



What is the Future for youth in Africa's Agri-Food Systems?

A Foresight Analysis

Summary Report October 2023

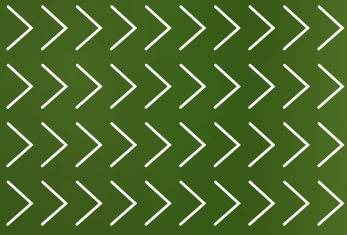


Foresight4Food
International Collaborative Initiative



AGRA
Sustainably Growing
Africa's Food Systems





ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This foresight analysis focusing on the future of youth in Africa's agri-food systems was conducted through a collaboration between Foresight4Food, the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), and AGRA. The initiative was made possible through support from the Mastercard Foundation. There was participation and guidance from staff of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). The analysis aims to support the strategies of development partners, government policy making, and investment priorities, including of the Mastercard Foundation's Pan African Programs. The input and support from the staff of these organisations contributed substantially to this work.

The insights and messages in this report were mainly generated by a group of 45 youth representatives and 12 agri-food systems experts from across Africa, who participated in a foresight workshop held in Mombasa in June 2023 (a list of participating organisations and businesses is provided at the end of the report). The report also incorporates key insights and findings from the background research and data analysis conducted to inform the workshop.

Systemic Link Consulting, led by Dr Jim Woodhill, was contracted by the Mastercard Foundation to organise the workshop, and produce the reports. The Mastercard Foundation supported this initiative to help develop foresight capabilities in its partner organisations and African institutions.

This summary report was produced by Jim Woodhill, Marie Parramon-Gurney, and Kristin Muthui based on the outcomes of the foresight workshop and the background research. Kristin Muthui and Jim Woodhill undertook the background research and wrote the supporting background discussion paper.¹ Mathematica² collated much of the quantitative data on agri-food systems and youth employment to support the foresight analysis.

The foresight workshop was facilitated by Jim Woodhill, Marie Parramon-Gurney and Mine Pabari.

Ayo Ojebode and Vanessa Bart-Plange from the Mastercard Foundation Research Team have guided and supported the initiative.

Gosia McFarlane (Butterfly PA) managed the logistics of the workshop with support from Ayana Woodhill.

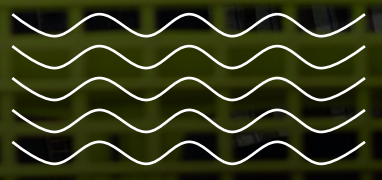
Velma Kiome and Raphael Gitonga made the graphic recordings of the workshop. Workshop photography and video recording was provided by Joshua Ochiewo and his team at Coast Photographics.

The layout and production of this report was done by Sabrina Trautman and her team at KANDS Collective: hello@kandscollective.com.

Citation for this report:

Jim Woodhill, Marie Parramon-Gurney, and Kristin Muthui. 2023. What future for youth in Africa's agri-food systems? A Foresight Analysis. Systemic Link Consulting, Foresight4Food, FARA, AGRA, the Mastercard Foundation. Oxford.

This report has been developed through a participatory process with youth and other stakeholders combined with information collated by the research team. The information and messages in the document do not necessarily reflect the specific views, policies or positions of the Mastercard Foundation, Foresight4Food, FARA, or AGRA, nor of the organisations who participated in the foresight process.





Contents

Acronyms	1
01 What is This Report About?	2
02 Foresight for Agri-Food Systems Process: An Overview	6
03 Setting the Scene: Issues and Opportunities for Youth in Africa's Agri-Food Systems	16
04 What is Happening in Africa's Agri-Food Systems: Implications for Youth	20
05 Exploring Different Scenarios of the Future	29
06 Pathways Forward	36
07 Reflection on the Foresight Process	47
Endnotes	51
List of participating organizations and businesses	52

Acronyms

AFCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
CGIAR	The Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centres
CFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FARA	Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IRENA	The International Renewable Energy Agency
MSME	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises
NGFP	Next Generation Foresight Practitioner's
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SOIF	Special Opportunities and Investment Fund
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa



Section One

01

What is the
report about?



Most of Africa’s youth work in agri-food systems.³ They are involved in production, transport, trading, processing, retail, and food services. Some are farmers, others are micro and small-scale entrepreneurs, and some are employed by larger scale enterprises.



Most make their livelihoods in the informal economy, and many combine different activities to earn an income. With Africa’s youth population set to nearly double by 2030, there will be a significant increase in the youth population. Creating quality, equitable, inclusive, and dignified and fulfilling work options for young people is a critical challenge for Africa, but also a huge opportunity.

Agri-food systems will remain central to dignified and fulfilling work opportunities for youth over the coming decades. This will be both directly through working within the sector and indirectly through the spin-off economic activities that can be generated, especially in rural areas. Despite challenges such as climate change, natural resource depletion, poor nutrition, and the exclusion of young women and marginalised groups that must be tackled in an integrated and systemic way, agri-food systems will offer substantial economic prospects due to population growth, rising wealth, and urbanisation.

This sets the context for the foresight analysis focusing on the future of youth in Africa’s agri-food systems. Looking ahead to 2050, the analysis explores the key trends and uncertainties that will shape opportunities and risks for youth in Africa’s agri-food systems over the next three decades.

Box 1: The Mastercard Foundation and dignified and fulfilling work

Given the centrality of dignified and fulfilling work to the Mastercard Foundation’s strategy, they listened to over 3,000 young people from Uganda, Kenya, Senegal, and Ghana about their aspirations and views on work in 2019. By listening to youth, the Foundation established four markers of dignified and fulfilling work; youth define work as dignified and fulfilling if it offers reliable income; is reputable; there’s respect in the workplace and brings a sense of purpose.

The foresight orientation online sessions and workshop brought together African youth representatives, youth leaders, and experts in agri-food systems to discuss the future of youth in Africa’s agri-food systems.⁴ By using foresight methodologies, they came together with the aim to gain critical insights and perspectives on the potential opportunities and risks for dignified and fulfilling work for youth in the African agri-food systems.

The workshop focused on the systemic changes needed to create more dignified, fulfilling and resilient work for youth, especially in Africa’s agri-food systems, as depicted in Figure 1. The goal was to generate conversations, collaboration where possible, and encourage innovative thinking about how to drive systemic change to create more resilient, dignified and fulfilling work opportunities for youth in Africa’s agri-food systems.

The foresight analysis included:

1. a literature review, data collection and analysis (pre-workshop);
2. orientation to foresight for systems change online sessions (pre-workshop) and,
3. a four-day participatory foresight workshop held in Mombasa, Kenya, 13-16 June 2023.



Figure 1: Focus of the Foresight workshop



Figure 2: Objectives of the workshop



THE OBJECTIVES OF THE WORKSHOP WERE TO:



Explore future opportunities for youth in Africa’s agri-food systems



Learn about and apply foresight and scenario analysis to the youth in the agri-food systems in Africa



Open space for networking, alliances and the co-creation of positive futures



Generate youth-driven ideas and practical actions for taking forward the agenda on decent work for young people in the agri-food systems

Foresight is essential for supporting government policies, investments, and systemic changes within agri-food systems. Thus, this report provides valuable insights into what is needed to transform African agri-food systems to create dignified and fulfilling work for future generations of young Africans, especially

the perspective of the youth participants. By bringing together a diverse range of young actors in Africa’s agri-food systems, this process also provided a space for young people to network, engage, and build their agency as empowered agri-food systems actors.

Box 2: Key messages from the foresight analysis

(Emerging from the workshop outcomes and key insights and findings from the literature review and data analytics)



Youth must be at the centre of creating agri-food systems for their futures.



The growth and development of Africa's agri-food systems over the coming decades presents significant employment and entrepreneurial opportunities for youth.



These opportunities, however, will not be automatic; they will have to be created and nurtured through policies that create an enabling environment.



Many of the opportunities will be in the midstream of agri-food systems, including trading, transport, processing, services, and retail, and not just in farming.



Agri-food systems can only meet part of what will be a rapidly growing demand for quality work opportunities for youth. Wider economic development will be critical, particularly in rural areas, and this needs to be leveraged by the agri-food sector.



Climate change, resource degradation, and geopolitical tensions are combining to create an increasingly turbulent future, and opportunities for youth cannot be disconnected from creating equitable, sustainable, and resilient food systems.



Capturing future opportunities and reducing future risks requires long-term thinking and action, which can be supported by participatory foresight and scenario analysis that brings together actors from across agri-food systems.



Much of WHAT is needed to create opportunities for youth is well-known. For example, improving rural infrastructure, better education and training, market access, entrepreneurial and business support, application of technology, and access to financial services.



The challenge now is HOW to bring about the changes that are desperately needed. This is essentially a challenge of societal and political engagement. Many of the technical options and solutions exist and could be implemented with the right political will.



Youth must be at the centre of helping to drive this necessary societal and political transformation. Creating the spaces of engagement and support for youth agency in creating a positive future is vital.



Section Two

02

The Foresight
for Agri-Food
Systems Process:
An Overview



2.1

Value of Foresight for Agri-Food Systems Change



Foresight for systems change offers one approach to supporting transformational thinking and action for a more equitable and sustainable world. Foresight is a critical tool that stakeholders can jointly use to better understand future risks and opportunities in agri-food systems. The process engages stakeholders in anticipating emerging trends and changes by developing a range of scenarios of how the future could unfold and using these to guide collective action and innovation.

By bringing a diverse range of stakeholders together, the foresight workshop enables a shared understanding of future challenges and opportunities, helping to create the necessary motivation and political will for change. It offers stakeholders a window into the future through which they can see how different future scenarios would affect their longer-term interests and ambitions. This helps break down the barriers of vested interests and resistance to change. The value of foresight is further outlined in Figure 3.

Box 3: The role of foresight and foresight capabilities:

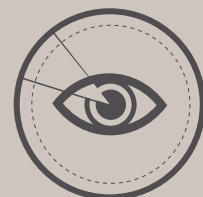
Given the uncertainties and turbulence in today's world, building resilience and sustainability in Africa's agri-food systems requires engaging with unknown and unpredictable futures – in both the medium and longer-term. Decisions made today cannot be based on assumptions of stable trajectories and 'business as usual'. The future, trends, uncertainties, and systems shocks need to be explored and understood to create resilience. This requires the ability to develop insights into the complex relationships within the wider political, economic, social, and technological systems. The foresight analysis supports better anticipation in planning, innovative thinking, and future-proofing of our planning approaches. Foresight is not about predicting the future, but rather intelligently engaging citizens and leaders in a better understanding of the current situation, its potential future consequence, and the alternative pathways that might lead to more desirable outcomes.

Figure 3: Why foresight and scenarios?



The future is created by how it is imagined today!

(Realizing that today's perspectives are shaped by the past)



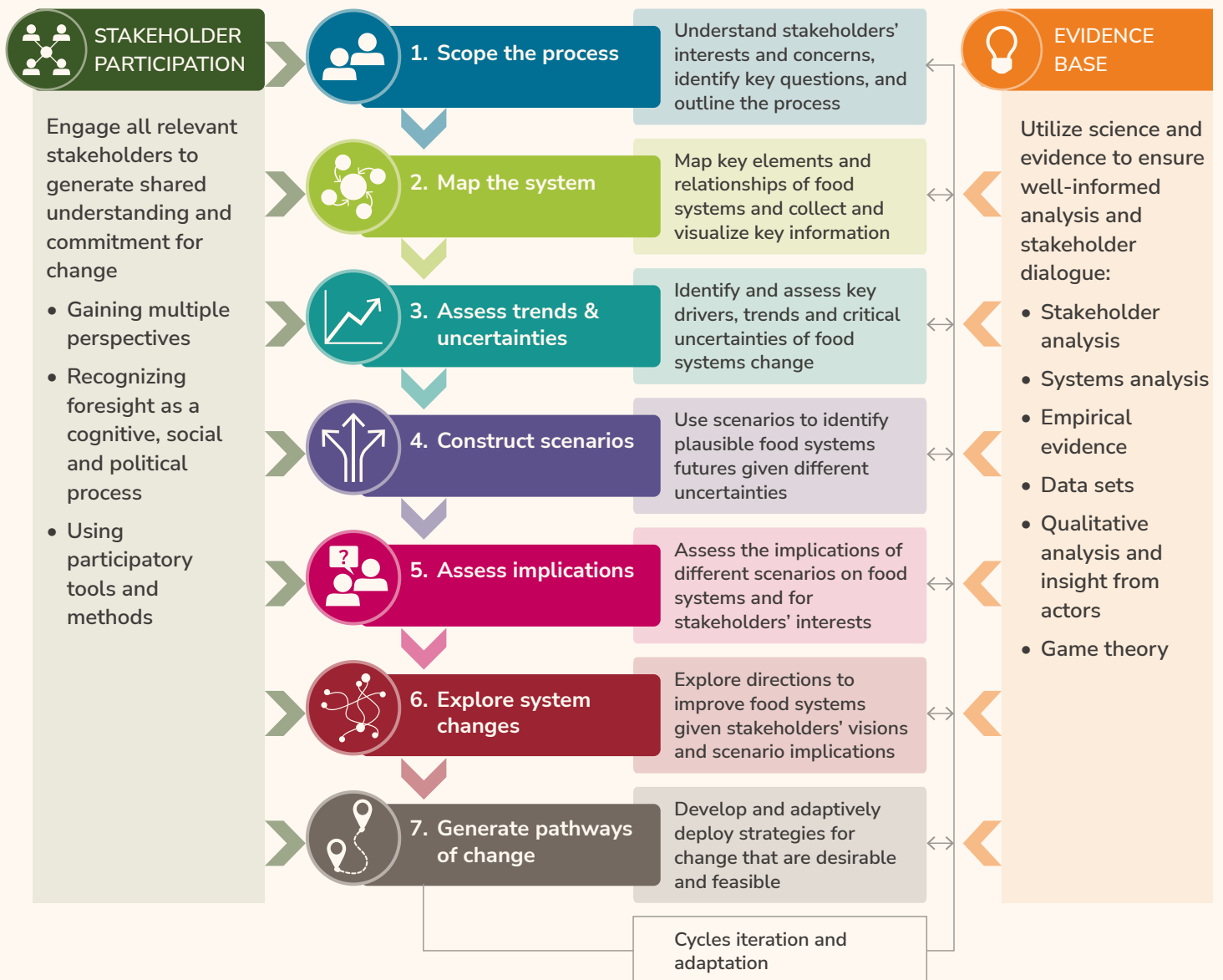
2.2

A Framework for Guiding Foresight for Agri-Food Systems

The foresight analysis was guided by a framework developed by the Foresight4Food initiative⁵ (Figure 4). This guiding framework links a participatory stakeholder engagement process with a strong scientific evidence base, including computer-based modelling and visualisation.

The assessment is designed to foster meaningful and informed dialogue among different stakeholder groups, enabling them to assess the implications of available information for scenario development.

Figure 4: The Foresight4Food Foresight Framework



2.3

The Foresight Process

The foresight process for this analysis was divided into three main stages:

Literature review, data collection and analysis (pre-workshop):

1

In a foresight analysis process, good data is essential to inform the identification and analysis of the main trends, drivers, and uncertainties shaping the systems under examination. Key research questions guided this foresight analysis, including:

- What will be the (rural) youth employment demands over the coming decades?
- How might employment patterns across different sectors in Africa's economies change, given varying trajectories for economic development?
- What types and scales of youth employment could emerge in different parts of agri-food systems (from production to consumption), considering diverse scenarios for the future of African economic development and agri-food systems?
- In what ways could agri-food systems provide quality employment opportunities for marginalised or excluded groups, including young women?
- How could agri-food systems contribute to broader rural economic development, generating non-agri-food sector employment opportunities for youth?

Based on the above, a literature review was conducted, a background paper produced and data analytics experts from Mathematica gathered and analysed data and information to identify trends, extract insights, and visualise the findings in an accessible manner for participants.⁶

Orientation to Foresight for Systems Change online sessions (pre-workshop):

2

This stage included a series of virtual online onboarding sessions to introduce the foresight for systems change process, establish a shared understanding of the foresight analysis, and refine the research questions guiding the data collection. These sessions also served as an opportunity to gain deeper insights into participants' interests, realities, and expectations. This understanding was crucial in designing a workshop that could deliver the most value to them.⁷





Four-day participatory workshop:

During the workshop, participants initially familiarised themselves with each other and engaged in discussion about their individual and collective challenges and ambitions related to agri-food systems in Africa. Through group exercises such as stakeholders mapping, rich pictures, and causal loop mapping, participants worked collaboratively to develop a shared and deeper understanding of African agri-food systems. They were able to understand the diversity of stakeholders within the systems, their respective power and influence, and their relationships with each other. Spending time analysing the data, participants identified some of the key drivers, trends, and uncertainties in the systems affecting youth work opportunities. Drawing from these critical uncertainties they identified, participants spent time developing scenarios and storylines, envisioning alternative futures. Finally, they explored potential pathways for driving change. For a comprehensive breakdown of the different stages of the foresight process day by day during the workshop, refer to figures 5 and 6.

3





Using foresight and its participatory process created an opportunity for informed and meaningful dialogue between different stakeholders. It gave a voice and leadership role to the youth, involving them in scenario development after assessing the implications of available information on African agri-food systems. This approach promoted collective exploration and critical thinking,

breaking down barriers and highlighting necessary changes for transformation. By focusing on how to move from the 'what' to the 'how', this foresight workshop stretched stakeholders to identify key levers of change required for transforming Africa's agri-food systems.



Box 4: The importance of mindset awareness and mental models in foresight analysis

Our mindsets are shaped by various events, experiences, and contexts that have influenced our beliefs and attitudes. For instance, historical experiences such as colonization have played a significant role in shaping our mental models. The prevailing power imbalances and inequalities that exist in various aspects of our lives can be directly linked to our past and warrant careful examination. We need to re-examine our colonial past and how it has influenced our mindsets, including the devaluation of African culture, knowledge, and values. Current structures such as financial and market systems are products of colonial power dynamics, which constrict our agency and freedom. Our mental models shape the way we see the world and determine how we behave in it. To achieve systemic change, we need to shift our mental models, which involves examining power dynamics and broader social norms. It is crucial to be aware of our own mental models and mindsets, and how they influence us. We also need to understand other mindsets and mental models in the systems. To effectively shift mental models, creating proximity between stakeholders is essential. Foresight, through its participatory approach, is a good way to interrogate mindsets, as well as shift mental models and develop new ones.



Figure 5: Outline of the key stages in the foresight analysis during the workshop



Figure 6: Outline of the process and key outcomes of the foresight analysis during the workshop





Sharing rich pictures

Sharing key insights and messages with others groups, developing a shared understanding of the system.



Day

03

Developing scenarios and assessing implications



Scenario development

Using key trends and critical uncertainties identified in day 2, participants worked on 4 scenarios to explore different possible ways in which the future might unfold.

Exploring systems and generating pathways of change

Day

04



Pathways forward

Participants spent time exploring pathways for change to enhance dignified and fulfilling work opportunities for youth in agri-food systems in Africa.



2.3

A Process to Support Youth Leaders in Creating the Future They Want

This workshop created an opportunity for young Africans to engage in a foresight analysis about the future of dignified and fulfilling work for youth within African agri-food systems. The workshop brought together young farmers, agri-entrepreneurs, agri-tech specialists, researchers, policymakers, and young professional from civil society and international organisations. The workshop participants displayed diversity in terms of gender, geography, and roles within agri-food systems. This workshop provided a valuable opportunity for the youth participants to network with each other and to start shaping a community for collaboration and support. The workshop proved to be a transformative experience. The youth participants' voice, energy, drive, and passion were loud, clear, and inspirational.



Section Three

03



Setting the
Scene: Issues and
Opportunities for
Youth in Africa's
Agri-Food
Systems



3.1

The Significance and Urgency of Agri-Food Systems for Youth

Agri-food systems provide significant livelihood opportunities for African youth. However, the future of dignified and fulfilling work for youths faces uncertainties related to climate change, stagnant economic growth, resource scarcity, globalisation, concentration of monopoly power, rapid technological advances, and an increasingly unstable geopolitical environment. Furthermore, Africa's youth population is projected to double by 2030⁸ with a significant proportion still living in rural areas despite rising urbanisation rates. This means that for many African countries, there is an urgent need to meet youth employment demand. The challenge is to create dignified and fulfilling work opportunities for young people in agri-food systems while also promoting wider rural economic development. How agri-food systems transform to meet growing demands will have implications for youth opportunities and rural economic development. Attention, therefore, needs to be paid to understanding key opportunities and risks for generating inclusive and quality youth dignified and fulfilling work across agri-food systems over the coming decades.



Agri business is one of the largest sectors taking up the African continent. It is therefore important for us to invest in young people in this sector and make sure that this links to the development of the Agenda 2063 of the African Union and the objectives of the regional economic communities.”

Sodfa Daaji, Founder of the African Legal Think Tank on Women's Rights and Programme Director of You Lead Africa

3.2

Youth Perspectives

Participants were asked to share their ambitions and challenges regarding the African agri-food systems. These are briefly outlined below:

Challenges: Overwhelmingly, young people mentioned the need for market access and development, as well as access to critical resources and opportunities to build required knowledge, skills, and capacities to create more opportunities for dignified and fulfilling work.

Ambitions: Participants referred to the desire to have a positive impact on their communities, to support other youth and marginalised people, and to be agents of transformative change as part of their legacy on the

continent. Many saw the need to better understand the systems in which they operate so that they could shift the power and influence in African agri-food systems. More importantly, young people said they want to have a voice, to be heard, and to be engaged in decision-making. Lastly, they spoke about the desire to be part of a broader community, engaged in the meaningful transformation of African agri-food systems.

Develop word cloud/figure with key words from above: market, resources, skills, knowledge, positive impacts, agents of transformative change, legacy, voice, be heard, engaged in decision-making, shift power and influence, change culture, mental model and mindsets, part of the community.

Figure 7: Youth's ambitions and challenges



3.3 Framing the Issues

The issues raised by the participants during the foresight workshop reflected the framing articulated in two landmark global reports on dignified and fulfilling work for youth in agri-food systems.^{8,9} Figure 8 combines the framing from these reports with the issues raised by participants in the foresight workshop. Three points are critical:



01 Mindsets: creating opportunities for youth and transforming agri-food systems will require a significant change in people's understanding, assumptions, values, beliefs, and attitudes.

02 The political economy of change: creating opportunities for youth in transformed agri-food systems is a political process that requires changing underlying economic incentives and tackling the power of vested interests.

03 More than a youth focus is needed: inclusive and equitable work opportunities for youth depend on transforming the broader agri-food systems, so it is vital to focus on both enabling conditions for youth and agri-food systems.

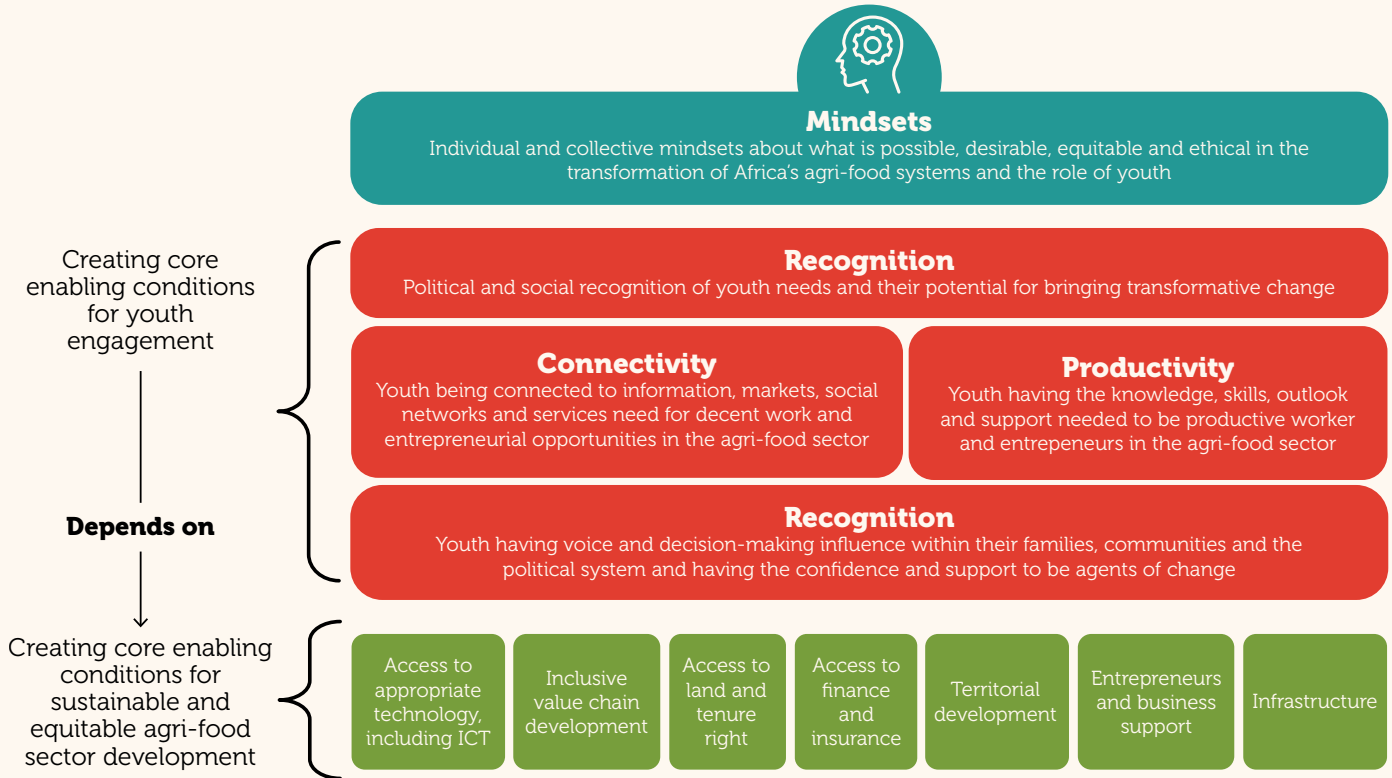
A key challenge is the lack of meaningful inclusion of youth in agribusiness decision-making process by the national government, the local government, and in Africa at large. Policies are being made for the youth, but they are not being included in the conversation. Another challenge is the mindset. We looked down on agriculture and don't see it as a way or a source of income. So, changing our mindsets along that line would go a long way in having more youth interested in the agribusiness space."

Ivy Nduta Kimani, Co-founder of Novelle Generation Limited, Kenya



Figure 8: Framing the issues for youth opportunities in Africa's agri-food systems.

Youth and Agri-Food Systems In Africa



Source: Adapted from IFAD 2019, HYPE 2021



Section Four

04

A young Black man in a white button-down shirt is holding a silver tray. On the tray are a large burger with lettuce and cheese, a glass of dark liquid, and a small bowl. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a warm, blurred indoor setting with string lights.

What is happening
in Africa's
Agri-Food
Systems:
Implications for
youth

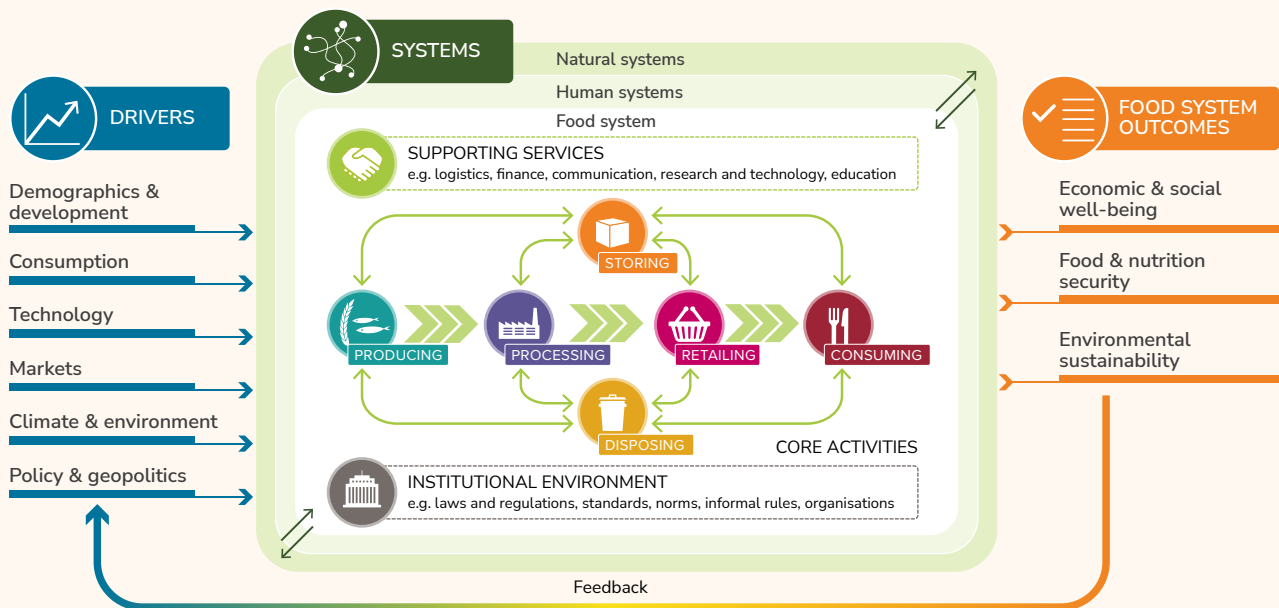


4.1

Understanding the Dynamics of Agri-Food Systems

An agri-food systems approach looks beyond the food value chain. It takes into account the outcomes of all job activities in agri-food systems, including poverty reduction, dignified and fulfilling work jobs, social welfare, and food security. To transform today’s agri-food systems into more healthy, equitable, resilient, and sustainable systems with dignified and fulfilling work for youth, it is necessary to understand them better, including their drivers of change. Agri-food systems are complex and dynamic and often evolve in unpredictable ways. Components co-evolve over time, becoming mutually supportive, keeping current production and consumption patterns established and deeply embedded. They are also self-organised, with actors maintaining, defending, or incrementally improving the existing systems according to their own interests. Actors also operate within the current overall institutional and business environment, and their evolution is subject to influence from powerful actors with vested interests. However, actors in agri-food systems can coordinate with each other to shape the systems – moving towards sustainable outcomes in the face of resistance to change. Agri-food systems, as understood in this report, are illustrated in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Conceptual model agri-food systems. Source: Woodhill (2019)



4.2

Workshop Participant’s Views of Current African Agri-Food Systems

Participants were asked to develop rich pictures to unpack further their current understanding of youth opportunities in Africa’s agri-food systems. It was a way for them to explore, acknowledge, and define a current situation through diagrams to create a preliminary mental model and facilitate discussion, coming to a shared understanding of the current situation.



Participants working on rich pictures

The rich pictures highlighted the importance of an integrated approach to agri-food systems, with the interconnections between water, soils, biodiversity, trade, markets, land, health, climate change, education, peace, inequality, security, finance, and digital inclusion within the systems emerging clearly. Such interconnectivity should also influence the governance approach to agri-food systems to be more integrated. Key insights emerging from the rich pictures created by participants are summarised in Figure 10 and related text below.

Figure 10: Examples of rich pictures drawn by workshop participants



My number one dream for youth in agri-food systems in Africa is access to information because we realized a lot of women and youth do not know where the opportunities for trade are. So I look forward to a scenario where the youth in Africa will be able to get sufficient information about the market and on where to access finance for them to go into trade. I also look forward for the youth of Africa to get mentorship from those who are already participating in agri-food systems.”

Salome Kavindu, Co-founder at Rustic Landscapes Studio, Founder of Murugi Farm, VP, and board member at OWIT Kenya (Organization of Women in International Trade). Co-founder



Figure 11: Overview of key insights emerging from rich pictures developed by workshop participant



Critical insights from rich pictures:

- **Population growth and its impacts on agri-food systems:** there will be significant growth in demand with new market opportunities but also increasing environmental impact.
- **Political stability and good governance:** level of corruption and illicit financial flows affect the sustainable and resilient development of agri-food systems on the continent.
- **Geopolitical cooperation:** the potential benefits of closer regional integration, a united, borderless Africa with one currency, free trade, and mobility for agri-food systems.
- **Youth access to resources:** the importance of access to resources, including inputs (seeds, fertilisers, and machinery), land, water, infrastructure, technology, finance, and information.
- **Critical role of education and skills/capacity development/knowledge.**
- **Importance of integration and consolidation of value chains while protecting local productions, markets, economies and products** from wholesalers/supermarkets and imports.
- **Inclusivity:** the need to put farmers, people, and communities (especially young people, women, and other minorities) at the centre of agri-food systems in Africa.
- **Food waste and consumption:** the role of consumers and marketing in influencing agri-food systems and the need to manage waste.
- **Influence:** recognising the power and influence of government, big corporations, finance institutions, elders, and chiefs. Highlighting the need to shift power to the youth, and women, for them to have more influence in decision making supporting youth agency.
- **Resilience:** the need to develop Africa’s agri-food systems which support food security in and which is resilient to shocks and crisis.
- **Need for action:** was emphasised in across most of the rich pictures.
- **Change in mindsets:** was indicated as being key for enabling agri-food system transformation.



“With knowledge comes the power of participation and engagement, and most importantly the power of contribution into agri-food systems. Knowledge is key to supporting youth engagement in agri-food systems in Africa. Youth should also interest themselves in understanding agri-food systems and the place they can position themselves, where they can add the most value, and perform best.”

Emolot Allan David, Chairperson of the Independent Continental Youth Advisory Council on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

4.3

Emerging Trends and Issues in Africa's Agri-Food Systems

In addition to the rich pictures, participants were provided with relevant data to assist them in their thinking about the foresight analysis. Data highlighted some of the key drivers of change in agri-food systems including population growth, urbanisation, technology, climate change, and environment, as well as institutions, policies and geopolitics. Based on the data analysis conducted for this foresight analysis by Mathematica,¹⁰ the following trends affecting youth opportunities in Africa's agri-food systems were also introduced; see the *Background Report* for further information on each of them:



Expanding populations: In Africa, the working-age population is projected to rise well into the mid-century, reaching 800 billion by 2050,¹¹ which will be the largest share in the world. Africa's youth population is the world's youngest and fastest growing population, with the youth cohort (15 -25) projected to double from 150 million in 2010 to more than 300 million by 2030.¹² A significant proportion of this future youth generation will be in rural areas.¹³



Urbanisation: Urbanisation in much of the developing world is on the rise. Sub-Saharan Africa's urban population share was 40 percent in 2018, up from 18 percent in 1970, and is projected to reach 47 percent by 2030 and 58 percent by 2050.¹⁴



Dietary changes: Changing consumer patterns and rising demand for food due to rising incomes and urbanisation are already leading to shifts in employment within agri-food systems. In Africa, reliance on prepared food is growing, with the poorest households in urban areas spending the most on meals away from home. Nonetheless, hunger, undernutrition, and micronutrient deficiencies remain prevalent, particularly in rural areas. At the same time, diets are changing towards higher consumption of highly processed, low-nutrient quality foods with rising levels of overweight and obesity.¹⁵



Technology: New technologies continue to be introduced in agriculture, processing, storage, logistics, and packaging, which will have a direct influence on the organisation and structure of agri-food systems. Digital technologies, particularly mobile and digital platforms, are already changing agri-food systems. Investments in telecommunication infrastructure and the affordability of mobile phones have extended the availability of mobile phone services in rural Africa, and mobile money has become an essential enabler of financial inclusion, particularly for women. As a result, the private sector is already playing a significant role in accelerating the development of promising technologies and solutions in the food and agriculture sector.¹⁶



Climate change and the environment: Climate change is a severe threat to further development of agri-food systems, in particular for small-scale farmers, low-income consumers, and actors in the informal food market systems. A combination of climate change and rapid population growth increases water scarcity, outbreaks of pests and diseases, and more significant variability of temperatures and rainfall. Furthermore, many countries in Africa are net importers of food, and thus climate change will impact both food availability and consumer food prices.



Agri-food systems have grown and transformed rapidly over the past three decades in Africa. This has been in response to urbanisation, rising incomes, and consequent changes in consumer demand and preference, as well as the introduction of investments and technology. In response to these changes, agri-food systems have been evolving, transitioning from localised, traditional, and short value chains with little value addition to longer, more complex supply chains capable of moving large volumes of food with increasingly complex and diverse value addition. Today's agri-food systems are characterised by:



Emerging duality within the producing sector: Although small-scale farming is the dominant mode of production, there is bifurcation within the sector, with the majority of farmers operating very small farms, less than one hectare, and a smaller proportion operating larger farms of up to two hectares.^{17,18}



Increasingly robust and dynamic wholesale and distribution sector: Expansion of the rural to urban food supply chains has boosted the development of regional centres and towns, which have grown into essential nodes in the agri-food supply chain, agglomerating produce from agriculture regions for packaging, sorting, processing, wholesale, and transport to urban areas.¹⁸



Dynamic and diffused processing sector: Food processing jobs are an essential source of employment for women, young people, and minorities. The agro-processing industry is projected to grow significantly over the medium term.



A supermarket revolution yet to emerge in the retail sector: Although supermarkets and other large-scale actors are poised to continue growing if incomes continue to rise, informal retail outlets remain dominant, with up to 70 percent of households regularly purchasing their food from them.¹⁹



Widespread and entrenched dietary transformation in consumption: Reliance on prepared food is growing and has become a vital aspect of urban life due to long commutes and limited time.²⁰



Informality as a defining feature of African agri-food systems: There is a growing number of jobs in the food value chain, such as grading, processing, storage, packaging, transporting, and wholesaling from for-consumption markets.²¹ However, a significant proportion of Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in agri-food systems are unregistered or informal, which is likely to remain an enduring feature.



On-farm work remains the most accessible occupation for young people: Despite concerns about lack of interest in agriculture, on-farm work remains the first entry point for young people, with 44 percent of youth below 25²² working primarily on farms.



Youth and entrepreneurship: Similar to adults, many youths are self-employed. Much of this activity is carried out at a small scale, requiring little skills, low investments, and minimal technology, with very few signs of specialisation within agri-food segments.



Young people live with economic precarity: Formal sector employment makes up a very small share of total employment in African countries, with only 18 percent²³ of young people in the formal sector. Hence, like older adults, young Africans work in precarious conditions defined by economic risk, instability due to the seasonality of work, and a lack of social protection.²⁴



Spatial differences in youth employment: Opportunities for young people in Sub-Saharan Africa are primarily shaped by economic remoteness and agricultural potential. In remote places, young people are more likely to leave school earlier and are less likely to engage in the non-farm sector.²⁵



Women and marginalised groups face extra barriers: Women face difficulties in accessing productive employment, and women’s farms and businesses are, on average, less productive than men’, reflecting disparities in access to land, capital, financing, and gender gaps in education attainment.²⁶ Studies suggest that young people with disabilities are also disadvantaged, in terms of schooling and employment.²⁷

4.4 Causal Loop Mapping to Explore Critical Relationships



Participants conducted causal loops mapping to explore critical relationships, improve their understanding of the dynamics within Africa’s agri-food systems structure, and make them more explicit. As outlined in Figure 11, the following themes were explored: Changing the role of young women in agriculture; Youth involvement in decision-making; Youth perspectives on the future in agriculture; Youth employment in retail and processing; Access to finance; Access to local food markets; Access to international agri-food sector; Youth employment conditions; Engagement of marginalised youth in agri-food systems (social protection); and Access to land and land rights.²⁸



Through this process, participants were able to:

- Discuss and investigate the more systemic causes of the current state of Africa's agri-food systems.
- Better understand the dynamics, power, and influence regarding the specific aspects.
- Better understand the key drivers maintaining current dynamics.
- Familiarise themselves with the complexities of agri-food systems.
- Develop initial insights on the potential key leverage points for change in agri-food systems in Africa.



Pictures of participants working on causal loop mapping in groups

Figure 11: Themes explored through causal loop mapping.





Section Five
05

Exploring
different
scenarios for
the future

As illustrated by COVID, extreme weather events, volatile food prices, and geopolitical instability, turbulence and uncertainty are increasingly the norm. It is impossible to predict the future. However, it is possible to use scenarios to explore different ways in which the future might unfold. Such scenario thinking helps to be more aware of future risks and opportunities and to bring imagination and creativity into ambitions, visions, and goals for the future. Scenario analysis and generating visions for the future go hand in hand. Scenarios enable deeper thinking on what might shape the future and what could enable or hinder the realisation of a vision for the future. Developing scenarios is also a powerful way of bringing different stakeholders together to explore different assumptions about the future and to create a shared understanding of what other stakeholders would see as more or less desirable futures.

5.1 Uncertainties Influencing the Future

A core part of scenario analysis is identifying the **critical uncertainties** that could lead to different futures. Table 1 lists twelve critical uncertainties identified during the foresight workshop, which could lead to very different futures for Africa's agri-food systems with profound implications for the dignified and fulfilling work opportunities and well-being of youths.

Table 1: List of twelve critical uncertainties identified during the foresight workshop

Critical Uncertainty	Uncertainty Extremes	
Diet patterns	Widespread consumption of low-nutrient quality and unsustainable diets driving poor health and environmental degradation.	Most people are eating a healthy and environmentally sustainably produced diet.
Resilience to climate change	Climate change causing regular and severe shocks to agri-food systems.	Impacts of climate change are being adequately managed to ensure food and nutrition security for all.
Human, animal, and plant disease and pest outbreaks	Disease and pest outbreaks become more common and highly disruptive.	Disease and pest outbreaks are either less frequent and extreme and / or effectively responded to.
Africa's economic development	Poor governance, climate change, and geopolitics severely constrain economic development.	Economic development flourishes, creating new employment opportunities and growing middle class.
Governance	Poor governance, corruption, elite capture, and poor transparency dominate.	Transparent and inclusive good governance becomes the norm.
Geopolitics	Multi-lateral governance and institutions struggle with nation states failing to cooperate effectively.	Renewed global order enables cooperative and effective responses to global issues.
Foreign and corporate influence	Control of Africa's resources is increasingly dominated by foreign and corporate influences.	Africa controls its own resources for the equitable benefit of its citizens.
Food self-sufficiency	Africa is increasingly dependent on food imports.	Africa is able to meet its own food requirements and benefit from food exports.
Inter Africa Trade	Trade within Africa is difficult due to poor infrastructure, cumbersome trade regulations, and corruption.	Trade within Africa is open, free, and efficient.
Global trade	Due to climate change and food shortages, countries are making trade more difficult.	There is an open, fair global trade regime that is trusted, and enables food crises to be dealt with globally.
Technological disruption	Current technological developments continue in relatively predictable ways.	Currently unknown or unimagined technologies fundamentally disrupt known ways of food production and distribution.
Enabling environment for youth	There are few or no specific policies to support a pro-youth engagement in agri-food systems.	A raft of enabling policies and funding programmes fundamentally shift the opportunities for youth engagement in agri-food systems.



5.2 Four Scenarios for the Future of Youth in Africa's Agri-Food Systems



The foresight workshop participants explored four possible scenarios using different combinations and extremes of the critical uncertainties. Rigorous foresight analysis are often developed with substantial stakeholder consultation over months. These scenarios were developed relatively quickly within the workshop context. Consequently, the scenarios presented here are indicative to illustrate how different the future could be, depending on the policy decisions of governments, the impacts of climate, and geopolitics, combined with the behaviours of consumers and businesses. The point of the scenarios is to identify what could be more, or less desirable futures, the factors that could lead to these and the pathway of policy and action required to minimise future risks and optimise opportunities for positive change. The scenario's presented in this report have been constructed from the essence of the issues discussed by participants during the foresight workshop and then subsequently elaborated to provide a distinct and coherent story line for each scenario."



Pictures of participants presenting the scenarios they worked one during the workshop



Our African governments need to assure they enact policies that are youth responsive, to enable youth not only to participate in the agricultural sector. There needs to be an inclusion of youth in the decision-making processes of policies that govern agri-food systems in African governments. When we break that divide, when we break that barrier, our youth will be able to meaningfully engage or meaningfully contribute in the development of agri-food systems.”

Emolot Allan David, Chairperson of the Independent Continental Youth Advisory Council on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Broadly, the scenarios were framed around:

- 01** Positive local responses by African governments to a difficult, wider, global environment of climate disruption and global geopolitics with positive youth engagement.
- 02** In a competitive world with poor governance, high-tech corporate and foreign interests are winning out over more equitable and sustainable African development.
- 03** High levels of cooperation and good governance globally and across Africa enable a progressive response to global issues, with Africa using its resources to take the lead in agri-food systems innovation.
- 04** Failing governance at all levels makes it impossible to effectively tackle emerging pressures on agri-food systems, creating a severe downward spiral.

Scenarios are often developed by selecting only two critical uncertainties; in this case, it was felt that many different uncertainties interrelate to shape the various scenarios.



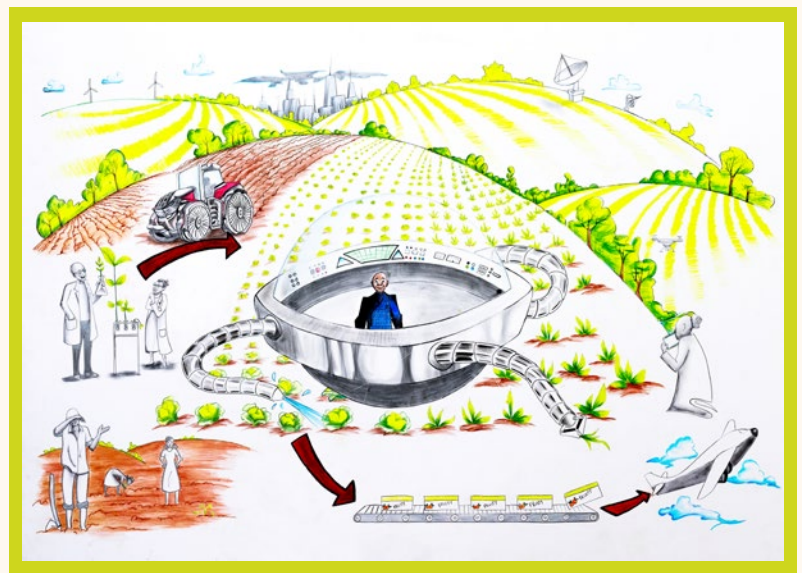
SCENARIO ONE: LOCALLY LINKED – YOUTH-LED INNOVATION FOR LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS

In an increasingly turbulent global context beset with geopolitical tensions and struggling international institutions, many African governments have turned towards innovative policies to support local food systems and their connection with urban areas. The difficult global context has constrained Africa's wider economic development, and agri-food systems remain a key employment sector. Some progress towards renewable energy has been made globally, primarily driven by the private sector, and climate change is being partly controlled, however, extreme weather events are having a significant impact on agricultural productivity. In this context, a new generation of younger politicians have radically rethought Africa's development trajectory. A core focus is ensuring sufficient, healthy, and reliable food for all. Driven by a highly activist youth contingent and recognising the risk of social instability, governments have developed a highly innovative set of programmes to engage youths in transforming agri-food systems.



SCENARIO TWO: BIG TECH DOMINATES – DIVIDED OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH IN AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS DOMINATED BY HIGH-TECH AND LARGER SCALE BUSINESSES

Large tech companies, foreign investors, and foreign governments seek to capture wealth from Africa's natural resources and large youth workforce. In an increasingly volatile global context, with climate extremes and geopolitical instability, there is a scramble for resources. In a world of growing inequality, those with wealth seek to protect themselves from an increasingly unstable environment with high tech solutions. A small proportion of Africa's youth who have education and skills can find good jobs in larger firms and high-tech companies. However, increasing automation in the food sector means there are limited numbers of such jobs. Governments across the planet have failed to create the governance systems needed in an increasingly turbulent world. Weak regulations drive short-term opportunistic markets that exacerbate inequalities and resource degradation. Low-tech agri-food systems for poorer consumers function in parallel to the high-tech system focused on wealthier consumers and exports.



SCENARIO THREE: AFRICA TURNS THE TABLES – YOUTHS CAPTURE OPPORTUNITIES AS AFRICA LEADS THE WAY IN CHANGING THE GLOBAL AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS GAME

Geopolitical turbulences and extreme heat events during the 2020s led to the establishment of a new global compact for the future. Youths have become increasingly vocal about these issues. The Ukraine crisis triggered a re-evaluation of Africa’s potential for food production. African governments, supported by international financial institutions and foundations, developed a 15-year plan for Africa, reshaping the investment strategy for agri-food systems. Building on early innovation by young African entrepreneurs, a global profile was designed for healthy value-added food from Africa. A worldwide social media campaign ignited global enthusiasm about young Africans making a



positive impact, which subsequently evolved into a highly effective marketing strategy for African products. A reformed CGIAR system enabled a massive investment in appropriate and accessible technology and an enabling environment for the MSME sector, allowing smaller operators to compete with larger scale enterprises. Economically, Africa turns the corner with its growing population, creating demand for industrial products and services – this wider economic growth increases the demand for higher-value food products creating significant opportunities in the sector. Dignified and fulfilling work opportunities outside agri-food systems mean less under-employment with increased wages in the agriculture sector. Labour-reducing technologies make farming more attractive for young entrepreneurs.

SCENARIO FOUR: COLLAPSE AND CRISIS – YOUTHS STRUGGLE IN COLLAPSED AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS

A lack of investment in climate resilience and an unregulated food sector driven by short-term profits has led to a severely degraded resource base, with agricultural production constantly affected by extreme weather events, and increased disease outbreaks. The food sector has marketed cheap, high-energy, low-nutrient food. This, coupled with growing inequality, has led to an escalating triple burden of undernutrition, obesity, and nutrient deficiency. Food prices are high and fluctuate dramatically due to the disruptive impact of climate-related extreme weather events on food production. Poorer groups are forced to consume cheap, low-quality food, and their life expectancy is decreasing. The lack of wider economic opportunities means that many youths are trying to make what living they can out of agri-food systems, which are struggling to meet the demands of an African population that has doubled. In an informal and unregulated environment, low wages and exploitation are common. Poor economic opportunities lead to migration, increased corruption, violence, and social instability. In response, country governments are resorting to draconian measures to maintain political stability.



youths are trying to make what living they can out of agri-food systems, which are struggling to meet the demands of an African population that has doubled. In an informal and unregulated environment, low wages and exploitation are common. Poor economic opportunities lead to migration, increased corruption, violence, and social instability. In response, country governments are resorting to draconian measures to maintain political stability.



5.3 Implications of the Scenario Analysis

More optimistic and pessimistic scenarios for the future of youth in Africa's agri-food systems emerged from the foresight exercise. Positive visions for the future are needed to drive policies and inspire action across agri-food systems. At the same time, it is essential to be keenly aware of the trends and uncertainties that could lead to more difficult and undesirable future scenarios.

The analysis of the trends and uncertainties makes it clear that significant opportunities exist for youth in what could be more equitable and sustainable agri-food systems of the future. However, this transformation will not come automatically or easily. There are negative headwinds which must be tackled, including for example, climate change, constrained economic development, control over resources, and poor governance. The scenarios make clear the potential negative consequences of these factors. At the same time, the more desirable scenarios give hope and direction, and help to clarify that change is possible.

Transforming Africa's food systems to optimise decent work opportunities for youth requires short-term action. However, as the foresight workshop illustrated for all participants, knowing what to do, setting clear directions, avoiding future risks and generating realistic visions for change requires a longer-term future oriented perspective. The foresight and scenario process can be a powerful way of engaging all stakeholders to help identify and shape the futures they desire. It also brings awareness of the potential risks and negative consequences of ignoring emerging trends and threats associated with future uncertainties. Such understanding of future opportunities and risks is one key element in creating motivation and commitment for change.

Section Six

06

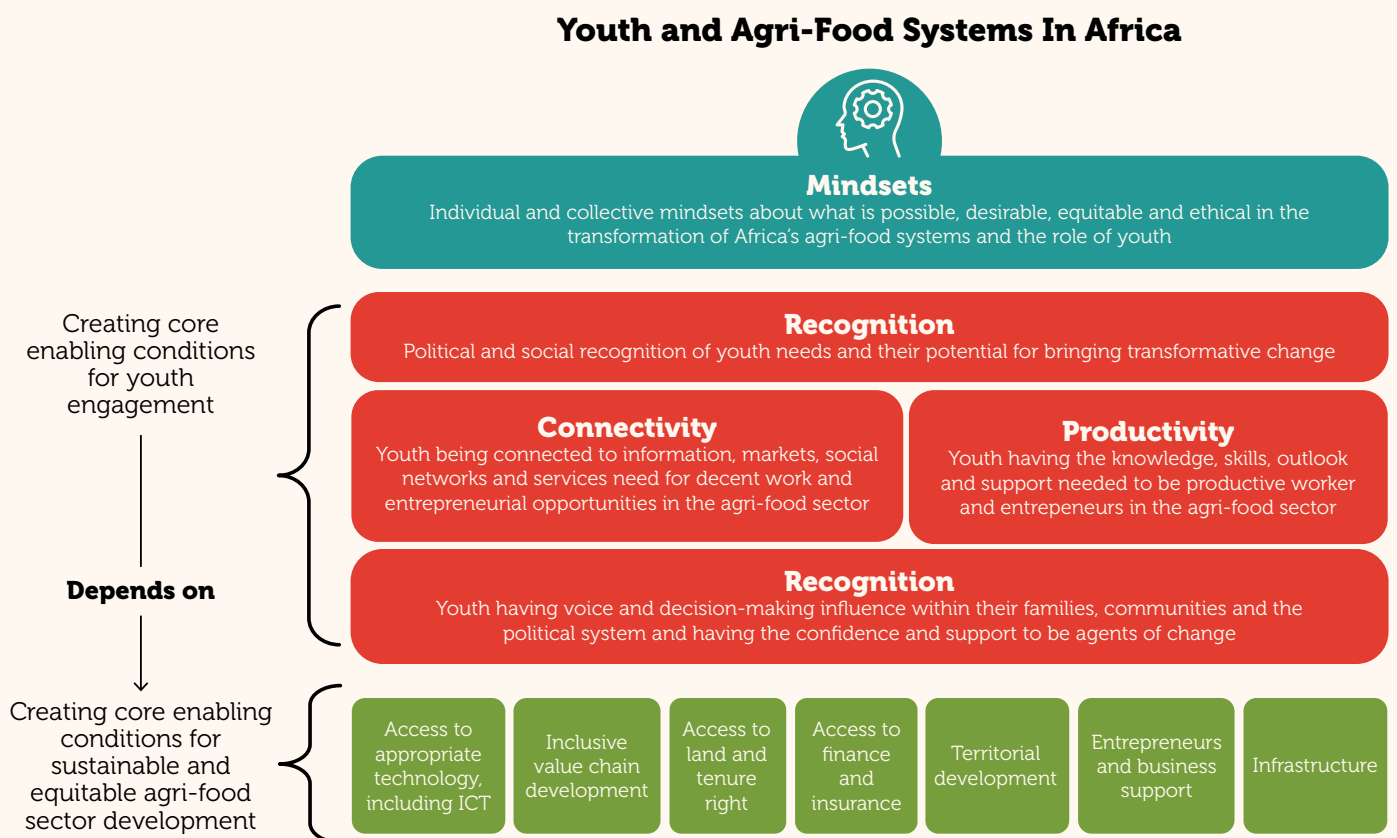
Pathways
Forward





The foresight workshop led to the following elements of a pathway for enhancing dignified and fulfilling work opportunities for youth in African agri-food systems. This section integrates outcomes from the foresight analysis during the workshop, including the rich pictures, causal loop mapping, scenarios, and discussions on implications for systems change. The generated ideas have been grouped to align with the framing outlined in section 3.3 – Figure 8, reproduced below.

Figure 12: Framing the issues for youth opportunities in Africa’s agri-food systems.



Source: Adapted from IFAD 2019, HLPE 2021

6.1

Enabling Conditions for Youth Engagement

During the foresight workshop, ambitions emerged from the participants on the changes they think will be critical to transform African agri-food systems to enable better youth engagement, and support the creation of dignified and fulfilling work opportunities. They also suggested some key actions to make such changes happen.

MINDSET CHANGE

Workshop participants stressed that transforming agri-food systems to support youth opportunities would require a change in individual and collective cultures, values, and mindsets about what is possible, desirable, equitable, and ethical. In this context, they identified the following ambitions and possible actions to change mindset:



Ambitions:

- **Recognition of the importance of agri-food systems for national and regional development:** It is crucial that all Africans recognise the significant role that agri-food systems play in the development of the continent, including the well-being of people, food security, and peace. Governments and decision-makers should further invest in agri-food systems, local economies, and young people to ensure sustainable and inclusive development in Africa. It is important to create an attractive environment for young people to contribute their skills and talents to the transformation of agri-food systems..
- **Intergenerational learning and shared understanding are essential for the success of agri-food systems:** Shifting mindsets requires integration of knowledge systems that had previously been devalued, and this needs to occur in order to find new ways of thinking about sustainability, land and water access, and use rights, as well as equity.
- **Change in mindsets on investing in agri-food systems:** Agri-food systems finance and investment actors should shift their mindset towards farmers, rural communities, youth, women, and marginalised people, often perceived as high risk. This will facilitate the creation of innovative financial services and products that incorporate the needs of agri-food systems actors.



Actions:

- **Agri-food systems champions:** Role models, such as celebrities and other well-respected people could be recruited to create awareness on the role of agri-food systems as a critical sector for youth entrepreneurs and young people in general.
- **Media campaigns and programming:** Some specific suggestions included developing strong communication, awareness, and cultural change campaigns, radio and TV programmes showcasing opportunities for young people and entrepreneurs, and raising awareness and visibility.
- **Workshops and other fora:** Targeted at a diverse audience, including parents, children, school teachers, politicians, and policy makers to discuss pertinent issues in agri-food systems.



RECOGNITION

To address the demand for political and social recognition of youth specific needs and their potential for bringing transformative change in Africa's agri-food systems, workshop participants identified the following key ambitions and possible actions.



Ambitions:

- **Political recognition:** Political leaders must recognise the realities, ambitions, and challenges that African youth face in agri-food systems and actively encourage their participation in international trade.
- **Recognition by agri-food systems' stakeholders:** Major stakeholders with power and influence must involve youth in their decision-making processes through inclusive co-creation.
- **Inclusive engagement:** Youth should be involved in policy development, decision-making, and government.



Actions:

- **Direct involvement in parliament:** A designated quota of youth representatives would ensure that young people are represented and their needs are recognised.
- **Safe spaces for dialogue:** Biannual meetings with political leaders, such as presidents and ministers would allow for regular engagement and discussion with the elected representatives.
- **Multistakeholder engagement:** This would facilitate discussions on the future of agriculture and food security in Africa. An ad-hoc youth commission for agriculture could also be created.
- **Mainstreaming of youth recognition in the government programmes and budgets:** Young people called for a 30 percent youth quota for all government-related programmes, special budget allocations for youth, women, and marginalized groups, and the inclusion of dedicated programmes for young people in all policies.



CONNECTIVITY

The workshop participants identified the following ambitions and proposed actions for change in terms of youth connectivity, information, markets, social networks, and services needed for dignified and fulfilling work and entrepreneurial opportunities in agri-food systems:



Ambitions

- **Social networks connecting young people in agri-food systems:** A robust African agri-food systems youth network to promote advocacy, influence, and engagement.
- **Youth alliances:** Youth alliances to provide a platform for young people to voice their challenges and support their inclusion in decision-making processes.
- **Access to services and information:** Enhancing access to information, social networks, and services in order to facilitate connection with other stakeholders and support entrepreneurial opportunities.
- **Business matchmaking:** Providing services that help to connect businesses along the value-chain and with finance and technical support.



Actions:

- **Knowledge and engagement platform for peer-to-peer interaction:** The primary objective of this platform would be to provide a secure space for dialogue, inspire and motivate each other, exchange ideas, facilitate collective support, encourage collaboration, explore market development opportunities, disseminate stories, exchange information and knowledge, and promote learning. This platform would enable regular communication through various channels such as emails, webinars, the African Youth Foresight Network's
- **LinkedIn page, quarterly/bi-monthly calls, and a WhatsApp group.** Thematic groups and regional chapters could be included to help contextualise recommendations and push the agenda in respective regions and countries. The goal is to shift from mere discussion to action.
- **Exchange visits:** Visits between countries would be encouraged to facilitate learning.
- **Youth Champions:** Identify and profile youth champions to help share knowledge and drive ideas and agendas forward.
- **Agri-tinder:** The platform could also create an agri-business matchmaking space.



I also look forward to a lot more collaborations when it comes to the African countries and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). This is one of the ways that collaboration is starting to take place. I look forward to having more engaging conversations with more youth from Africa to find solutions on how to solve the problems that we already have. Another thing I look forward to is the youth getting a voice when it comes to policy formulation.”

Salome Kavindu, Co-founder at Rustic Landscapes Studio, Founder of Murugi Farm, VP and board member at OWIT Kenya (Organization of Women in International Trade).



PRODUCTIVITY

To support youth in having the knowledge, skills, outlook, and support needed to be productive workers and entrepreneurs in agri-food systems, the workshop participants identified the following ambitions and proposed actions for change:



Ambitions:

- **Integrate formal and informal education:** Support youth to develop capacities for running agri-food sector enterprises through integrating formal and informal education and training.
- **Importance of both formal and informal approaches** in improving education, skills, capacity, and knowledge development.
- **Private sector engagement:** This could include the use of technology and local knowledge hubs linked to innovation and logistics hubs to facilitate skills transfer to young people. Public-private partnerships could facilitate this.



Actions:

- **Education and curriculum reform:** Reforms would be necessary to include civic education and integrating agri-food systems specific issues and indigenous knowledge from elementary schooling. This would encourage innovation and promote education suited to local culture and continental history.
- **Skill gaps and needs assessment:** A skill gaps and needs assessment for agri-food systems should be conducted for Africa for 20 years. This will inform skills and knowledge development plans, and a practical and action-oriented approach should be supported for continual development.
- **Practical and action-oriented learning approaches:** Increase access to apprenticeships and internships to enable young people to develop practical skills. Mentorship and coaching programmes could be used to help young people develop soft skills and enhance their personal development. School visits by young agripreneurs and farmers trips to agri-business fairs, expos, and programmes, could help more young people learn about opportunities in agri-food systems. Training programmes on specific topics such as trade could also be targeted at young people to ensure they know about opportunities and how to take advantage of them.



AGENCY

The need to increase youth agency, enabling them to have a voice and decision-making influence within their families, communities, and the political system, and having the confidence and support to be agents of change was vital to the workshop participants. They outlined the following ambitions and actions for change to improve youth agency:



Ambitions:

- **Organised and connected young people in agri-food systems:** Agency is enhanced through organisation and connection with other young people to have a stronger voice.
- **Shift in power dynamics:** Give youth a stronger voice and influence in shaping direction, policies, and agendas at the national, regional, and continental levels.
- **Inclusive engagement and participation:** Engage youth in policy through engagement in policy development and decision making, including direct involvement in parliament, and regular meetings with elected officials.
- **Intergenerational cooperation:** Ensuring intergenerational cooperation is crucial in moving away from the 'tyranny of the elders.'



Actions:

- **Development of a long-term youth vision for Africa's agri-food systems:** A co-designed and collective vision articulating young people in Africa's agri-food systems ambitions, starting with a goal for 2024.
- **Support to build networks and alliances:** Including engagement platform and knowledge hub to enhance peer-to-peer engagement.



6.2

Enabling Conditions for Sustainable and Equitable Agri-Food Systems Development

Enhancing dignified and fulfilling work opportunities for youth in agri-food systems requires equitable and sustainable development of the entire industry. Workshop participants had wide-ranging and in-depth discussions on what is needed to create agri-food systems fit for the future. Key emerging themes, related ambitions, and possible actions for change are summarised below.

Enabling conditions for sustainable and equitable agri-food systems development: Key messages from workshop participants

TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

Need to support Africa's self-sufficiency and unity - One Africa, united, borderless, one currency, free trade, self-sufficient, food security, and food sovereignty. Need to support connectivity between rural and urban areas.

ACCESS TO FINANCE AND INSURANCE

Financing and investment actors should offer diverse options with suitable terms and conditions suited to the need of farmers, especially youth. An integrated approach to investing is necessary, including "de-risking" agriculture and developing new collateral approaches. Financing and investment options should be created specifically for youth, women, marginalized, and disabled individuals. Low taxation and incentives should be provided for youth-led ventures. Bureaucracy should be reduced, and digitalisation embraced to improve access to finance. Innovative finance options should be pilot tested with dedicated insurance products created to build resilience.

ACCESS AND USE OF TECHNOLOGY (INCLUDING Information and Communication Technology (ICT))

Technology should be used to modernise agriculture, enhance resilience to climate change, and increase efficiency. Sharing market and technology information should be facilitated to bridge the gap between local producers and the market. Access to agri-tech and artificial intelligence for young people should be facilitated to expand market access and enhance youth participation. Data at research institutes should be centralised and open access. Farmers and other agri-food systems actors, including youth, should be engaged in data collection and verification to data to improve data accuracy and relevance. Data collection and management standards should be established for using artificial intelligence. Partnerships with tech and cell phone companies should be used to enhance credit provision, mobile payment solutions, and tech infrastructure. Existing village structures should be used to improve digital access and connect initiatives for experimentation.

INCLUSIVE MARKETS AND VALUE CHAINS DEVELOPMENT

Youth, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), and rural areas need support to participate and integrate into value chains for economic resilience and improved market access, especially to take advantage of f. Better planning and coordination among agri-food systems actors can achieve value chain integration. Improved value chain production, operational and logistical efficiency, and effectiveness (including reduction food waste). Technology can support markets and value-addition development. Local economies, markets, and products, including indigenous food-related markets and value chains, need protection. Innovation and product development should be supported through incentives and investment for youth and locally owned businesses. Production and packaging hubs should be established to increase the quality of products and learning opportunities. Consumer education through marketing and public health campaigns is needed to encourage healthy food choices and promote local value chains. A circular economy approach should be taken, and a regulatory and certification system should promote environmental responsibility and sustainability while creating/promoting access to existing/new markets.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND BUSINESS SUPPORT

Efforts to increase access to business development services and market information in Africa, particularly for youth, could include the establishment of an "Agri-tinder" to support matchmaking and market development for young entrepreneurs. The focus should be on supporting youth presence at market shows and providing dedicated start-up funding and incubators. Processing centres can be developed as learning centres and collectives and cooperatives should be created to increase economies of scale and facilitate exchange. Youth businesses could be clustered by value chains and types of innovation and supported by innovation hubs. Youth-specific programmes can be developed to support the development of viable business ideas for youth.

ACCESS TO LAND AND TENURE RIGHT

A long term and integrated approach to resource use and planning is necessary. Land legislation should be clear, time-bound, and effectively implemented, with adequate penalties. A clear governance framework with defined roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities should be established. Adequate budget, human resources, and technical skills should be allocated to ensure proper land administration. Accountability mechanisms that involve youth and communities should be established to increase transparency. All land should be included in a digital land registry, and campaigns should be conducted to ensure that all adults have valid identification cards, to ensure that land ownership and tenure is respected and facilitate transfer of land from elders to youth. Include all land in the digital land registry regardless of the type of land tenure. Land and water access and use rights should be protected, especially for women, young people, and marginalised groups in both urban and rural areas.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Investment in supporting infrastructure is crucial for developing markets and value chains, ensuring efficiency and effectiveness, and reducing wastage. Key areas that require attention include transportation, ICT, technology, energy, water, logistics (including packaging, storing, processing, and cold storage plants), and modern machinery.



6.3 Four Overarching Themes

Overall, four overarching significant themes emerged from the participants, organisers and facilitating team during this foresight workshop:

- **Incorporate youth perspectives in the decision-making process at all levels:** The foresight workshop showcased the remarkable insights and understanding of agri-food systems challenges and opportunities of youth representatives. Including young people on every level of the decision-making process, from local communities to policy-making at the African Union, is crucial for three reasons: Firstly, to incorporate their unique perspectives and knowledge; secondly, to establish alliances with young people to drive change; and thirdly, to strengthen the agency of young people in bringing about positive change.
- **Integrate long-term and adaptive thinking supported by foresight:** A realisation that the future will be increasingly uncertain and turbulent was clear to all participants. The workshop demonstrated the value of bringing stakeholders together to explore how the future might unfold and how to adapt and respond to emerging scenarios.
- **Focus on politics and social mobilisation to make change possible:** Much of **what** needs to change to create healthier agri-food systems for people and the planet and **what** needs to change to improve dignified and fulfilling work for youth in the sector is well understood. The challenge is **how** to make the change happen. The political economy of change, mindsets, alliances, and social mobilisation needed to create social understanding and political engagement to social mobilisation required to drive transformation will be key.
- **Dual track approach that focuses both on enabling conditions for youth and on enabling conditions for sustainable development of agri-food systems:** work opportunities for youth in agri-food systems require the entire sector to be transformed and for youth to play a vital role in this transformation. However, bringing change in agri-food systems with a specific focus on the needs of youth will not optimise the potential opportunities. This is particularly the case for young women and youth groups experiencing marginalisation and disadvantage.

The power of foresight: A youth community in the making to transform Africa's agri food systems





Section Seven

07

Reflection on the foresight process



As illustrated by the participant's and partners final reflections, the foresight analysis and workshop proved to be a compelling, insightful, and inspiring experience. Participants clearly stated that the foresight analysis could be used in their contexts to help drive agri-food systems transformation.

This report has already emphasised that **what** needs to change in agri-food systems to create better dignified and fulfilling work opportunities for youth is relatively well understood. Making the change, the **how** is the challenge that now needs to be faced. This requires mobilising actors from across agri-food systems to help drive change. With stakeholders across the systems, from consumers to farmers, it is necessary to create an understanding of the need for change, the will to change, and the capacity to change. Inspiration is needed, new alliances must be formed, mindsets must shift, trade-offs managed, and vested interests tackled. This is a social and political process that requires engaging stakeholders in an informed analysis and dialogue. The foresight workshop illustrated one approach that can be highly effective in generating such interaction.

As leaders of the future, the foresight analysis and related workshop helped to equip this group of young people with the thinking and practical tools for mobilising stakeholders to help transform agri-food systems. It also provided inspiration, a sense of solidarity with other youth leaders, expanded their networks and gave hope that youth-led change is possible.



I think foresight is a powerful tool for convening the youth towards collective intelligence that then leads to collective action towards desirable futures. And so, if you put this powerful tool in the midst of young people who are in agribusiness, it empowers them and strengthens their capability to think about possible ways of improving agri-food systems. Foresight becomes a huge benefit for them in their businesses, in policymaking.”

Passy Amayo Ogolla, Next Generation Foresight Practitioner's (NGFP) Advocacy Lead and Africa Network Weaver at the School of International Futures (SOIF), Programme Manager leading the Sustainable Energy Futures and Youth Foresight Programmes in Africa at the Society for International Development's Regional Office for Africa and Vice-Chair of the IRENA Global Council on SDG7.



It's been an amazing and wonderful opportunity. This meeting has brought quite a large number of young people, from diverse background, to come and discuss issues around the future of youth in terms of agri-food systems in Africa. This is really quite refreshing because they bring the diversity of their views to really try to develop a sort of scenario map that will help Africa attaining its development goals. This work actually also partly delivers the mandate of FARA with the work that we have been doing with the Africa Foresight Academy.”

Abdulrazak Ibrahim, Cluster Lead of Institutional Capacity & Future Scenarios (ICF) at Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA).





“

My best moment of the conference so far has been meeting so many diverse people. Because there are so many ideas that we are exchanging. Sharing our perspectives and reinforcing the fact that Africa is almost like one big country. After this workshop, I hope for two things. One, I would hope that we can create a lobbying forum. As participants of this conference with “a patron,” like the Mastercard Foundation, who will be able to open up doors for us to be able to lobby the government, to lobby stakeholders. We, the youth, we do not have the power to get into certain rooms, which some of the sponsors would be able to do. The second thing would be a mentorship system to allow young people to access finance, knowledge, and skills to grow and then move that on to the next and to the next and to the next person.”

George Mimano, Co-founder and Director of Crossfrontier International Limited.

“

My favourite moment from the workshop has actually been the interactive sessions. I've been able to meet people from other countries in Africa, which I have not really had the opportunity to do before, and to discuss, and discuss and discuss together.”

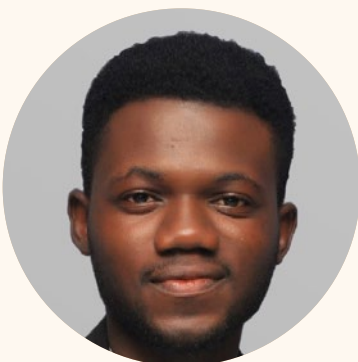
Omolara Ester Padonou, Founder, Juicy Pad Enterprise.



“

What I liked the most about the workshop was the whole approach, the framework used in the workshop. It was different in the fact that nothing was assumed from the start. No assumption was made concerning any topic at all. Every single thing we formulated during the workshop was built up from scratch and I believe the solutions we developed, every single thing was created by the participant, by the teams, every single thing. We created the solutions together.”

Samuel Adhlakun, Engagement Lead at i Lead Climate Action Initiative.







Endnotes

1. Optimizing Opportunities for Youth Employment in Africa's Agri-Food Systems, A Foresight for Systems Change Initiative, Discussion Paper, August 2023, referred in this report as Background Report.
2. <https://www.mathematica.org/>.
3. Agri-food systems are defined as the set of activities, processes people, and institutions involved in supplying a population with food and agricultural products. Agri-food systems encompass provision of farming inputs and services, production at farm level, post-farm marketing, processing, packaging, distribution, and retail, and the policy, regulatory, environmental, and broader economic environment in which these activities take place. Agri-food systems can be viewed as the set of all value chains – and the links between them – involved in supplying a population with its food and agricultural products.
4. Foresight workshop on the future of youth employment in Africa's agri-food systems, held in Mombasa, Kenya 13-16 June 2023.
5. Click here to learn more about the Foresight4Food Guiding Framework for Foresight4Food Systems Change.
6. Refer back to the Background Report for more information.
7. You can find the summary of the outcomes of such onboarding co-creation session in the Background Report.
8. IFAD. (2019). 2019 Rural Development Report- creating opportunities for rural youth. International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Rome.
9. HLPE. (2021) Promoting youth engagement and employment in agriculture and food systems. A report by the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security. Rome. Retrieved from: <https://www.fao.org/documents/card/en/c/nh021en/>.
10. Refer to the Background Report (2023).
11. UNDESA. (2021). World Social Report 2021, Reconsidering Rural Development. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). Retrieved from: <https://www.un-ilibrary.org/content/books/9789216040628>.
12. World Bank & IFAD. (2017). Rural youth employment. Paper commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development as an input document for the G20 – Development Working Group. Rome: World Bank and IFAD.
13. Even as migration and urbanisation are on the rise, the rural population is still expected to grow into the near future (UNDESA, 2021).
14. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2018). World Urbanization Prospects: The 2018 Revision, Online Edition. Retrieved from: <https://population.un.org/wup/publications/Files/WUP2018-Highlights.pdf>.
15. Popkin, B. M., Corvalan, C., & Grummer-Strawn, L. M. (2020). Dynamics of the double burden of malnutrition and the changing nutrition reality. *The Lancet*, 395(10217), 65–74. . [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(19\)32497-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(19)32497-3).
16. Malabo Montpellier Panel. (2019). Byte by byte: Policy innovation for transforming Africa's food system with digital technologies. Dakar, Senegal: International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI); Center for Development Research University of Bonn (ZEF); and Imperial College London. Retrieved from: <https://www.mamopanel.org/resources/reports-and-briefings/byte-byte-policy-innovation-transforming-africas-f/>.
17. Lowder, S., Sanchez, M., & Bertini, R. (2021). Which farms feed the world and has farmland become more concentrated? *World Development*, 142, 105455. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2021.105455>.
18. Woodhill, J., Kishore, A., Njuki, J., Jones, K., & Hasnain, S. (2022). Food systems and rural wellbeing: challenges and opportunities. *Food Security*, 14(5), 1099–1121. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s12571-021-01217-0>.
19. Reardon, T. (2015). The hidden middle: The quiet revolution in the midstream of agri-food value chains in developing countries. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 31(1), 45–63. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxrep/grv011>.
20. Frayne, B., Crush, J., & McLachlan, M. (2014). Urbanization, nutrition and development in Southern African cities. *Food Security*, 6, 101–112. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s12571-013-0325-1>.
21. Allison, N., Ray, K. & Rohel, J. (2021). Mobilizing the streets: the role of food vendors in urban life. *Food, Culture & Society* 24(1): 2–15. DOI: <https://bit.ly/40xBhWS>.
22. Dolislager, M., Reardon, T., Arslan, A., Fox, L., Liverpool-Tasie, S., Sauer, C., & Tschirley, T. (2020). Youth and Adult Agri-food System Employment in Developing Regions: Rural (Peri-urban to Hinterland) vs. Urban, *The Journal of Development Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/00220388.2020.1808198. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00220388.2020.1808198>.
23. Elder, S. & Koné, S. (2014) Labour market transitions of young women and men in sub-Saharan Africa. International Labour Office, Youth Employment Programme, Employment Policy Department– Geneva: ILO Retrieved from: https://www.ilo.org/employment/areas/youth-employment/work-for-youth/publications/regional-reports/WCMS_235754/lang--ja/index.htm.

24. Sumberg, J., Fox, L., Flynn, J., Mader, P. & Oosterom, M. (2021). Africa's "youth employment" crisis is actually a "missing jobs" crisis. *Development Policy Review*, 39(4), 621-643, DOI: 10.1111/dpr.12528. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/dpr.12528>.
25. IFAD. (2019). IFAD Rural Development Report 2019 - Transforming food systems for rural prosperity," IFAD Research Series 313753, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Retrieved from: <https://www.ifad.org/en/rural-development-report/>.
26. Beegle, K., & Christiaensen, L. (Eds.). (2019). Accelerating poverty reduction in Africa. World Bank Publications. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-1232-3>.
27. Cramm, J. M., T. Lorenzo, & A. P. Nieboer. (2014). Comparing education, employment, social support and well-being among youth with disabilities and their peers in South Africa. *Applied Research in Quality Life* 9(3): 517-527. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2013-22248-001>.
28. Woodhill, J. (2019). The Dynamics of Food Systems – A Conceptual Model. Foresight4Food. <https://foresight4food.net/the-dynamics-of-food-systems-a-conceptual-model/>.

List of participating organisations and businesses

Achiever Foods
African Fertilizer and Agribusiness Partnership (AFAP)
African Inception for Agribusiness Research
Afrobarometer
Agency for Cross Border Pastoralists Development (APaD)
AGRA
AGRIDIS
AI for agribusiness
AL for agribusiness
Centre for African Bio-Entrepreneurship (CABE Africa)
CEO, Kati Farms
Chipatso farms initiatives
Climate Smart Agriculture Youth Network Global
Coordinator, Busia District Farmers Association
Crossfrontier International
Dedan Kimathi University of Technology and Masstricht University
FARA
FAO
Farmer LifeLine Technologies
FarmIT
Foresight4Food
Ghana society for the physically disabled (GSPD) & disabled farmers Union
GIZ - Agri-Jobs 4 Youth Project
Greenrev Gr
Hotfin farm
i Lead Climate Action Initiative
Independent Continental Youth Advisory Council on AfCFTA (ICOYACA)
Institute for Poverty, Land, and Agrarian Studies (PLAAS), University of the Western Cape
Institute of Economic Affairs, Kenya
International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)- Youth Program
Juicypad Enterprises
Karpolax
Knowledge Transfer Africa Private Limited
Makerere University
The Mastercard Foundation
Mbeu Yedu
MS Training Centre for Development Cooperation
Next Generation Foresight Practice at the School of International Futures in partnership with the Society for International Development
Oakland Agro-allied Ventures
Olusola Abayomi Integrated Farms
Organization of Women in International Trade
Shibah Millers
SPOTA COMPANY
Strategies for Northern Development
TeamO Ranch
The Room
University of South Africa (UNISA)
VET INFO GROUP
YouLead Africa
YPARD Africa / FARA



Foresight4Food
International Collaborative Initiative



AGRA
Sustainably Growing
Africa's Food Systems



**mastercard
foundation**