



The Farmers' Forum Youth session
18 February 2012

**Summary of the findings of the project implemented
by MIJARC in collaboration with FAO and IFAD:
'Facilitating access of rural
youth to agricultural activities'**



Summary of the findings of the project implemented by MIJARC in collaboration with IFAD and FAO: ‘Facilitating access of rural youth to agricultural activities’.

This paper serves as a working document for the youth session of the 2012 Farmers’ Forum and provides an overview of the findings of the MIJARC/IFAD/FAO joint project on ‘Facilitating access of rural youth to agricultural activities’. These findings will be completed and inserted into a final report that will be published after the Farmers’ Forum.

1. Facilitating Youth Access to Agricultural Activities: background and methodology of the project.

1. Rural youth are the future of the agricultural sector. With a growing world population and a decreasing agricultural productivity in combination with a rural exodus, sustainable food production and supply are threatened. Young farmers play an important role in ensuring food security for future generations but they face many challenges. These findings were brought up in the 2010 Farmers’ Forum (FAFO), where farmer leaders representing various farmers’ organizations recognized the urgent need to address young farmers’ issues. The International Movement for Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth (MIJARC) responded to the call of the FAFO and elaborated a project called “Facilitating Youth Access to Agricultural Activities” supported by IFAD. The initiative was implemented in collaboration with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and IFAD.
2. The overall objective of the project can be divided into two sub-objectives: i) national and regional farmers organisations in Africa, Asia and the Pacific as well as Latin America and the Caribbean have a better knowledge of the specific challenges facing poor young women and men in agriculture and of successful policies and programs to address these challenges and ii) this enhanced knowledge and understanding is translated into specific proposals and recommendations to governments and development partners.
3. First of all, an on-line *mapping exercise* was carried out, aiming to identify existing young farmers’ organizations including youth sections, committees or platforms within farmers’ organizations at local, national; regional and global levels. Secondly, an on-line *survey* was conducted which aimed at identifying specific needs, challenges, expectations and aspirations for youth, women and men, while entering into farming. A *desk study*, analyzing past and existing programmes and initiatives addressed to rural youth in developing and developed countries was carried out in order to focus the questions of the survey. Thirdly, three *Regional Consultation Meetings* (RCMs) were convened in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The first RCM took place in Dakar, Senegal from 30 August to 3 September 2011. The second RCM was held in Negombo, Sri Lanka from 4 October to 8 October 2011. The third RCM was organized in Lima, Peru from 18 to 22 November 2011. The RCMs included selected young farmers representatives from the respective regions. Participants to these workshops were selected upon their contribution to the mapping and survey activities. These regional workshops aimed at sharing experiences and further discussing the results emerging from the mapping and survey process. As an outcome of each RCM, region specific recommendations were drawn up on how to address issues faced

by rural youth in the context of policies and development programmes. These recommendations are inserted at the end of each chapter of this paper because they will be further fine-tuned during the 2012 FAFO.

4. This paper aims to provide an overview of the main findings of the project and is structured around the following topics: (1) rural employment, decent work, pluriactivity and migration; (2) representation and participation of youth within farmers' organizations and in policy dialogue; (3) access, conservation and management of land and other natural resources; (4) access to markets; (5) access to rural finance; and (6) capacity building.

2. **Rural employment, decent work, pluriactivity and migration.**

5. Statistics on rural youth employment are scarce because country employment data are usually not disaggregated according to locality (rural/urban) and age group¹. However, in countries where there are no social provisions for unemployed youth, it is mainly young people from higher income families who can afford to be unemployed while benefiting from family support. Youth from lower income families, which are often rural youth, typically cannot afford to be unemployed and will be forced to take up any income-generating activity, including informal jobs if available or to migrate to the city². When compared to adults, youth are more often employed under informal and casual contracts; they earn less; work more hours; and have weaker social dialogue³. In addition to this, youth employed in the agricultural sector are often struggling with visible underemployment⁴ during the slack season. Reportedly, underemployment is more prevalent among youth than adults and is more prevalent in rural than urban areas⁵.
6. Almost 50% of young farmers that responded to the survey are involved in more than one agricultural sector and for approximately 70% of them farming is not their only income-generating activity (IGA). These results illustrate that young farmers derive their income from a variety of sources, including non-agricultural activities. RCM participants from all regions agreed that pluriactivity is used as an important risk-management strategy by young farmers and rural youth. It can protect them against shocks and the consequences of seasonality of the agricultural sector. They further attributed the need for pluriactivity to the lack of access to land, which is a common constraint for rural youth (see chapter 4).
7. RCM participants from all regions quoted (seasonal) migration, within their own country or abroad as a common strategy for rural youth to cope with a difficult rural employment situation. Other main push factors for the rural exodus mentioned by RCM participants are

¹ FAO, ILO and UNESCO, *Training and employment opportunities to address poverty among rural youth: a synthesis report*, FAO, ILO, UNESCO, 2009.

² ILO, *Improving prospects for young women and men in the world of work. A guide to youth employment*, ILO, 2004.

³ FAO and ILO, *Guidance on how to address rural employment and decent work concerns in FAO country activities*, 2011.

⁴ According to ILO, Visible underemployment includes individuals who are involuntarily working less than the normal duration of work determined for the activity, who are seeking or available for additional work during the reference period.

⁵ WORLD BANK, *Youth and Employment in Africa: the potential, the problem, the promise*, 2009.

poor infrastructure and service provision as well as lack of mechanization and social facilities⁶. The lack of respect towards farmers and the lack of role models and leaders among young farmers also appear as reasons to not pursue a future in agriculture. An Indian RCM participant stated that girls are not interested in marrying a farmer which stimulates young men to move away from farming. Asian RCM participants stressed the role that the media play in demonizing agriculture and rural areas; in promoting a western and urban lifestyle; and thus also in shaping rural youth's aspirations related to agriculture. Many young people have a stereotyped vision of agriculture and see farming as a dirty job. Hence there is a need to improve the image of agriculture. An RCM participant from Latin America stated that in some countries in the region, young men consider migration to be a necessary step in the transition to adulthood. It has been documented that migration is not always the preferred option for youth and that many of them would like to stay in the rural areas if there were more opportunities⁷.

3. Representation of Rural youth.

3.1 Youth policies.

8. Youth, and rural youth in particular, have been ignored for a long time in policies and programmes. For example, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers ('PRSPs') rarely deal with youth issues. When specific youth policies do exist in developing countries, they often do not cater for poor rural youth but tend to be biased towards non-poor males living in urban areas.⁸ Why are rural youth not (sufficiently) taken into consideration in policies and programmes? In some developing countries, rural children become adults quickly mainly because they start working and get married at an early age. The transitional phase from childhood to adulthood is often limited in rural areas. As a Latin-American RCM participant put it: *'There is no youth-hood in rural areas'*. Many youth programmes define youth on the basis of a specific age category only and those who do not fit into the age bracket are thus excluded. Rural youth rarely participate in the making of policies that concern them. African and Latin American RCM participants confirmed that youth are often not seen as 'equal parties' that could participate in the policy-making process but rather as uninformed; indecisive; and problem-causers. They further stated that national policies related to youth in agriculture are many times not implementable and/or sustainable because they are designed by others who are unaware of the situation of youth in rural areas. RCM participants from all regions agreed that rural youth and young farmers are not enough united and that their participation within organizations should be strengthened in order to facilitate youth's participation in policy-making.
9. Not involving rural youth in policies is risky as it paves the way to undesirable effects on the whole society⁹. The recent youth-led revolutions in North Africa and the Middle East can

⁶ DIRVEN, M., *Juventudes rurales en América Latina Hoy: fortalezas y desafíos, con acento en el empleo*, IFAD, 2010 and WORLD BANK, *Youth and Employment in Africa: the potential, the problem, the promise*, 2009.

⁷ SARD, *Children and Youth*, in 'Sustainable agriculture and rural development policy brief 8', FAO, 2007.

⁸ BENNEL, P., *Promoting livelihood opportunities for rural youth*, IFAD, February 2007; WORLD BANK, *World Development Report 2007: Development and the next generation*, World Bank, 2006.

⁹ DIVYAKIRTI, V., *Rural Development: the strategic option of youth employment*, A.F. Ferguson & Co, 2011.

be cited as an example since they are largely due to the neglect of youth needs and problems over recent decades and also to their inability to participate in frozen political processes. A growing number of countries are aware of this situation and are developing innovative rural youth policies and implementation strategies. It has been proven that programmes involving both elderly and youth have been most successful. Youth cannot be seen as isolated from their communities and have to be enabled to participate in community decisions. A survey carried out in the Pacific region shows that young farmers find their various support groups such as family, the community, church and school very important to help them make the right decisions concerning their agricultural activities¹⁰. Box 3 illustrates how Pakistani youth is helping the Government in designing policies, programmes and projects related to agriculture.

10. Recently, as a result of the 2007-2008 food crisis, there has been renewed attention by the international community not only to agriculture but also to rural youth and their organizations¹¹. The UN General Assembly proclaimed 2010 as the International Year of Youth¹² and the theme of the UN International Day of Cooperatives 2011 was ‘Youth, the future of cooperative enterprise’¹³. FAO states however that ‘*in the majority of cases, the participation of youth in institutional decision-making processes is particularly poorly documented and difficult to evaluate*’¹⁴.

3.2 Representation and participation of youth within farmers’ and rural organizations.

11. In order to address the lack of information on the representation of youth within farmers’ organizations, an online mapping and survey exercise were carried out throughout the course of the project, as explained in para 3. The target group of the mapping consisted of young farmers’ organizations, farmers’ organizations which are addressing youth issues and rural organization representing young farmer interests. A mapping questionnaire was sent out to more than 800 organizations and more than 440 replies were received. Most contacts are located in sub-Saharan Africa, in particular in West and Central Africa, which is also reflected in the number of replies from that region. A large variety of rural organizations replied to the mapping and survey questionnaires including farmers’ organizations, youth organizations, women’s associations, indigenous peoples’ organizations and other membership based organizations, as well as rural service providers.
12. Only 26% of the organizations that replied to the mapping consist of **only young farmers**. (see box 1) The highest concentration of these organizations could be found in sub-

¹⁰ PAFNET, *Youth in Agriculture Strategy 2011-2015: echoing the voices of Pacific Youth*.

¹¹ AGUIRRE, M., KIM, S., MAETZ, M., MATINROSHAN, Y., PANGRAZIO, G. and PERNECHELE, V., *Food and agricultural policy trends after the 2008 food security crisis: renewed attention to agricultural development*, FAO, 2011.

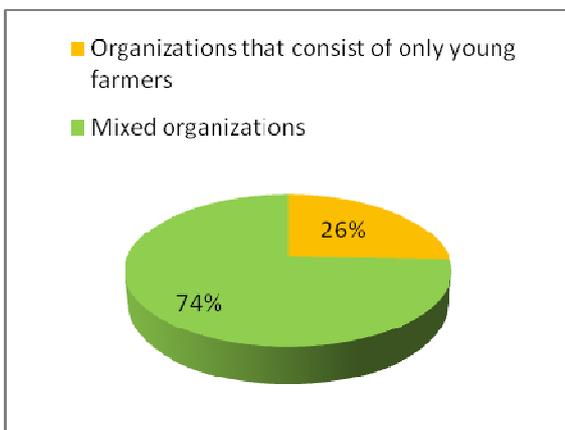
¹² The year 2010 is also the 25th anniversary of the first International Youth Year in 1985 on the theme Participation, Development and Peace. UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, A/RES/64/134, *Proclamation of 2010 as the International Year of Youth: Dialogue and Mutual Understanding*, 2010.

¹³ <http://www.copac.coop/idc/2011/index.html>

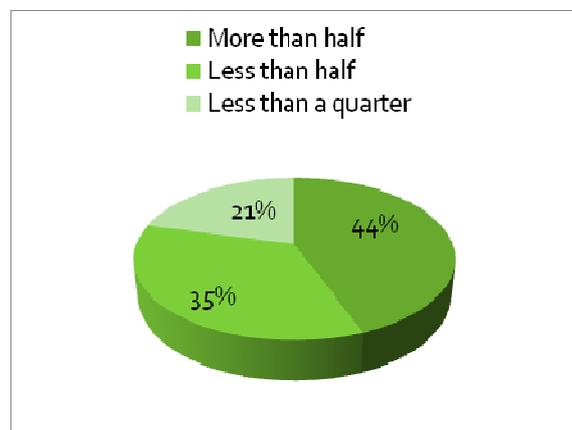
¹⁴ HERBEL, D., CROWLEY, E., OURABAH HADDAD, N. AND LEE, M., *Good practices in building innovative rural institutions to increase food security*, FAO, 2010.

Saharan Africa, followed by Latin America and the Caribbean. Those organizations are generally young, informal and they lack human and financial resources. About 92% of organizations consisting of only young farmers from Asia and the Pacific have existed for less than 15 years compared to 85% of organizations from sub-Saharan Africa, 54% of organizations from Latin America and the Caribbean and approximately 45% of organizations from Europe and North America. Most organizations consisting of only young farmers are rather small (except those from Europe and North America) and count up to 200 members. In all regions except for Latin America and the Caribbean, there are more youth-only organizations than mixed organizations that describe themselves as informal grouping.

Box 1: Young farmers' representation.



Box 2: Numbers of young farmers members in mixed organizations.



13. The other youth that responded to the survey are involved in organizations led by elder farmers (called **mixed organizations** for the purpose of this paper). More than half of the mixed organizations have a youth group or section and in all regions, this is the most common young farmers' representation mechanism. Other representation mechanisms include young farmers' committee or college; young farmers' platform and focal point. Although youth form a large percentage of the members of the organization (see box 2), they are frequently not well represented. RCM participants further stated that in many organizations, youth membership results from quotas or other binding internal regulations which are rarely respected. Actually, rural youth have to fight for recognition within mixed organizations to be given appropriate channels and mechanisms to voice their concern. The limited participation of young people within organizations also undermines their ability to participate in policy processes outside their organization.

14. Approximately 60% of the respondents mentioned young farmers' participation as an aspect of their organization that could be improved to better represent young farmers since actual youth participation in decision-making and leadership is very limited. A Mexican participant explained that youth are sometimes included as organization members just to reach the quotas but are not given any real opportunity to voice their concerns. RCM participants from all regions argued that transitional leadership is problematic in many organizations; when leaders of the organization grow older, they don't make space for

younger members. This is due to a variety of reasons. Firstly, youth sometimes lack the confidence to take up leadership roles. Secondly, there are no retirement structures in place for leaders. Therefore, they tend to cling to their position in the organization which provides them with an honorific position with potentially financial advantages. Thirdly, those leaders who have set up the organization themselves, are inclined to be particularly attached to it and do not want to give up their position.

15. Culture and traditions also affect 'real' youth participation in farmers' - and rural organizations. Most societies in the developing world are characterized by hierarchical relationships where youth are expected to obey and respect the older generations. African RCM participants stated that *'African culture makes youth fear the elderly and they are not free to express themselves. Within mixed organizations, there is poor interaction between generations because the elderly do not trust the youth'* and Asian RCM participants mentioned that *'Traditionally leadership is held by the elderly. Our culture prescribes loyalty to these elderly leaders'*. Migration might have a positive effect on youth participation; the 2009 Human Development Report argues that movement allows young men and women to gain autonomy and to challenge traditional roles¹⁵. Furthermore, RCM participants from all regions underlined that many young farmers are not involved in any kind of organization and that an effort should be made to help them enter farmers' groups.
16. The mapping indicates that between 30 and 50% of the members of most organizations from all regions are young **women** farmers. These percentages are similar for organizations consisting of young farmers only. RCM participants from all regions however estimated the actual percentage of young women farmers' membership to be lower even if there is a real process of feminization of agriculture. Moreover, Latin American RCM participants explained that young women are often active in the organization before having children and after having grandchildren. Latin-American RCM participants mentioned that ownership of land is often a requirement to join a farmers' organization and as Latin American youth (and young women in particular) typically do not own land, they are thus excluded from organizational membership. Organizations are frequently working with the children of organization members in order to reach out to the youth. Some Latin American organizations introduced 'household membership' of the organization to make sure that other family members apart from the head of household who owns the land (which is usually an elderly male) can be involved in the organization.
17. However, there are cases where young farmers are better considered and where they are supported to represent their interests and dialogue with their elders and public and private partners. Box 3 elaborates on some good practices from Pakistan, Uruguay, Peru and Togo. The recommendations from the RCMs in this regard are cited in box 4.

¹⁵ UNDP, *Human Development Report 2009. Overcoming barriers: human mobility and development*, UNDP, 2009.

Box 3: Options to facilitate young farmers participation and representation.

Youth for Change in Pakistan.

The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) are a semi-autonomous tribal region in the northwest of Pakistan. Because of the remoteness and the very complex political situation of FATA, the Government of Pakistan put into place the FATA Development Programme –Government to Community (FDP-GC). The programme aims to build confidence and trust between communities in FATA and the local government entities through a participatory approach. Young men are a specific target group of FDP-GC as they are a source pool for (Taliban) militants. In order to avoid this militant recruitment, young men should become part of the mainstream of Pakistani society. In this context, the Government of Pakistan (GOP) is working with the Pakistani organization ‘Youth for Change’. Youth for Change is part of a multi-sectoral group within the FATA administration which is mainly focusing on Water, Sanitation and Agriculture. Youth for Change is responsible for making assessments in the areas and to advise the administration about intervention strategies. The GOP is thus working with rural youth to identify the FATA needs and to design appropriate policies, programmes and projects.

(Adapted from an interview with Mr. Atta Ur Rehman, Asian RCM participant)

MERCOSUR thematic youth group.

Since 2005, the ‘National Commission of Rural Development’ (CNFR) of Uruguay has been advocating for the drafting of national and regional policies addressed to rural youth. In 2006, the CNFR became an official member of the “Special Meeting on Family Farming” (REAF) of MERCOSUR¹. During REAF, the CNFR organized a youth seminar which led to the creation of a thematic group within MERCOSUR focusing on youth issues. Subsequently, this thematic group has organized two youth consultation meetings, each hosting 50 rural youth participants to address youth specific issues related to access to land, production models, rural collective actions and rural worker’s rights.

(Adapted from CNFR Brochure: Abriendo Caminos Jordanas de Encuentro y Formación con Jóvenes Rurales.)

National Coordinating Committee of Young Coffee Growers in Peru (CONAJOC).

The National Association of Coffee Producers of Peru (JNC) represents 52 organizations of coffee producers. JNC’s approach to membership is based on the household, meaning that not only the coffee producer himself is member of JNC but also the rest of his/her family. Elderly members of JNC wanted youth to participate in the organizations’ decision-making processes but the organizational structure didn’t allow this. In 2005, it was acknowledged that it was time for a generational renewal of leadership within the organization. As a consequence, the National Coordinating Committee of Young Coffee Growers (CONAJOC) was created as a section of the national board within JNC. CONAJOC conducts various activities including workshops to identify young farmers’ challenges and trainings. CONAJOC also provides technical support and launched the Youth Innovation Fund. In order to facilitate CONAJOC membership, CONAJOC is encouraging parents to anticipate the inheritance of a part of their coffee plantations so that their children can join the Committee.

(Adapted from a presentation of Mr. Edison Portocarrero, Latin American RCM participant).

Network of young producers and agricultural professionals of Togo (REJEPPAT).

The network of young producers and agricultural professionals of Togo (REJEPPAT) was born in 2010 after a long and difficult process. In 2009, the first National Farmers Forum took place. A young participant of this Forum, Mr. Eloi Tegba Toi, noticed that almost all other participants were more than 40 years old. He decided to contact the National Youth Council (CNJ) to request their support for improving rural youth representation at national level. CNJ helped Eloi to unite young farmers from all over Togo for a meeting. One of the recommendations of this meeting was to set up a national young farmers network. When the second National Farmers Forum was held in 2010, Eloi together with CNJ was lobbying for better youth representation. During this Forum, the youth seized the opportunity to present their idea on creating a national young farmers network. The President of Togo supported the young farmers’ idea and instructed the Ministries of Agriculture and Youth to help the youth to create this network. A few months later, REJEPPAT was successfully created as a youth college within the Togolese Coordination Committee of Farmers Organizations and Agricultural Producers (CTOP). Currently, REJEPPAT is making efforts in securing rural youth representation at the regional level. In this regard, REJEPPAT is collaborating with the European Council of Young Farmers (CEJA) in order to create a regional youth structure within the West African Network of Farmers- and Producers Organizations (ROPPA).

(Adapted from an interview with Mr. Eloi Tegba Toi, African RCM participant)

Box 4: Recommendations from RCMs on ‘Representation and Participation of rural youth in decision-making organs’.

Participants from Africa recommend that:

- Well-structured rural youth and young farmers’ councils/ platforms are created in all African countries to address and facilitate rural youth participation in agricultural and rural development policies, programmes and projects;
- Rural youth are mainstreamed into development programmes and projects;
- Youth committees/Colleges /Sections are formed in farmers’ organizations to address the youth issue.

Participants from Asia and the Middle East recommend that:

- Youth (men and women) should be represented by at least 33% in government agencies, UN agencies (e.g IFAD and FAO), and farmers’ organizations as well as in international mechanisms such as the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme (GAFSP), civil society mechanisms and mainstreamed in the planning, policy-making, and in the implementation of agricultural projects and programmes;
- Government agencies, UN agencies (e.g IFAD, FAO) and civil society organizations such as GAFSP provide financial and technical support as well as capacity enhancement for young men and women involved in young farmers’ organizations and in existing farmers’ organizations (e.g leadership training and legal advice, agri-entrepreneurship trainings, biodiversity-based and agroecological trainings, gender sensitization);
- Young farmers’ organizations and development partners prioritize networking and sharing of experiences at national, regional and global levels while organizing regular workshops, consultation meetings and exchange visits among their respective members and while defining an appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanism.

Participants from Latin American and the Caribbean recommend that:

- Rural- and farmers’ organizations set up a minimum participation quota of 30% of youth in their decision-making organs and include this quota into the statutes of the organization.
- Spaces for dialogue with governments are created so that youth organizations, farmers’ organizations, universities and other associations located in rural areas can participate in the drafting, implementation, monitoring and assessment of policies directed at young rural people; and that such spaces are used to discuss rural extension services and the funding of these policies through budgets (which are defined in a participatory way) in the perspective of an integral development of the rural youth.
- Forums and groupings of organizations are created to monitor the effective implementation of rural development policies in favour of all young farmers, young people from coastal areas and young indigenous people, irrespective of their political, cultural or social identity.

4. Access, conservation and management of land and other natural resources.

18. Approximately 52% of the young farmers that replied to the survey, mentioned access to land as the biggest challenge when they started farming. More than half of the respondents that were not practicing farmers mentioned access to land as one of the main factors that refrains them from starting a farming activity. As results from the survey, inheritance is still the most common system to obtain land in most developing countries. Land is usually passed on from father to son(s). Life expectancy is increasing in all regions. As a consequence, rural youth often have to wait many years before inheriting their share of the

family land. In the meantime, youth are cultivating the land of the family and many times they are getting no or little income from this work. Latin American RCM participants mentioned that tradition prescribes that you can only own land once you have a family and thus the transfer usually happens at a later age.

19. The world population is projected to grow from 6.9 billion in mid-2011 to 9.3 billion in 2050 and to reach 10.1 billion by 2100¹⁶. According to the World Bank, the size of rural population is expected to continue to grow until 2020.¹⁷ This population growth has resulted in the ongoing sub-division of land and in highly fragmented parcels. Therefore, youth (especially those with many siblings) end up inheriting just a very small piece. In areas where land is owned by the community, decisions on how to use this land are generally taken by the elderly, often ignoring youth interests. One of the Asian RCM participants explained that in some regions of Pakistan, the elderly refuse to distribute their land to the youth as they are afraid it will not suffice for everyone. In many countries in North Africa and the Middle East, the tradition is against the division of inherited land, leading to farmers cultivating under a joint-ownership situation with their co-heirs¹⁸. In addition to this, governments of some developing countries (mostly in Africa, South-East Asia and Eastern Europe) are selling/leasing large tracts of land to investors based in the North or to food-importing countries. These practices are leading to increased pressures on land¹⁹. RCM participants felt that these transactions are unfair, given their difficulties in accessing arable land.
20. For young women it is even more difficult to acquire land. FAO's gender and land rights database²⁰ shows stark gender disparities in land holdings in all regions of the world, for example data from Mali (2004-2005) indicate that only 3% of the country's land owners are women and Actionaid reports that less than 2% of the available land worldwide is owned by women²¹. As explained above, in many communities land rights are governed by both statutory and customary laws. Many of these traditional customary laws deny women's rights to land. By tradition, men inherit land and women gain user rights through their relationship with a male relative²². To put an end to this discrimination, several countries have approved statutory laws or have ratified international conventions (e.g. CEDAW²³) which grant women equal rights to land. However, even when the country has adopted such laws, they are not always implemented as patriarchal customs persist²⁴.
21. As set forth, youth face many challenges in accessing arable land. Box 5 explores some options to facilitate this access and box 6 gives an overview of the recommendations from the RCMs on this topic.

¹⁶ UNDESA, World Population Prospects, the 2010 Revision, UN, 2011.

¹⁷ WORLD BANK, *World Development Report 2008: Agriculture for development*, 2007.

¹⁸ WORLD BANK, *Agriculture and rural development in MENA Sector brief*, 2008.

¹⁹ COTULA, L., *The outlook on farmland acquisitions, Policy brief*, ILC, March 2011.

²⁰ <http://www.fao.org/gender/landrights>

²¹ ACTIONAID, *Her mile: Women's rights and access to land, the last stretch of road to eradicate hunger*, 2010.

²² FAO, *The state of food and agriculture, Women in agriculture: closing the gender gap for development*, 2010-2011.

²³ Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, art.14, II, g.

²⁴ FAO, *FAO Land tenure studies, Gender and access to land*, 2002.

Box 5: Options to facilitate youth access to land.

Group acquisition of land and cooperative farming.

Youth often inherit small plots of land and lack access to finance to buy more land. To overcome these constraints cooperative farming in India has proved to be successful.

- Tarode-di village in India has no decent road access to the nearest town. Young inhabitants of the village applied for jobs in the towns but could not take up any offer because of poor transport facilities. Hence they decided to form the 'Adarsh Yuvak Swayamrojgar Sewa Sahakari Sanstha' Cooperative that would take up farming. They were supported by the Poorest Areas Civil Society (PACS) Programme; an initiative of the UK Government's Department for International Development (DFID). PACS helped them to register the cooperative and to work out a business plan. The cooperative decided to lease a plot of land from a relative of one of the members and to take crop insurance to protect their investment. Their first crop was sunflower and the members calculated that the cooperative should make a modest profit even after paying transport charges to carry the produce to oil mills.

(Adapted from PACS Programme Stories, Unemployed youth try their hand at cooperative farming, www.empowerpoor.org)

(Family) land transfer intra-vivos.

In order to mitigate the consequences of an increased life expectancy on youth access to land, family land transfer intra-vivos can be considered as a good option. Through this system, the elderly transfer (a part of) their land to younger family members while they are still alive. This has been proven beneficial to both parties since elderly often do not have the capacity any more to manage their lands in the most efficient way and youth are keen to have their own land and have better access to new technologies

- In Mexico, transfer of land from elderly to youth has been proven highly successful. In Mexico, most of the land used to be commonly owned. These common lands are called 'ejidos' and are owned by 'ejiditarios'. Traditionally, transfer of rights on ejidos from one generation to another was heavily restricted. Hence young households were facing land shortages, which is one of the factors causing youth migration to the United States. The generally older and less-educated ejiditarios with secure land rights were not very good at managing their lands. In order to solve this problem, the Government allowed land sales if the land was kept in the community. To support youth in taking over the ejidos, the Government of Mexico together with the World Bank initiated the 'Young Rural Entrepreneur and Land Fund Program'. This project provided credit to rural landless youth to acquire the underutilised ejidos. The young people were trained and received technical assistance in setting up their farming activities on the ejidos. The project also assists older landholders who transfer their lands to young farmers to access social welfare schemes for their retirement.

(Adapted from WORLDBANK, Returning young Mexican farmers to the land, 2nd Annual Golden Plough Award for Innovative Project Design, in 'Agricultural and Rural Development Notes issue 27', June 2007.)

- In France, the 'Association pour l'Aménagement des Structures des Exploitations Agricoles' (ADASEA) puts in touch young farmers that would like to set up in farming with farmers who wish to hand over their farms. ADASEA helps the transferor to evaluate his farm; interviews the young farmer candidates; and proposes options to facilitate the transfer¹.
(Adapted from www.adasea.net)
- In the National Coffee Association of Peru (CNF) where land is a criterion for membership, parents have given their children anticipated land inheritance so that they can join the Association. This case is further explore in box 3.

Statutory laws for equal access to land.

Currently, more and more countries tend to adopt statutory laws which give equal access to land for women, opposing discriminatory customary laws. This is an opportunity for young women as they now also get the opportunity to own land. In some countries, for example Rwanda, community leaders and members of the Abunzi (=local mediation committees) are trained on the implementation of these laws hence abolishing discriminatory practices which are prevailing in customary law¹.

(Adapted from IFAD, *Republic of Rwanda, Smallholder Cash and Export Crops Development Project (PDCRE), Gender and youth in the tea and coffee value chains*, September 2010.)

22. As explained in the above paragraphs, access to natural resources for young rural people is becoming challenging. This is not only due to an increasing population but also due to the effects of climate change. Youth are very much aware of these trends and tend to take a special interest in the conservation and management of natural resources²⁵. Participants from the RCM in Asia presented their initiatives for preserving the environment. The Arab Group for the Protection of Nature (APN) is working mostly with young volunteers from Jordan. They have launched the One Million Trees Program (MTC) to replant olive, fruit, and palm trees in Palestinian lands which were uprooted by Israel²⁶. The National Fisheries Solidarity Movement of Sri Lanka (NAFSO) carried out a successful campaign to fight against sea-plane landing on the Negombo Lagoon which prevents young fishermen from using the Lagoon for fishing. NAFSO is also educating youth on the importance of preserving coastal resources through field visits and a drawing competition²⁷. The role of the youth in promoting an environmental-friendly and sustainable agriculture worldwide is a central preoccupation of MIJARC. Calls for collective actions such as: tree planting, sharing with elderly peasants about traditional systems of water and biodiversity conservation, creating information desks and stimulating debate in the local communities etc. are regularly being published and implemented in each continent.

Box 6: Recommendations from RCMs on 'Productive resources' (e.g. land, water, seeds).

Participants from Africa recommend that:

- The specific needs of rural youth and in particular of young women are taken into account in policies and programmes regarding natural resources;
- Governments ensure the accessibility and understanding of land policies and land laws by the youth while organizing sensitization programmes in rural areas;
- Rural youth are involved in the drafting, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of policies and laws related to agriculture;

²⁵ FAO, *Expert consultation on extension rural youth programmes and sustainable development*, FAO, 1996.

²⁶ www.apnature.org

²⁷ <http://nafsoonline.blogspot.com/>

- Funding mechanisms and access to credit are improved so as to facilitate youth's access to land and other resources (e.g. setting up guarantee funds and/or sources of credit specifically aimed at facilitating access to resources for young people in rural areas for their farming activities.);
- Strategies are developed to fight land grabbing by encouraging attribution of land for uses promoting local development and the wellbeing of the local populations.

Participants from Asia and the Middle East recommend that:

- Governments should take the necessary steps to make sure that arable government land is only used for agricultural purpose, fairly distributed among young female and male farmers and that government should put in place mechanisms to help youth entering sustainably into farming;
- Governments should invest in water conservation/harvesting and irrigation systems in arable areas;
- Governments should support local seed banks to facilitate access of young female and male farmers to tax-free traditional seeds and seedlings and respect the provisions on seeds in their existing national regulations.

Participants from Latin American and the Caribbean recommend that:

- Governments promote land reforms and fishing laws that ensure young people's access to production means (land, seeds, water), to sea and fishing resources, and that ensure equal opportunities for young men and women
- Governments adopt laws and public policies relevant to young rural people and small producers, facilitating access to credit for productive resources according to the specific needs of the youth, in order to reduce inequalities in rural areas, to ensure young people's access to land, to provide young men and women with future prospects in farming, and strengthen their identity.
- Governments impose a specific tax to mining companies (private, public, national, multinational, transnational ones) which are using the land against the interests of young farmers.
- Governments implement legally binding consultation mechanisms with rural communities and rural youth movements while drafting policies related to productive resources, and that such policies respect mother earth and its natural production cycles, and guarantee a healthy and sustainable environment for future generations.

5. Access to markets.

23. The results from the survey indicate that 25% of young farmer respondents are engaged in marketing and commercialization of agricultural, fishery and/or forestry produce. They can be food buyers or food sellers and they can play a role in every link of the value-chain from production to transformation to marketing. RCM participants argued that access to markets often remains difficult for young farmers. First of all, market structures often do not favour young people. In rural markets there are typically large numbers of producers/consumers and only a few market intermediaries²⁸. Participants from the Asian RCM complained that these intermediaries are often rich businessmen who also influence the government while drafting market policies. Many times, youth are not sufficiently organized and/or lack experience to counter these strong market actors. Secondly, RCM participants stated that rural youth frequently don't have the required knowledge of how markets work and they lack information on prices. Young rural women face additional difficulties in

²⁸ TRACY-WHITE, J., *Rural-urban market linkages: an infrastructure identification and survey guide*, FAO, 2005.

accessing markets since in many communities their freedom of movement is restricted because of social and cultural prescriptions²⁹.

24. Results from the survey and the RCMs show that young farmers would like to be involved in all links of the value chain and become more business oriented. The following paragraphs give examples of how young farmers can better access markets and box 9 gives an overview of the recommendations from the RCMs related to access to markets; finance and technologies.
25. In order to overcome market-related challenges, young farmers need organizations that can allow them to gain the necessary bargaining power to interact on equal terms with other market actors. Through these organizations, they can purchase larger quantities at lower unit prices from input markets and take advantage of economies of scale when selling their goods³⁰. Box 7 gives examples on how organizations from Jordan, Togo and Peru facilitated market access for their members.
26. High value agricultural products and niche-markets also offer opportunities to young farmers³¹ and especially to women farmers. FAO reports that women dominate employment in many of the high-value agricultural commodity chains in Africa and Latin America³². Consumers, mostly from developed countries, are becoming more and more interested in fair trade, organic and other 'new' tropical foods and natural products³³. Agro-tourism, culinary tourism, herbal preparations and cosmetics turn out to be increasingly popular and young farmers are very creative in exploiting these new opportunities. In St Lucia, the Frooty Foods Company was set up by a young producer who makes jams and jellies from tropical fruits³⁴. In Tobago, a young cocoa farmer is now combining aged rum with chocolate from top quality Caribbean cocoa and his products are sold to developed countries³⁵. Other success stories from Kenya and Fiji are cited in box 7.
27. Another way to overcome these power asymmetries is access to market information. When this information is available, better decisions are made on future crops and on where and when to buy and sell goods. Lately, a lot of market information services have been developed and the emergence of new ICTs has facilitated marketing and trading. RCM participants explained that youth often pick up new technologies more easily than adults and have in this way a comparative advantage (see also para 38). Box 7 explains how these ICTs are used in Uganda to enhance market access for young farmers.

²⁹ USAID, *Enhancing women's market access and promoting pro-poor growth*, 2005.

³⁰ IFAD, *Trade and rural development: opportunities and challenges for the rural poor: discussion paper*, 2004.

³¹ HELLING, J., LUNDI, M. and MEIJER, M., *Farmer organization, collective action and market access in Meso America*, IFPRI, 2007.

³² FAO, *The state of food and agriculture, Women in agriculture: closing the gender gap for development*, 2010-2011.

³³ FRÉGUIN-GRESH, S., LOSCH, B. and WHITE, E., *Structural dimensions of liberalization on agriculture and rural development: a cross-regional analysis on rural change*, 2010.

³⁴ <http://frootyfoods.com/>

³⁵ SPORE, *Population and Agriculture Special Issue*, CTA, August 2010.

Box 7: Options to facilitating young farmers' access to markets

Facilitating market access for young women farmers in Jordan.

Zeinab Al-Momani from Jordan was already married at 19 with little money and a child. Zeinab realized that if she wanted to study further, she needed help in child care and she started a nursery in her town. In this way, she started employing women from her area. In 2003, Zeinab established the Sakhrah Women's Society Cooperative to further encourage women's employment. And in 2007, she founded the Specific Union for Female Farmers in Jordan. Zeinab believes that only women themselves can demand their full economic, social and political participation and they can do this best when organized. The Specific Union for Female Farmers is currently working together with AgriCord to improve women's managerial and entrepreneurial skills. Joint activities include courses in packaging and sale of agricultural produce; purchase and treatment of customers; and participation in exhibitions.

(Adapted from www.agricord.org and www.ashoka.org and from an interview with Ms. Zeinab Al-Momani, participant in the Asian RCM)

Prospective market visits in Togo.

REJEPPAT, the young farmers' college of the 'Coordination Togolaise des Organizations Paysannes et de Producteurs Agricoles' (CTOP), decided to invest in 'aggressive market research' for the agricultural produce of their members. They started prospective visits to markets in various West African countries. They managed to negotiate a contract at the big Katakoto market in Niamey, Niger to sell their bananas and pineapples and they signed a contract to sell their green beans in Burkina Faso. In order to keep up with the demand in Burkina Faso, REJEPPAT is encouraging its members to intensify the production of green beans. REJEPPAT contacted the Togolese Chamber of Agriculture who put them in touch with the International Trade Center (ITC). ITC accompanied REJEPPAT on prospective market visit to Morocco to identify other suitable markets to sell their pineapples. REJEPPAT is currently negotiating a contract to sell their soya produce to the PKL agro-food business in Ivory Coast.

(Adapted from an interview with Mr. Eloi Tegba Toi, President of REJEPPAT and participant in the African RCM)

Breeding and marketing of guinea pigs in Peru.

In 2010, the Catholic Agricultural and Rural Youth Association of Peru (JARC Peru) launched a guinea pig project. After an assessment of the targeted rural areas, guinea pig breeding was identified as an interesting income-generating activity for youth. Six communities participated in this project and were supported by partner organizations and local authorities. In November 2011, 50 young producers attended a training on "breeding and marketing of guinea pigs" to share successful experiences and learn about good management of their project. Emphasis was also put on collective initiatives as a means to fight social exclusion and to improve income in rural areas.

(Adapted from a presentation by Ms. Edith Manosalva Acuna and Mr. Estaban Chavez Mosonbite, Latin American RCM participants)

Organic farming in Kenya.

Charles Kimani abandoned his city job for organic farming in the village where he was born. He joined the Kenya Organic Agriculture Network (KOAN), which trained him in growing organically certified horticultural crops for export. As his activity proved to be flourishing, he formed the Wangige Organic Farmers Self Help Group which now consists of 22 members who are all former city-dwellers. Kimani now earns over ten times more than what he used to earn with his city job.

(Adapted from SPORE, Population and Agriculture Special Issue, CTA, August 2010)

Coconuts in Fiji.

Garry Tarte, a young coconut farmer from Fiji has revived the local coconut industry. He is producing virgin coconut oil for the top-end consumer market, making copra cake and selling his coconut oil to cosmetics companies. He is using coconut by-products to generate an alternative supply of electricity for his farm. In 2010, Garry won the Pacific Farmer Award.

(Adapted from SPORE, Population and Agriculture Special Issue, CTA, August 2010)

ICTs in Uganda.

Mr. Gilbert Egwel, a 25 year old fruit farmer from Apac district in Northern Uganda, has been using ICTs innovatively.

Gilbert learned through a local radio agricultural talk show how to set up a nursery bed and manage a fruit farm. Gilbert now sells his fruits to the Apac population on local market days. Sometimes they pay him through his mobile phone, using the mobile money service offered by MTN Uganda. He subscribed to the MTN Market price update service and he now receives weekly update on market prices through his mobile phone. The Kubere Information Center is also been an important source of information for him as it gives him online access to newspapers on agro-business. After having attended a web 2.0 training, Gilbert joined two online platforms: Facebook and Twitter which he would like to use to tap into a bigger market out of Uganda.

(Adapted from AGENA, M., *Increasing rural agricultural productivity through technology: a story of a young modern fruit grower in Apac, Northern Uganda* in 'CTA ARDYIS Essay contest', 2011.)

6. Access to rural finance.

28. Our survey shows that rural youth severely lack access to rural finance. More than 70% of young farmers respondents to the survey stated access to finance as the biggest challenge they face when they start farming. RCM participants from all regions confirmed that access to finance is just as important as access to land since in some regions youth have access to land but lack the finance to invest in the land. Financial services are also the least commonly offered services by the organizations from all regions that replied to the survey.
29. Financial institutions often have the perception that youth form a riskier client category than adults. African and Latin American RCM participants agreed that rural youth are often lacking knowledge on how to draft business plans and have thus difficulties in 'selling' their business ideas to financial institutions. As a consequence, youth often obtain access to finance through informal sources such as family and friends. Indeed, the survey indicates family support as a common finance source available for young people willing to start a farming activity, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. Asian RCM Participants mentioned that youth often turn to money lenders who take advantage of them and charge really high interest rates. Young women face additional barriers to access credit even though it is proven that they are more reliable clients than men³⁶. Women have on average lower literacy levels than men, they often lack collateral (e.g. land) and in some communities their mobility is restricted³⁷. Over the last few years, a range of financial services have been designed for rural clients. However, only a few financial service providers have developed specific products for youth.
30. Savings are extremely important to youth³⁸. It helps them build assets, plan for life events (e.g. weddings and births) and respond to emergencies. Regrettably, financial service providers tend to focus more on credit instead of enabling savings. A USAID survey on youth microfinance providers in most of the developing world, mentions that less than half these providers offer savings products³⁹. Informal savings groups such as Rotating Savings

³⁶ IFAD, FAO and WORLDBANK, *Gender in agriculture Sourcebook*, 2009.

³⁷ FAO, *The state of food and agriculture, Women in agriculture: closing the gender gap for development*, 2010-2011.

³⁸ PIERARD, O., *Servicios Financieros para jóvenes rurales*, 2010.

³⁹ MC NULTY, M. and NAGARAJAN, G., *Serving youth with microfinance: perspectives of microfinance institutions and youth serving organizations*, USAID, 2005.

and Credit Associations (ROSCAs) can be a valid alternative. Box 8 gives an example from Ecuador, where a youth-specific savings programme has been put in place.

31. Loans are the most commonly offered financial products to youth⁴⁰. Although, many times accessing credit remains difficult for young people. First of all, youth often lack the required collateral such as land or savings to obtain credit from financial institutions. This can be solved by guarantee funds and credit guarantees⁴¹. Young farmers could also benefit from the warehouse receipt system⁴² and use their receipts as collateral to obtain a loan, as described in box 8 in the case of Tanzania. According to Latin American RCM participants, young people in rural areas are often hesitant of taking out loans because they are afraid they will not be able to manage the reimbursement. To reduce these perceived risks, many financial service providers combine loans with various types of training and give youth some extra support. Box 8 gives examples on how this is done in Cameroon, Paraguay and Peru. USAID reports that loans are generally only provided to youth who have an established business rather than to start-ups⁴³. Therefore, some institutions (mostly in developed countries) provide installation aid to youth who are setting up in farming. In Kenya, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports is campaigning to stimulate youth interest in farming. In this regard, the Ministry is partnering with companies that specialise in ranching and green house farming to give loans to young entrepreneurs to buy cows for export and to set up greenhouses⁴⁴. Another example from Northern Ireland is cited in box 8.
32. The recommendations drawn up in the RCMs regarding access to markets, finance and technologies can be found in box 9.

⁴⁰ MC NULTY, M. and NAGARAJAN, G., *Serving youth with microfinance: perspectives of microfinance institutions and youth serving organizations*, USAID, 2005.

⁴¹ Guarantee funds and credit guarantees are financial contracts in which a lender (e.g. microfinance institution) extends credit to a borrower (e.g. young person), based on a promise by a guarantor (e.g. father of young person) to absorb a specified portion of losses if the borrower fails to pay as promised. (IFAD, IFAD Decision tools for rural finance, 2010.)

⁴² The Warehouse Receipt System is a mechanism whereby warehouse managers keep farmers produce in the warehouses until the right buyers with the best prices are found. When a farmer deposits produce at a warehouse, they are issued a warehouse receipt as proof of ownership. (HERBEL, D., CROWLEY, E., OURABAH HADDAD, N. AND LEE, M., *Good practices in building innovative rural institutions to increase food security*, FAO, 2010.)

⁴³ MC NULTY, M. and NAGARAJAN, G., *Serving youth with microfinance: perspectives of microfinance institutions and youth serving organizations*, USAID, 2005.

⁴⁴ www.allafrica.com

Box 8: Options to facilitate young farmers' access to finance.

AhorrandoAndo in Ecuador.

The Advancing Integrated Microfinance for Youth (AIM) programme from the Freedom of Hunger Organization carried out a market research study in Ecuador to identify financial pressures young people face as well as the strategies they utilize for addressing those pressures. Youth in Ecuador report being able to save USD 1-2 per week. They hide their money in the house and some entrust the money to their mothers. These young people don't see themselves as savers because they believe that their savings are so scant that banks would not be interested in having them as clients. The data from this study has been used to develop appropriate youth-focused savings services. Cooperative San José developed the Individual Savings Account Integrated with Financial Education for youth in the Highlands and Sub-Tropic of Ecuador. Youth as young as 13 years old can access this service. Youth first receive financial education for free and they then pay a USD 2 deposit to open the account. The Cooperative provides incentives for deposits made to the savings account.

(Adapted from AIM Youth News, August 2011.)

Programme for the development of rural employment in Cameroon.

The PADER programme adopted an innovative approach to credit for youth. PADER clusters young farmers into Common Initiative Groups ('CIGs'). The financial service provider (the Cameroonian National Employment Fund, NEF) then comes to the field to visit the CIGs and discuss with them their financial needs. In this way, farmers don't have travel expenses and they avoid paying commission to financial intermediaries. Generally, 80% of the NEF loans are made in kind (e.g. fertiliser, pesticides) and the remaining amount is paid into the CIGs' account on behalf of the members involved.

(Adapted from SPORE Population and Agriculture Special Issue, CTA, August 2010.)

Fundación Paraguay.

The Fundación Paraguay combines microfinance with entrepreneurial training and an agricultural school. As a graduation project in the agricultural school, pupils have to develop an entrepreneurial project. The microfinance institution then assesses the project and can decide to provide financial services. The Fundación acknowledges that young clients need more support and monitoring than adult clients but that they can be equally successful.

*(Adapted from <http://www.fundacionparaguaya.org.py/> and PIERARD, O., *Servicios Financieros para jóvenes rurales*, 2010.)*

CONAJOC Youth Innovation Fund in Peru.

In 2011 CONAJOC, the youth branch of the National Association of Coffee Producers of Peru (JNC), launched the "Youth Innovation Fund" in the North and Central Provinces Cajamarca, San Martín and Junín with the support of DFID and TWIN. About 30 young people willing to enter into coffee production responded to the call for proposals. Their proposals were sent to a steering committee composed of CONAJOC youth leaders. Important selection criteria are the sustainability of the farming activity and the support of an organization affiliated to JNC. The best proposal will be selected soon and the young entrepreneur will receive USD 4 000 as well as technical support and specific training to implement his/her initiative. Proposals collected by CONAJOC included nurseries for coffee seed production; production of organic fertilizers; and comprehensive technical services to increase productivity.

(Adapted from a presentation by Edison Portocarrero, Latin American RCM participant.)

Warehouse receipt system for Tanzanian rural youth.

Around 120 rural young people in Singida Rural District in Tanzania have formed an Agricultural and Marketing Cooperative Society (AMCOS) to create employment opportunities. AMCOS aims to acquire bank loans under the warehouse receipt system with target crops being sunflower and millet. The warehouse receipt will not only give the cooperative access to credit but also allows the farmers to receive advance payments for their produce which are stored in a warehouse awaiting peak prices. The regional cooperative officer is currently encouraging parents of those youth to help them access enough land to grow their crops. The officer is convinced that the chances of success of the project are high as the sunflower market is readily waiting and he has already been approached by a brewer who wishes to buy the cooperatives' white millet.

*(Adapted from WA SONGA, S., *Tanzania: 120 STD Seven Leavers establish co-op*, AllAfrica.com, 2011.)*

New entrants scheme of Northern Ireland.

The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) in Northern Ireland has set up a 'New Entrants Scheme' to promote additional investment by new entrants to farming. The scheme provides an interest rate subsidy on loans taken out in pursuance of an agreed business plan and is available to farmers up to 40 years old. At the end of February 2009, an assessment of the scheme was carried out. The assessment found that if all 273 approved applicants implement their agreed business plan in full, this will lever an investment based on loans of around USD 46.5 million into the Northern Ireland agricultural sector. The scheme also turned out to motivate the young farmers to get training on farming skills. In addition, the scheme advanced the inter-generational transfer of holdings and placed the new entrant in a more commanding position within the business. Scheme participants were of the opinion that they would assume complete control of the farm business considerably earlier than would otherwise have been the case without the Scheme.

(Adapted from DARDNI, Review of the financial assistance for young farmers scheme, 2010.)

Box 9: Recommendations from RCMs on 'Access to markets, finance and technologies'.

Participants from Africa recommend that:

- Agribusiness centers with storage and processing facilities are created for young farmers in order to link farmers and traders and to act as a venue for training, sensitization and capacity building programmes on market actors, financing opportunities and new agricultural technologies;
- Governments, together with funding agencies, facilitate the development of infrastructure especially roads linking young producers from rural areas to markets;
- Young farmers trade fairs are organised to increase the exposure of young farmers to the market as well as to the major players in the finance sector;
- Favorable marketing policies are developed to encourage rural youth in their farming activities;
- Young farmers are trained on financial sustainability and management of membership-based organizations in order to encourage the creation of strong and sustainable young farmers' organizations.

Participants from Asia and the Middle East recommend that:

- Governments should facilitate and support the creation of young farmers' organizations and young women farmers' organizations able to channel and ensure fair access to financial and technological support from governments, donors and the private sector;
- Sustainable agricultural market systems inserted in the value chains should be established in villages, towns and cities and should be governed by local authorities and representatives of local young farmers' organizations;
- Marketing of agricultural products, agricultural technologies and financial management in agriculture should be included in educational curricula from the secondary school onwards.

Participants from Latin American and the Caribbean recommend that:

- Governments and farmers' organisations should work out financial support programmes specifically directed to young farmers and to young people in coastal areas, to promote the work, creativity and innovative spirit of young people (i.e. organising contests rewarding best projects with funding);
- Access of all youths in Latin America to technology should be guaranteed (internet, social network, productivity tools) in order to start a new development era. Such access to technology, if used properly, can increase productivity and make farming activities profitable while protecting the environment;
- Resources should be found to adapt technologies to agricultural production modes, without changing local traditions, in order to create decent jobs for rural people and promote entrepreneurship among young farmers;
- Governments should guarantee the access of indigenous people, small agricultural producers and local people to food markets;
- Governments should provide farmers and indigenous people with the necessary conditions (market information, facilities, cold chain) for competitive and sustainable marketing of their agricultural products;
- Governments should foresee budgets to promote agricultural production in family farming and small-scale agriculture, in order to have access to agribusiness markets, preserve and improve the value chain in rural areas, and create decent jobs for young people in the region;

- Farmers and rural youth organisations should set up strategic alliances between the different regions in each country in order to increase the added value of agricultural products (local markets etc.), and empower young people in the communities to take up management and leadership for the benefit of the whole community.

7. Capacity development.

33. Children from rural areas have less access to education than their urban peers⁴⁵. Apart from a lack of educational infrastructure in rural areas, finding good and motivated teachers in rural areas was identified by RCM participants from Africa and Asia as a big challenge. Furthermore, moving children up from primary to secondary school is not self-evident in many developing countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa⁴⁶. RCM participants from India reported that some parents are hesitant in investing in secondary education for their daughters as they rather invest in their dowry. Not only do rural youth have less access to education, but the education in rural areas is often of less quality and not relevant to rural lives. African RCM participants complained that agricultural curricula have disappeared in schools and Asian RCM participants mentioned that **agricultural curricula in their schools are outdated and inadequate**. Therefore, there is a need to include agriculture in the school curriculum from primary school level⁴⁷. In addition to this, schools can play a big role in shaping the perceptions of youth towards agriculture. In schools in the Pacific and in sub-Saharan Africa, **agricultural activities are often used as a punishment**. In most parts of the world, agriculture is seen as a less worthwhile subject or as a last resort for under-achievers hereby influencing rural youth aspirations in a negative way. A study from the Pacific indicates that especially urban students see agriculture as a ‘dirty job’⁴⁸. Teachers could instil a more positive image towards agriculture by explaining their students the many aspects of agriculture; its importance to everyday life; and its career opportunities. The ‘Ag Pen Pal Program’ and the ‘Thousand gardens in Africa project’ (box 10) provide examples on how this could be done.
34. Not only do rural youth need general education but they also need skills training on agricultural activities. It was found that younger household heads who are engaged in farming tend to derive a higher income from their agricultural activities than older household heads; these findings suggest that agricultural training targeting rural youth can be highly effective in raising agricultural productivity⁴⁹. According to the survey results, approximately 50% of young farmers from developing countries stated education and training as one of the biggest challenges when they started farming. They further mentioned that young farmers generally acquire the necessary knowledge for their activities through farmers’ organizations; through the elderly in the community and through NGO programmes. RCM participants stressed the importance of **intergenerational knowledge-sharing**, since in many rural areas knowledge on agricultural practices is passed on from parents to children. A

⁴⁵ ATCHOARENA, D. and GASPERINI, L., *Education for rural development: towards new policy responses*, FAO and UNESCO, 2003.

⁴⁶ In sub-Saharan Africa, only 64 per cent of primary school students move up to secondary school. (UNICEF Global Database, 2010).

⁴⁷ SARD, *Children and Youth*, in ‘Sustainable agriculture and rural development policy brief 8’, FAO, 2007.

⁴⁸ PAFNET, *Youth in Agriculture Strategy 2011-2015: echoing the voices of Pacific Youth*.

⁴⁹ VAN DER GEEST, K., *Rural youth employment in developing countries: a global view*, FAO, 2010.

survey carried out in the Pacific indicates however that advice from families should be provided in a more coordinated and effective way rather than on an ad hoc basis. Young people felt that there should be formal sessions on transfer of traditional agriculture methods and technologies⁵⁰. Asian RCM participants reported however that parents often do not want their children to become farmers hence they are not transferring their agricultural knowledge to the next generation. Latin American RCM participants found it important to bring the knowledge gained by rural youth who have migrated to cities, back to the rural areas and share this knowledge among generations.

35. Almost 90% of the organizations that replied to our surveys claim to offer capacity building services to their members. However, RCM participants from Africa stated that these services offered by farmers' organizations often do not meet the training needs of rural youth. In addition to this, Asian RCM participants mentioned that young farmers are not always interested in receiving agricultural training since they are working on other people's land and are thus not motivated to improve their agricultural skills. In many cases, training programmes reach mostly young men and do not cater for the needs of young women⁵¹. Restricted mobility; young motherhood; and limited schooling and literacy levels are factors contributing to this. African RCM participants added to this that the timing of trainings is often inconvenient for young women as they are busy with household chores.
36. To overcome these challenges, new training approaches should be adopted. Trainings that are adjusted to the rural situation and use an integrated approach, combining technical training with life skills, have proven to be successful. The FAO Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools in several African countries as well as in the Middle East and Asia⁵², the Songhai model in different African countries⁵³ and the Don Bosco Agro-mechanical technology center in the Philippines⁵⁴, have all piloted these alternative training methods (see box 10). RCM participants from all regions equally stressed the importance of providing leadership training for rural youth.
37. RCM participants from all regions stressed the importance of providing leadership training for rural youth. The recommendations from the 2011 Global Youth Innovation Network (GYIN) workshop and fair, equally acknowledge that leadership development should be integrated in the basic school system and continuing education⁵⁵. A study carried out in Pennsylvania with rural leaders shows the linkages between education and rural leadership; most rural leaders received higher education and those who didn't stated that this would be an important factor to improve their leadership. In addition, the study shows that

⁵⁰ PAFPNET, *Youth in Agriculture Strategy 2011-2015: echoing the voices of Pacific Youth*.

⁵¹ FAO, *The state of food and agriculture, Women in agriculture: closing the gender gap for development, 2010-2011*.

⁵² DALLA VALLE, F., *Promoting employment and entrepreneurship for vulnerable youths in West Bank and the Gaza Strip*, FAO, 2010; FARMING MATTERS, *Youth and farming: we take the lead*, Volume 27.1, ILEIA, 2011; IFAD, FAO and WORLDBANK, *Gender in agriculture Sourcebook*, 2009.

⁵³ www.songhai.org

⁵⁴ www.dbagrolegazpi.org

⁵⁵ www.gyin.org

also informal education is absolutely necessary in developing leadership skills⁵⁶. The capacity building activities of rural youth organizations often focus on generating leadership skills of their members.

38. Using ICTs for training also seems to be popular among young farmers. First and foremost, young farmers need information on production techniques. Knowledge on farming techniques is often poorly documented and scattered between various sources, notably farmers, universities, NGOs etc. That is why recently some initiatives were taken to better document and spread this information. For example the Savannah Young Farmers Network (SYFN) is making efforts in spreading successful farming techniques through new technologies (see box 10). Secondly, ICTs can enhance information flows on marketing and can facilitate contacts between various actors in the value chain. RCM participants repeatedly mentioned that youth pick up more easily new technologies related to farming. RCM participants further reported that adults many times do not trust new techniques. Rural youth could thus be an asset in their communities by helping elderly farmers to work with ICTs.
39. It is also important to stimulate agricultural R&D for youth. The ‘Young Professionals Platform for Agricultural Research for Development’ (‘YPARD’)⁵⁷ and the ‘Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) Series on Youth in Agriculture’⁵⁸ can be cited as examples. Box 10 elaborates on the work of YPARD.
40. Box 11 cites the recommendations from the RCMs that were drafted on access to knowledge.

Box 10: Options to facilitate young farmers’ access to knowledge.

The Ag Pen Pal Program.

The State of Nebraska (USA) has developed the Agriculture in the classroom program (‘AIT’). AIT teaches pupils that agriculture is a source of food, clothing, shelter and other essentials of life and develops awareness on the agricultural industry which includes the production, processing, distribution and marketing of the products that are being used in everyday life. The AIT Pen Pal Program links classrooms with farm and ranch families across Nebraska. Farmers exchange letters with students on a regular basis, explaining how food moves from the farm to the consumer and the importance of the interdependence between rural and urban communities. Often, the students visit the farms of their pen pals and the farmers sometimes also visit the classrooms.

(Adapted from the Nebraska AIT website: <http://www.ne-aitc.org/teachers/penpal.htm>)

⁵⁶ WILLIAMS, L.L. and LINDSEY, M.J., *Rural leaders and leadership development in Pennsylvania*, The Center for Rural Pennsylvania, 2011.

⁵⁷ <http://ypard.net/>

⁵⁸ <http://ictkm.cgiar.org/youth-in-agriculture/>

A thousand gardens in Africa.

The Slowfood Foundation has embarked on an ambitious project named 'A thousand gardens in Africa'. School kitchen gardens are being set up in order to create awareness on where food comes from, how and by whom it is produced. Children learn about local produce, agro- biodiversity, local recipes etc. The food produced in the gardens is transformed into healthy school meals. There is an emphasis on intergenerational learning, such as bringing in elders to tell children stories and transmit their knowledge on farming. The children can then also persuade their families to eat locally cultivated food.

(Adapted from THE SLOWFOOD FOUNDATION, A thousand gardens in Africa: guidelines.)

Songhai Centre.

The Songhai centre was founded in 1985 in Benin to develop alternatives, allowing young Africans to stand on their feet through agricultural entrepreneurship. The centre is an economic as well as a social institution which carries out training, production and research, combining traditional and modern methods. The Songhai model presents an integrated system of production where agriculture, animal husbandry and fish farming interact and nothing is wasted. Values such as creativity; taking initiative; competitiveness and organizational capacity are key. The Songhai model was promoted as a Centre of Excellence for Africa by the UN and is being replicated in 14 other African countries.

(Adapted from the Songhai website: www.songhai.org)

Don Bosco Agro-Mechanical Technology Center.

The Don Bosco Agro-Mechanical Technology Center was established in 2001 in the Bicol Region in North Philippines with the aim of improving the quality of life of the youth from poor rural families through skills training, values formation and entrepreneurship. The Center offers three courses: agro-mechanics, agriculture technician and general electricity. The courses each have a duration of 1.5 years and are accessible for youth between 18 and 25 years old. Students who are not able to pay the tuition fees are supported in their application for scholarships. Since its establishment up to present, the Center has trained 1223 young people of which 80-85% are employed.

(Adapted from brochures received from Filipino RCM participants and from <http://www.dbagrolegazpi.org/>)

Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools.

The JFFLS approach was developed by FAO in 2004 in response to the HIV/AIDS orphan crisis and has been successfully introduced in several African countries as well as in the Middle East and Asia. These Schools have a unique curriculum, combining agricultural, life and entrepreneurship skills. The learning programme lasts a school year and follows the crop cycle; participants are taught about the links between agriculture, nutrition, gender equality and life and business skills. The course not only teaches them how to grow healthy crops, but also how to make informed decisions for leading healthy lives. There is also an employment-oriented component which encourages and helps JFFLS graduates to form Youth Farmers' Associations (YFAs), through which they can more easily access resources and place their produce in the markets.

(Adapted from DALLA VALLE, F., Promoting employment and entrepreneurship for vulnerable youths in West Bank and the Gaza Strip, FAO, 2010; FARMING MATTERS, Youth and farming: we take the lead, Volume 27.1, ILEIA, 2011; IFAD, FAO and WORLDBANK, Gender in agriculture Sourcebook, 2009.)

Innovative extension tools in Ghana.

Mr. Moses Nganwani Tia, Executive Director of the Savannah Young Farmers Network (SYFN) and participant in the African RCM stated that farmers often don't trust extensionists anymore since they come with outdated information and are not bringing their messages across in a convincing way. That is why SYFN introduced innovative tools to spread farming techniques. Video blogging is used to record the good farming practices of young farmers. Extension messages are added to this video in the local language and farmers can then access these videos online. Social networks such as Facebook are used to discuss these good practices. Through the Integrated Voice Recording (IVR) system, SYFN is packaging extension messages for farmers so as to enable them assess the information at their most convenient time. The extension message is pre-recorded and through the service of a computer and a normal cell phone, which most farmers have, the extension message is received. Vice versa, the farmers can also record their questions so that the extension officer can provide answers to them and through the same technology communicate his responses to the farmers.

(Adapted from an interview with Mr. Moses Nganwani Tia, African RCM participant)

Young professionals in Agricultural Research for Development.

YPARD is a network of young professionals active in Agricultural Research for Development (ARD) from different stakeholder groups around the world. YPARD aims to facilitate exchange of knowledge among young professionals; to broaden opportunities for young professionals to contribute to ARD policy debates; to promote agriculture among young people and to facilitate access to resources and capacity building opportunities. YPARD is currently working on a study to contribute to the debate on higher agricultural education. The results of this study will be used as evidence of the type of changes needed that will enable students to acquire skills that are relevant to perceived future needs within the Agricultural Research for Development (ARD) sector, thus producing young professional with improved and more relevant competencies.

(Adapted from www.ypard.net)

Box 11: Recommendations from RCMs on 'Access to knowledge'.

Participants from Africa recommend that:

- Education and capacity-building programmes for rural youth (women and men) are defined in a more participatory way and focus on agricultural best practices, land laws and knowledge sharing;
- Youth platforms (Rural youth and young farmers platforms and councils) are created to determine training and capacity building needs;
- Rural training centers are put into place;
- Governments earmark the necessary funding for these training programmes and centers;
- Trainings on leadership and lobbying are implemented for rural youth;
- Sensitization programmes for rural youth on their rights are put in place;
- The use of innovative information and communication technologies (ICTs) is promoted among rural youth;
- Women and men have equal access to training and education and that gender aspects are taken into consideration while deciding the themes and setting the timing of these trainings.

Participants from Asia and the Middle East recommend that:

- Young farmers with leadership quality are identified, trained and that young farmers' platform/forum/council are created to ensure the active participation of young female and male farmers in policy-making bodies;
- Agriculture is included as a compulsory topic starting from primary education curriculum in order to promote interest in farming for youth and that informal education programmes are implemented in rural areas to change the mind set of parents;
- Agricultural universities, research institutes, mobile camps are established in rural areas to which all section of the population should have access thanks to scholarships and quotas mechanisms;
- Frequent youth-participatory realistic data collections for monitoring and evaluation on the above aspects are conducted to ensure timely reforms and updates of the knowledge-systems and structures and that these data are made available and discussed with the youth.

Participants from Latin American and the Caribbean recommend that:

- Governments should diversify and adapt educational subjects to the local needs of young rural people (e.g. drafting of proposals, management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of projects) and to development needs of family farming in agreement with producers' organizations;
- Governments should provide youth organisations with technical and economic support in order for them to draft their own training programmes for rural young people, considering their specific needs and those of young women; such programmes should be geared towards empowering them to manage their own knowledge (i.e. development, formulation, management and implementation of projects);
- Governments and civil society organisations should implement educational programmes for young farmers and young people in coastal areas, based on a real assessment of their training needs;
- Governments and youth organisations should work out educational programmes based on the experiences of young people themselves as a way to ensure inclusive, dynamic and innovative processes and be respectful of cultural expressions of youth;
- Training programmes on rural development should be included in formal education schemes and be better valued on the labour market.

8. Conclusions.

41. Most rural youth do not foresee a prosperous future for themselves in the agricultural sector mostly because of the lack of profitability of agricultural activities and the lack of infrastructure and (social) facilities in rural areas. At the same time, rural youth are very aware of this situation and are full of hope and energy to turn the tide and create a 'new rural reality'. Rural youth are trying to mitigate the low profitability of agriculture which is typical for beginning farmers mostly through pluri-activity and temporary migration to urban areas. They aspire to become 'agripreneurs' who are involved in all links of the value chain from production to transformation and marketing. Keen on organic farming and other niche-markets, rural youth are very creative in exploring these new opportunities. Conscious of the effects of climate change on the environment and aware of the depletion of natural resources, rural youth are excellent environmental stewards who promote sustainable agriculture. Many of them are farming in the agricultural high-season but migrate to the cities during the low-season, keeping close ties with their relatives in rural areas and thus enhancing rural-urban linkages. Rural youth are willing to become modern farmers and are taking advantage of new ICTs to learn about new agricultural techniques and to facilitate the marketing of their produce. Although they are skilled users of new ICTs, they equally value traditional knowledge transmission methods and are very much in favor of knowledge sharing across generations. Rural youth desire to be respected and heard at local, national, regional and global level. Youth sections with decision-making power are being set-up within existing rural organizations and other institutions, challenging traditional structures where mostly elderly men are in power. Participatory approaches not only in the drafting but also in the implementation and monitoring of rural policies, programmes and projects are emerging as decision-makers are realizing that rural youth are the future of the agricultural sector. Box 12 quotes RCM recommendations on 'rural youth prospects'.

Box 12: Recommendations from RCMs on ‘Rural youth prospects’.

Participants from Africa recommend that:

- Governments earmark and decentralise a significant part of their budget to the agricultural sector of which at least 5% should be allocated to agricultural activities for rural youth and young women;
- Governments and development partners put the needs and preoccupations of rural youth at the centre of their development policies and this should be done in a participatory manner with the rural youth involvement and that they include advocacy and lobby in their development programme in Agriculture;
- Farmers’ organizations put into place rural youth sections (colleges) within national, regional and continental platforms;
- Governments and development partners establish a rural youth day.

Participants from Asia and the Middle East recommend that:

- Agricultural education systems and research institutions should be improved to better respond to the needs of young people willing to make their living in agriculture;
- National agriculture policies should be youth friendly, promote small scale farming and protect young farmers from the adverse effects of corporate farming;
- Governments (with help of the private sector) should use media and modern technology to promote agriculture among youth and to provide information and examples of sustainable agricultural activities;
- A higher percentage of national agricultural budgets should be dedicated to improve youth access to agricultural activities.

Participants from Latin American and the Caribbean recommend that:

- Governments should review their youth policies and propose measures which are adapted to rural life, guarantee the rights of rural youth and provide them with a better and more decent life;
- Governments and their funding institutions should assign a sufficient percentage of the national budget to launch policies empowering young rural people. This empowerment should enable them to promote productive activities in the field of family farming, small-scale farming and fisheries, and actively include rural youths in the drafting, implementation and evaluation of policies and budgets;
- Governments should implement policies which are adapted to young rural people’s needs and to the different cultural, social and economic backgrounds, in order to reduce inequalities in rural areas and guarantee an access to land for the young rural people, give them future prospects in farming and value peoples’ identities;
- Farmers’ organizations should promote and facilitate young rural people’s participation in their own structures, both men and women, and should consider the need for gender equity, in order for them to understand the issues affecting rural youth, and involve themselves actively in defending their social, political and economic rights.