 17 members in April; 51 members in January

### **LinkedIn**

YPARD LinkedIn group has shown from 43 members in 28 April to 124 members in August 31 and 279 members in January 2012. Comments and posts are also going increasingly. Posting of people expressing to be glad to belong to this group somehow confirms the assumption that YPARD members need to feel like belonging to a community: the human and social aspects are important.

## Annex 3: YPARD'S structure in 2011

### **Working with GFAR**

GFAR and YPARD share the overall goal of improving ARD through improving the capacity and participation of a variety of stakeholders. YPARD mobilizes and brings in the specific concerns and perspectives of young professionals and young people, a key element of the GFAR programme of work and in transforming and strengthening AR4D systems in line with the GCARD Roadmap. YPARD is an independently governed network, operated among young professionals themselves. In support of YPARD's role, GFAR hosts the YPARD Secretariat, provides administrative support, helps obtain funding for YPARD programmes and helps provide advice and guidance on programmes as requested.

**Regional coordination units** are in place in the Asia (VIT University), Africa (within FARA), and in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) (within CIAT). While independently governed, these units also aim to link with Regional Fora and regional partners and programmes in delivery of their roles. Activity plans and budgets have been developed, funds have been transferred for operations and activities are underway.

The structure of hosting institution for the YPARD regional operations enables YPARD to have presence on the ground, access to a wide range of young professionals around the world and the ability to carry out activities in a variety of places. It also enables representatives to take advantage of existing meetings and partnerships of the host organizations and positively influence the way that that organization perceives and listens to young professionals.