

CoP Youth Agripreneurship

Working Group: Market Access

Activity Report 2024

Working with Local Institutions to Improve Market Access for Young Agri-preneurs

After a collaborative research project with INCLUDE and The Broker, the Netherlands Food Partnership initiated a Community of Practice (CoP) on inclusive youth agri-preneurship in Africa. Based on the findings of the [research](#), the CoP focuses on deepening the understanding about the [recommendations](#) and learning about best practices and challenges from CoP members to put them into practice.

At the beginning of 2024, CoP members in consultation with youth champions identified the **key challenges for youth agri-preneurs' in Africa**, namely:

1. Limited access to knowledge and skills
2. Limited access to finance
3. Limited access to markets
4. Society's and policymakers' negative attitude towards youth

Building on the expertise and learning needs of interested CoP members - VSO, GAIN, SNV, EAFF and CABI - a small Working Group on Market Access was initiated. The Working Group combines their knowledge to better understand the context, opportunities and potential leverage points with an aspired impact of facilitating better market access for small and medium-sized youth-led agri-businesses.

In a series of meetings, the Working Group identified the key challenges of young agripreneurs in accessing local and regional markets, as well as local institutions, like county governments, chambers of commerce and sector and producer associations, as key actors in improving market access for youth. These served as a basis to develop a common knowledge and action agenda

The main insights and findings of the Working Group activities in 2024, which included a Youth Consultation Meeting and a Hybrid Policy Dialogue, are summarised in this report.

Youth Consultation Meeting:

Working with Local Institutions to Improve Market Access for Young Agri-preneurs

On May 23rd, the CoP Youth Agripreneurship Working Group on market access hosted a hybrid youth consultation event with youth agripreneurs and advocates. The aims were to map local institutions that can help to facilitate market access for young agri-preneurs, identify youth inclusion challenges related to market access, and define the roles of various actors in addressing these challenges.

Prior to the event, **GAIN**, **VSO**, and **EAFF** organised pre-sessions in **Kenya** and **Tanzania**, allowing youth champions to exchange experiences and lessons on collaborating with local institutions. The outcome of this event were recommendations for linking youth agripreneurs to existing support structures of local institutions, like cooperatives, county governments and private sector associations.

Key recommendations for better market access:

1. Improve communication and information sharing through centralised systems and one-stop centres to ensure youth have access to relevant and timely information.
2. Enhance collaboration by forming youth associations for collective advocacy in policy and decision-making processes.
3. Enhance coordination among local government bodies, NGOs, and cooperatives for continuous support for young farmers.
4. Establish partnerships with financial institutions for tailored financing options.
5. Utilise digital platforms for marketing and advocacy to reach broader markets.
6. Create affordable licensing systems for easier market entry.

These recommendations emphasise the need for tailormade capacity-building, improved coordination, and robust stakeholder engagement.

Hybrid Policy Dialogue:

Working with Local Institutions to Improve Market Access for Young Agripreneurs

Following a successful first consultation, on July 10th the CoP Youth Agripreneurship Working Group on market access held a second hybrid dialogue session, organised by **VSO Kenya**, **CABI**, and **GAIN Tanzania**, with participation from youth across Eastern Africa. This session hosted in-person working groups with local representatives of national and local government departments and agricultural sector associations in **Dar es Salaam**, **Nairobi** and **Makueni County**, which came together online to share their main discussion highlights on common challenges and recommendations.

Key outcomes from these sessions included:

- Centralised Systems and One-Stop Centers: Developing centralised systems to ease registration, licensing, and export certification.
- Sector Association Membership: Facilitating youth access to sector associations by allowing group memberships and reducing fees.
- Digital Platforms: Promoting digital platforms for disseminating information about production quality and quantity assurance.

Youth champions highlighted the challenge of information asymmetries regarding Africa-EU trade requirements, which leads to challenges like banned pesticides affecting trade. The need for revised laws and policies in Europe and developing nations was emphasised to address these trade barriers.

The participants were all very committed to fostering dialogue and facilitating future exchanges to enhance entrepreneurship opportunities for youth in agriculture.

Concluding remarks and follow up

The findings from both sessions can be summarised in **three overarching recommendations:**

- Improve communication and information dissemination through centralised systems and one-stop centres, ensuring youth have access to relevant and timely information.
- Leverage digital platforms for marketing and advocacy, providing youth with modern tools to reach broader markets.
- Enhance institutional collaboration by forming youth associations to facilitate collective advocacy, ensuring their voices are heard in policy and decision-making processes.

To ensure that the recommendations and lessons are integrated in organisations' and policymakers' practice, the Working Group agreed to develop dissemination material and decide together with youth champions on relevant platforms to make local decision makers aware of the barriers and challenges for young entrepreneurs to access local/regional/international markets.

We are looking forward to exploring together what next steps can be taken towards implementation of these recommendations.