Gendered Youth Realities, Aspirations, Opportunity Structures and Transitions to Adulthood in the Semi-Arid Tropics: Strategy for Targeting and Engagement

Esther Njuguna-Mungai, Katindi Sivi-Njonjo, Getachew Shambel Endris, Brenda Boonabaana, and Dismas Mwaseba

Field support team

Uganda

1. Peace Musiimenta
2. Jasper Bakeiha Ankunda and
3. Margaret Najjingo Mangheni
4. Frances Longora
5. Pius Okello
6. Charles Amaitum
7. Hellen Opie

Tanzania

1. Athman Kyaruzi
2. Ken Mapunda
3. Ms Vidah Mahava

Ethiopia

1. Jemal Yousuf Hassan
2. Chanyalew Seyoum
3. Muluken Gezahegun
4. Dereje Kifle

ICRISAT

1. Rachel Gitundu
2. Philip Miriti
3. Isaiah Okuku

Acknowledgments

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Acronyms

AfDB	African Development Bank
CBO	Community-based organisation
CRP-GLDC	CGIAR Research Program on Grain Legumes and Dryland Cereals
CSA	Climate Smart Agriculture
CSO	Civil society organisation
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
ESA	Eastern and Southern Africa
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FGD	Focus group discussion
FGM	Female genital mutilation
GDP	Gross domestic product
GLDC	Grain Legumes and Dryland Cereals
ICRISAT	International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ILO	International Labour Organisation
KII	Key Informant Interviews
NARS	National Agricultural Research System
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
POVNET	Development Assistance Committee & Network on Poverty Reduction
RoK	Republic of Kenya
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
ToC	Theory of change
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USA	United States of America
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Summary

This strategy is based on three country studies conducted in 2019 and 2020 in the drylands of Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania. Each study was done by a team of researchers from that country, using common focus group discussions, key informant interviews and life history interview guides. The interviews were recorded on audio, transcribed, translated to English, coded, and analysed. Thanks to this parallel method, these qualitative studies have standardised results.

The studies found that local communities define "youth" differently, and do not always use age as a strict criterion. Marriage, leaving school and certain traditional rites of passage, for example, may mark a transition to adulthood, even for adolescents. Local definitions of "youth" can exclude some young people.

Counter to prevailing stereotypes, many young people want to stay in the countryside and work in agriculture, especially in the study areas in Ethiopia, but less in Uganda and even lesser in Tanzania. However, even youths who aspire to a formal education and a good job in the city (e.g., doctor, lawyer, teacher) see agriculture as an option they can fall back on.

Girls and women are discriminated against in various ways. Female students who get married or pregnant will usually have to drop out of school, while boys who are responsible for pregnancies may be able to continue with their studies. Because land inheritance is transacted mainly through the boy child or through marriage, unmarried females tend not to inherit land. Even formal extension services usually do not consider women to be "farmers." Teenage girls who are married or who are mothers tend to see themselves as adults, as do their communities. This often keeps young mothers from taking advantage of youth programs. Barriers to youth involvement in agriculture, for males and females, include the lack of land, capital, extension services, and information about modern technologies.

This strategy paper calls for further research on youth, understanding local definitions of "youth" so that young people are not excluded from programs. Other strategies include technical, business and market training for young people, and providing them with youth-friendly finance as credit or grants (e.g., interest-free and without collateral). Youth should have access to profitable technologies that can be used on a small piece of land, and can include drought-resistant, fast maturing, grain and legume varieties. Youth-friendly agricultural development will also depend on improved infrastructure (roads, electricity, potable water and irrigation, and telephone networks). Youth need help establishing enterprises based not just on farming, but also on post-harvest transformation, transportation, and marketing. Gender equity and greater access to education must be included in the strategy.

Introduction

Youths can play a significant role in the development of dryland agriculture. However, they make up a disproportionate share of the worlds' poor, due to political, economic and social marginalisation, which leads to limited access to productive resources and inadequate participation in decision-making (ILO, 2019). There are different definitions of "youth" according to age, gender, religion, personality, education, ethnicity, cultural norms and social networks (Yami et al. 2019). However, the United Nations defines youths as those aged between 15 and 24 years. Globally there are about 1.2 billion young people aged between 15-24, which is 16% of the global population. It is projected to grow by 7% by 2030 to 1.3 billion and is expected to peak around 2065 with a population of 1.4 billion, or 14% of the global population (UN 2019).

Currently there are about 258 million young people aged between 15 to 24 years in Africa, of which 50.5% are male while 49.5% are female accounting for 22% of the global total for this age category (UN 2019). In Africa, about 10 to 12 million youths join the labour market every year, but only 3 million jobs are created annually, resulting in a disparity in demand and supply in the labour market (AfDB 2016). In addition, youths in sub-Saharan Africa are three times more likely to be unemployed than the adult population. Of the employed youth, 17% have formal employment while the rest are self-employed or perform unpaid family work, especially in the agricultural sector (AfDB 2016).

With rapid population growth, the demand for food is also increasing, worsening the global food crisis, especially in developing countries where agriculture is the major contributor to the gross domestic product (GDP). In view of this, food security has been anchored in Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2) which aims at attaining zero hunger by the year 2030 by ending malnutrition, doubling agricultural productivity, ensuring sustainable food systems, maintaining genetic diversity of crops and ensuring efficient functioning of food commodity markets (UN 2015). On the other hand, Agenda 2063 of the African Union recognises the important role agriculture plays in economic growth; it aims to modernise agriculture by scaling value addition, improving intra-Africa trade by 50% of formal agricultural systems and by implementing affirmative interventions to ensure that at least 30% of agricultural credit is accessible to women (AU 2013)the people of Africa and her Diaspora, united in diversity, young and old, men and women, girls and boys from all walks of life, deeply conscious of history, express our deep appreciation to all generations of Pan-Africanists. In particular, to the founders of the Organisation of African Unity for having bequeathed us an Africa with exemplary successes in the fight against slavery, colonialism and apartheid. Agenda 2063, rooted in Pan Africanism and African Renaissance, provides a robust framework for addressing past injustices and the realisation of the 21st Century as the African Century.","author":[{"dropping-particle":"","family":"AU","given":"","non-dropping-particle":"","parse-names":false,"suffix":""}],"id":"ITEM-1","issue":"September","issued":{"date-parts":[["2013"]]},"page":"1-24","title":"Agenda 2063: The Africa we want","type":"article-journal"},"uris":["http://www.mendeley.com/documents/?uuid=d9f0b624-e946-4053-b00e-b9fc27d1ad6f"]}],"mendeley":{"formattedCitation":"(AU, 2013.

With a high population of young people, it is imperative to involve them as key drivers of food systems as well as agro-processing, since investment in agricultural development is up to four times more impactful than investments in other sectors for reducing poverty (World Bank 2015). In Uganda, the youth policy defines youths as those aged between 18 to 30 and according to the last census, they comprised 23% of the entire population (UBOS 2014). Uganda is among the countries with the highest youth population, with over 75% of the population below 30 years (World Bank 2019). About 29% of the youths are involved in subsistence agriculture: 21.5% of male youths and 34.8% of female youths (UBOS 2019).

Ethiopia also has a high youth population, with about 70% of the population below 30 years (UNDP 2018). Data from the Central Statistical Agency suggests that youths are actively engaged in agricultural activities; 67.9% of male youths aged between 15 and 29 are in agriculture vs 37.3% of females of the same age group (CSA 2017). In Tanzania, the youths aged between 15 and 35 account for about 35% of the total population (ILO 2018), with 59% of the rural youths involved in agriculture.

Despite the high involvement of youths in agriculture, several bottlenecks to youth participation in agriculture are exacerbated in the drylands, including but not limited to access to land, extension services, modern and innovative agricultural technologies, agricultural financial and insurance services, value addition and markets. These challenges trigger migration of youths to urban areas in search of work, contributing to the gap between food production and consumption (Giuliani et al. 2017). With rapid urbanisation and a growing, young population, the youth migrants end up in informal urban settlements due to poverty resulting from limited job opportunities. They face higher urban food prices and challenges in accessing nutritious food, resulting in higher food insecurity which may lead to other social vices such as crime.

In response, governments and development partners have incorporated policies and programs targeting youth's empowerment in dryland agriculture and providing incentives aimed at attracting and retaining youths in the agricultural sector so as to fully exploit their potential. Despite these concerted efforts, the sector remains largely unattractive to most youths (RoK 2017). A major emerging concern in agriculture is to ensure sustainable engagement of youths in dryland agriculture in order to create attractive employment opportunities, food security and an adequate livelihood for rural dryland households. This strategy aims at exploring mechanisms of unlocking youth's potential in dryland agriculture by critically evaluating their aspirations, transitions and realities to offer insights on areas of prioritisation in overcoming youth-specific constraints. Develop actionable, demand-driven interventions to revolutionise youth perceptions of dryland agriculture and food systems by making it spur growth in rural economies and by making it more attractive, whether as a career choice or a livelihood option, rather than being the alternative of last resort.

For the full country reports, see, Tanzania (Mwaseba et al. 2020), Uganda (Boonabaana et al. 2000) and Ethiopia (Endris and Hassan 2020).

Rationale of youth in CRP-GLDC & objectives

The drylands of the semi-arid tropics have the potential to contribute to livelihoods based on agriculture and livestock farming systems. Because of the harsh conditions in the drylands, it is becoming more and more apparent that the youth (especially the young men) from these regions migrate to other regions in the same country or to other countries. The migration from the Sahel to Mediterranean countries has been especially concerning for international governments. There has been a concern also that the "average age of the household heads" in rural household surveys are increasing towards 60 years old. The idea that young people are not taking over farming then becomes a concern for the future of agriculture, food and nutritional security and welfare for the drylands. There is also a blanket narrative that the "youth are not interested in agriculture". In delving deeper into this question, the CRP-GLDC team with partners in Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia formulated research questions to guide an empirical study:

- Who are the youths (men and women) of the drylands? What are their realities?
- Who among them stays in agriculture?
- What are their transition pathways?
- What are the opportunity structures that support their transitions?
- Based on the answers above, how would the CRP strategize to formulate effective, impactful and sustainable youth interventions?

Purpose of the strategy

The overall goal of the Grain Legumes and Dryland Cereals CRP is to concurrently achieve the outcomes such as expanded, resilient and inclusive production, value addition, trading and consumption of nutritious grain legumes and dryland cereals in target countries, and improved capacity and inclusivity of agri-food system stakeholders to collaboratively develop innovations that

respond to the needs of women, men and *youth* in GLDC-based livelihoods and value chains. Youth are viewed as catalysts of change throughout all CRP GLDC activities, leading to impact acceleration and through engagement of future pioneers, paving the way toward more sustainable GLDC farming and agri-food systems. This strategy is intended to be a guiding document for partners who work with youth, so they can deliver on this aspiration.

Method

A similar method was applied to the three participating countries (Table 1). Teams came together for a design workshop that explored the potential of different qualitative tools and approaches to apply to a comparative study, implemented in representative communities from the drylands of the three countries and allowing for flexibility to allow rich content. Three tools were selected: focus group discussions among young people (male, female and mixed groups), life histories of persons aged between 17-70 who would share their personal stories of transition, the factors that facilitated their transition trajectories, the challenges they faced and insights into where they ended in life. From this, the study was especially interested in understanding those who stayed in dryland agriculture vis-a-vis those that left it. Both men and women respondents would be interviewed. The third tool were key informant interviews among stakeholders involved in youth program design and implementation in the regions where the team worked.

Table 1. Study sites.

Country	Regions and districts	Tools applied, respondents	
Uganda	North Region (Nwoya district), North East Region (Moroto, District and Karamoja Sub-region) and Eastern Region (Serere District)	6 female youth FGDs 6 male youth FGDs 25 male life histories 21 female life histories 6 male key informant interviews 6 female key informant interviews	72 interviews in total
Ethiopia	Oromia Region (Eastern Harerghe Zone – Babile District, 3 kebeles; Western Harerghe Mieso district, 4 kebeles) Amhara Region (Northern Wollo, Raya Kobi District, 1 kebele; North central Ethiopia, 2 kebeles)	33 key informant interviews 4 FGDs male youth 3 FGD female youth 3 FGD mixed youth group 2 FGDs mixed male and female adults 27 female life histories 20 male life histories	92 interviews in total
Tanzania	Songwe Region (Mbozi District, Momba District); Mtwara Region (Nanyumbu District, Masasi District)	10 FGDs 61 key informant interviews 63 life histories	124 interviews in total

This study was conducted in three East African countries: Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania. Africa's young population is mirrored in the East Africa region (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Burundi, and Rwanda) where about 45% of this region's population is below 15 years and a further 28% are youth between 15 and 24 years old (DFID 2018). In each of the countries some regions were purposively selected for the fieldwork; selected regions had dryland agriculture and produced at least some of ICRISAT's core crops (sorghum, millet, groundnut, pigeonpea, and chickpea).

Methods of data collection

Before starting fieldwork in the three countries, a one-week joint workshop was organised to train all of the country team members in qualitative research methods. This was followed by a week's refresher training in every country, where members of the team went through each of the data collection tools to familiarise themselves and to ensure effective and efficient use in the field in a way that was customised for the country.

The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide for each tool. Each of the tools was translated into the local language. The translated tools were evaluated by research teams and local experts for clarity and accuracy. Necessary corrections were made to the tools after pre-testing them with communities. Concepts that were ambiguous or constructs that were difficult to understand were simplified, with some questions accompanied by short vignettes – hypothetical scenarios that described real life alternatives where respondents were invited to imagine how they or a third party would respond. This was especially useful for sensitive questions.

Data was collected by skilled enumerators who were selected for their skills and knowledge in social sciences, prior experience in data collection and familiarity with the culture of the communities where the data would be collected. An iterative and reflexive process was employed throughout data collection (Bryman and Burgess 1994) and analysis. This approach supported the researchers in collecting useful data and looking for additional information for the next step of data collection (Ortlipp 2008). Data were analysed in the field and afterwards in an iterative and reflexive process.

Field teams held daily debriefing sessions after fieldwork to review and guide the next step in data collection. As data became available it was analysed in a rapid and preliminary way. This allowed identifying gaps in information (e.g., when inconsistent information indicated that there was a missing link) and possible explanations that could be verified during the next interview, and then amended. Once fieldwork was completed, the data were analysed using combinations of interpretive or relational content analysis (Hardy et al. 2004) and thematic analysis. The interpretive content analysis approach integrates content and discourse analysis, so data were analysed and categorised not only by looking at the text (content) but also its relationship to its context where meanings are produced, to the intention of the producer of the text, or the reaction of the intended audience (discourse analysis).

Five major steps were employed in data analysis: 1) transcription, 2) cleaning,3) reviewing, 4) data organisation, coding, categorizing into theme, finding patterns of relationship, and 5) interpreting. First, since all interviews were conducted in the local languages, data had to be transcribed and translated. Audio recording were transcribed in the local languages by experts and then translated to English. The whole process of data transcription and translation was full of back and forth between the different groups involved.

Second, data were then cleaned and made presentable. Casual spelling and grammatical errors were corrected; photographs and field note were linked to each event and interview transcript. Each interview transcript was separately identified by a unique file name. Third, the researcher reviewed the data, reading each interview transcript to understand and get to know the data. On the fourth stage, data were organised by research question and responses for each respondent. Qualitative data were then coded line by line and organised into themes. To gain an in-depth understanding of personal stories and interview responses for each respondent, the transcriptions was read and reread repeatedly. The coded interview transcripts were then categorised using predefined concepts and additional coding categories that emerged during the coding process. Based on the emerging themes, similar sections were merged. Finally, patterns of relationship were established between the different categories afterwards.

Ethical considerations

This study strictly adhered to the ethical guidelines of social science research. Upon reaching the villages and being granted permission to proceed, participants were taken through the consent form detailing that their participation was voluntary, and they were at liberty to leave at any point of their choosing should they make a decision not to continue. The anonymity and confidentiality clauses were well laid out and explained to the respondents. The study also tried to make sure that no harm came to the participants as a result of their participation in the study. Utmost integrity was maintained in the field to ensure that no harm came to the discipline from the study such that other researchers from our field can at later dates also have the opportunity to conduct their research in these regions.

Synthesis of findings from Uganda, Ethiopia and Tanzania

Characterisation of the youth in the drylands of East Africa

Who are the youth in the drylands? How are they identified?

This may sound like a simple question. In this study, we found that answering this question was neither easy nor straightforward for dryland communities. An understanding of how the youth are identified and described in the semi-arid tropics is a key foundation of understanding our target beneficiaries. As researchers and development practitioners, we intended to understand the definitions our beneficiary communities use for the youth, and whether these were different for girls and boys. We also wanted to compare how the national level statistics align (or don't) with the contextual definitions of youth.

After months of targeted conversations about this topic in Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania, we conclude that defining who the youth are in the dryland communities is not based on any one factor. Although age has internationally been agreed on as a common, standardised metric that describes the youth (the UN uses 15-24 years of age). Age is an over-simplification of many intersecting factors that communities consider. Communities applied age differently for young boys and for young girls. In Ethiopia for example, respondents both from Amhara and Oromia regions, considered male youth as those aged 18-30 years, but in the same community, female youth were the girls aged between 12 and 22 years. In these communities, these were also the years that were identified as "marriage ages" for male and female respectively. In Tanzania, respondents mentioned that a girl is considered to be youth up to 22 years. Past 22 years, she is "too old," even when she didn't have a child. However, a male child of up to 40-45 years can self-identify as youth, as long as "he feels strong," is not married and self-identifies as youth.

Youth or young mothers?

When age intersected with childbearing, and a young girl bore a child, even though they would be in the ages that officially define the youth, girls would acquire new cultural identities of wife, mother or a member of a cultural age set that the community identified for women of her age and circumstances. Their names would also change from given or nicknames names to descriptive names like 'Mother of child x[1]' Communities would not identify such a girl as "youth," even though she would be a youth in terms of her age for all other purposes and intents, nor would she self-identify as youth. We came across a lady in Mbeya Region of Tanzania who gave birth to a child at the age of 14. By the time she was 28, her 14-year-old girl had a child. She was a grandmother at 29-years-old!

[1.] *For most African cultures, women are usually not called by their own given names after they give birth. They are identified with the name of their first child. For example, if the child is called Juma, the girls acquire the name 'Mama Juma' in Swahili. In some communities, the name acquired is that of the husband, so if the husband is called Juma, she becomes known as the equivalent of 'Mrs Juma' in her language.*

When a young man marries, his names may not change drastically, but in some communities, he starts getting the respect accorded to the co mmunity elders and his name changes to "father of child x" or "leader x" or "elder x," depending on how the community perceives he has demonstrated his maturity and success, even though his age may still be considered in the youth bracket. The term "youth" was sometimes applied only to the young men. This was common in areas where youth group membership is comprised of mainly young men and the groups objectives are for advancing political agendas. Some communities identified the youth based on the level of maturity they demonstrated and their drive or courage in undertaking certain activities. For instance, in Ethiopia, in Shewa Robi and Raya Qobbo, one is considered a youth when he or she is ready for migration to Arab countries (which usually starts from age 14 or 15). In Uganda, when a young man builds his own hut, he is considered a youth. In some communities, when a young man takes charge, plants his own crop, tends to it to maturity and harvests, he is considered a youth.

Age is not always a factor!

In some communities, *age* was even controversial as a descriptor for the youth! In Northern Uganda, age was not used at all in describing the youth. The concept of estimating age with numbers was not common. Because of the war legacy in the region, there were many community members that didn't know their own age; they were not registered at birth and would otherwise guess their ages in any subsequent official registrations. In such cases, bodily changes were used as key markers of change to the stage youth: getting a beard and a deep voice (for boys) and developing breasts and starting menstruation (for girls). In this case, the youth stage was closely aligned with adolescence. Many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the area used diverse definitions for youth and women beneficiaries. To participate in the various programs, community members adopted the prescribed identities presented for youth, even when they themselves were not youth in the cultural sense.

Other cultural descriptors were related to changes in behaviour; youth developed an interest in listening to music, singing traditional love songs for the opposite sex, growing and combing their hair (for males), twisting hair (for males), brushing teeth in public using a stick (particularly in Ethiopia's Amhara Region, both genders) among others. However, traditional cultural symbols of transition (mainly dress and hair styles) that were once popular and used to identify the different age groups in rural Ethiopia have gradually been abandoned.

Rites of passage ending and beginning of eras

Cultural rites of passage are critical markers of age set differentiation in the drylands. Such events mark the end of one era (childhood) and the start of another (youth). Going through a rite of passage together is culturally designed to cement social bonds, identity, allegiance and pride for the participants. In some instances, the rites of passage events are valued more than formal education. In Southern Tanzania, as the process has evolved and become commercialised, parents were found to save big sums of money to prepare their children for the traditional rites of passage, but they claimed not to have enough money to pay school fees. Different forms of rites of passage were common in the three participating countries (See Box 1).

The age at which the rites of passage happen may vary, but the rights, identities and opportunities it opens tend to be similar for all participants. After a rite of passage, the participants were assumed to be ready for adult responsibilities in the community. They could marry, be entrusted with community leadership roles; they would be given assets like land (often discriminating against female land ownership). There is a link between participating in a rite of passage and eventually deciding to get married and transition to parenthood, sometimes even with little in the way of income and assets.

Box 1: Examples of rites of passage in East Africa

Unyago (girls' rite of passage in Southern Tanzania)[i]

Unyago is a traditional training for girls approaching puberty. It is an important step for a girl child from childhood to adulthood. The state of *ukubwa* (maturity) is comparable to adolescence except that it starts before adolescence. It is a socially guided transition to adolescence and early adulthood. *Unyago* starts with an opening ceremony (when the girls go away from home to a camp) and ends with a big party where the girl is re-introduced back to the community. Typically, there are four weeks between the ceremonies. The girls spend the weeks in a room, in isolation from the community and from men's eyes. Only senior female family members, *kungwis* (trainers) and *washikamkonos* (older girls who have passed through *unyago* previously) can visit the girl. During this isolation time, she is taught through songs and dances by *washikamkonos*. The lessons range from being about respect towards the elderly, life-skills, personal hygiene, family life, sexuality and sexual practices. In the context of sexuality and sexual practices, she learns how to please her future husband sexually and how to take care of his needs. The *kungwis* have a great impact on what the girls will learn since they are the primary decision-makers and experts in the *unyago* ritual knowledge. There are two time periods for *unyago,* mid-December to mid-January (the common one) and from mid-June to mid-July. The time when the girl is determined to be ready to be sent to *unyago* is not determined by age*.* The right time is when the first visible markers of puberty occur, and when her parents determine that she seems to be maturing. The typical age for *unyago* is between 8 and 12 years. Whatever is taught during *unyago* is to be kept a secret. The *kungwi* tells the girl never to let anyone know what was discussed at *unyago*.

Jando (boys' rite of passage in Southern Tanzania)[i]

Jando is a traditional initiation for boys in Mtwara region. Unlike <u>*unyago, jando* </u>rituals are not composed of many ceremonies. It is centred on one main ceremony, the male circumcision. It does include some of the teachings of cultural norms and expectations of adult life as well as punishment of the initiates for past wrong deeds. This aims at transforming them into more responsible and obedient individuals in their adulthood. *Jando* is primarily conducted during June-July and occasionally during December-January.

Hawiso (rite of passage in Ethiopia)[II].

In Oromia Region (particularly in Mieso district of western Harerghe), for a young person to be categorised as youth, he should participate in a cultural event called *hawiso*, which marks the youngsters' transition to the next stage (adolescence, youth). *Hawiso* refers to both the event and the ceremony. A person will be fully transformed after a night's dance. During this night of gathering, youngsters, both male and female, meet in a small valley for dancing. On this night, a person meets many friends of similar age and they dance a traditional dance called *shegoye*. Hawiso (the event) often serves as a platform for one to choose his or her future spouse.

[i] = Dr Mwaseba Dismas and team, 2020 [ii] = Dr Getachew Shambel and team, 2020.

Tensions in youth definitions

Adult and youth understanding of the youth differed. Adults depicted youth in a derogatory and negative outlook, full of misconceptions and stereotypes, while the youth had a more positive and hopeful outlook. Youth programs designed by elders with bad attitudes may not engage with youth in an atmosphere of trust.
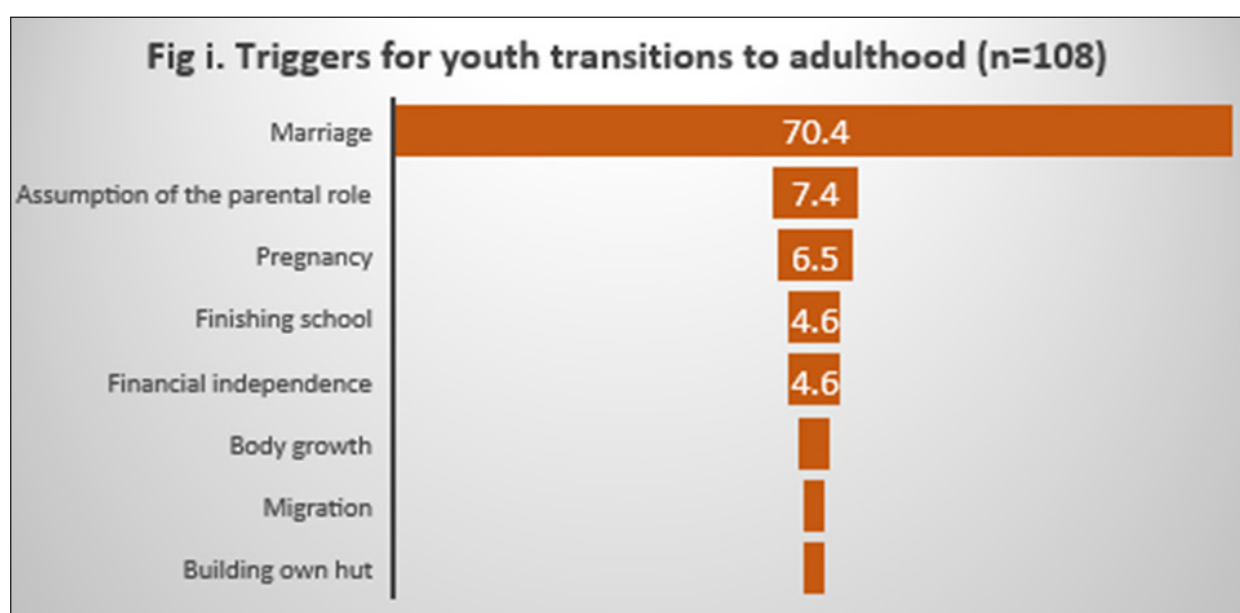
Youth transitions

This study interviewed 108 respondents (male and female, ranging from ages 14 to 70 years old) in the drylands of Ethiopia, Tanzania and Uganda using a life history qualitative tool. The purpose of the life histories was to gain insights into their personal life experiences, learn about when they transitioned, the process they went through for their transitions and to tease out some of the factors that had influenced their decision-making. These conversations, and the literature, suggest that an individual's life is made up of many different kinds of transitions. One is always transitioning. For example, transitioning from being a pre-schooler to a schoolchild or from lower primary to upper primary, from primary to secondary, from a childhood to youth, from youth to adulthood, from student to employee, from a dependence to independence. We were particularly interested in the transitions from childhood to youth and from youth to adulthood. For some, these two transitions merged into one big transition from childhood to adulthood. The question we asked was "How did you transition from being a child to a youth to an adult, and how did you know you were an adult?" See Table 2.

Table 2. Age at which respondents transitioned.

Age of transition (years)	Uganda	Tanzania	Ethiopia
Mean	21.3	20.6	15.7
Min	15	14	11
Max	47	39	23

Source: Life histories of 108 respondents in Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania, 2019/2020

In Uganda and Tanzania respondents transitioned from 14 years old to forty-seven years old. Ethiopian respondents transitioned at much lower ages, 11 years minimum and 23 years maximum, with the average of 15. Across the countries, girls transitioned much earlier on average, at 17 years, compared to 20 for boys. For most respondents (70.4%) the main marker of their transition was marriage (Figure 1). There was a strong correlation between the rights of passage, access to opportunities for decision-making and getting married.

Figure 1. Triggers for youth transition to adulthood.

The other main triggers for transitions from youth to adulthood was the assumption of parental roles (about 7.4% of the respondents—Figure 1). This was occasioned by parents dying in conflicts, disease or other calamities. Pregnancy was quoted as a reason by 6.5% of the respondents (with young men reporting taking responsibility for impregnating a girl). Finishing school and gaining financial independence was quoted as a reason for transition by 4.6% of respondents. Body growth (2.8%) migration (1.9%) and building one's own hut (1.9%) were also quoted as triggers for transitions.

Marriage seemed to be the end game for young people and their communities when they went through the rites of passage (Figure 2). Social norms encouraged a decision towards marriage. The rites of passage were designed as a precursor to marriage, the avenue by which the young people were given an opportunity to choose their partners (example from the Ethiopian hawiso), to give resources to the young men through inheritance, so that they could consider marriage as an opportunity. On the other hand, the process seemed engineered for the young women to be submissive and dependent on marriage to access critical resources, especially land. In patriarchal communities, which were the majority, girls didn't inherit land from their parents. Social norms led to shame if one got pregnant out of wedlock. Over 81% of the life history respondents reported that it was their own decision and strong cultural norms that were the main reasons they got married. A few respondents, 9%, were not sure how they wound up in marriage. Over 71% of the respondents obtained land through family inheritance. 16% of the respondents didn't have land to farm at the time of transitioning. Only 5% obtained land through purchase while 2% received land from government allocations. Renting was reported by 1% of the respondents (Figure 3).
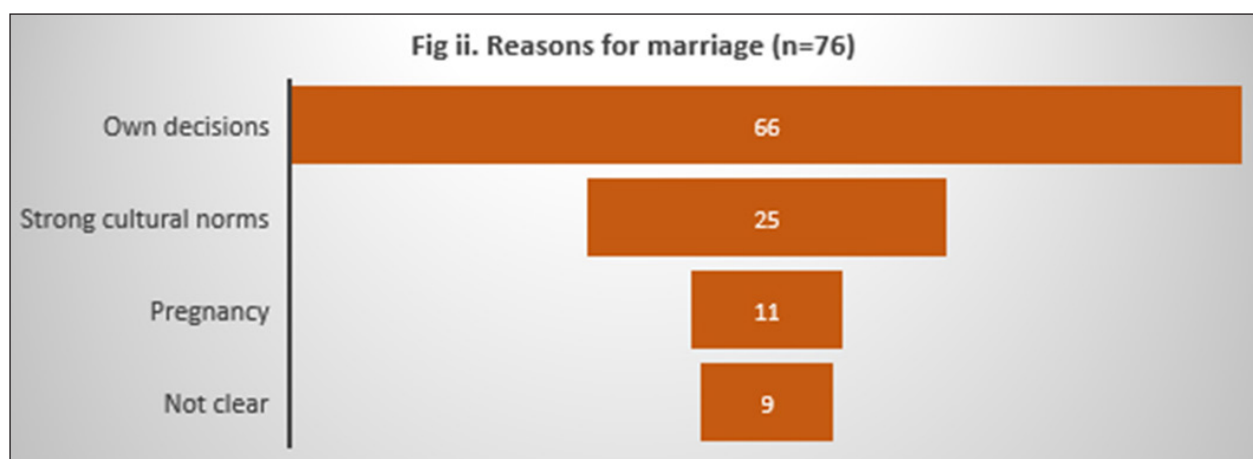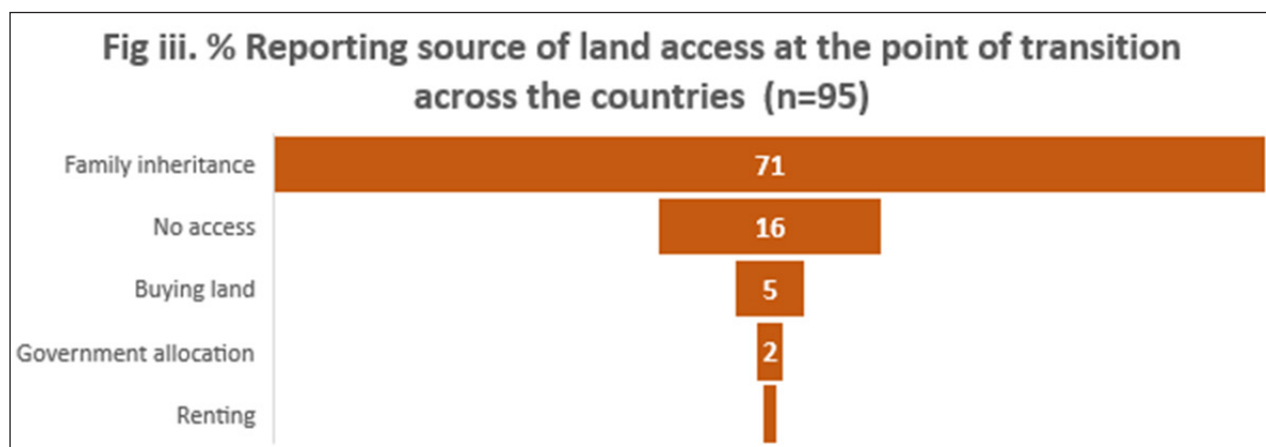

Figure 2. Reasons for marriage.

Figure 3. Source of land at the point of transition.

Transitioning from youth to adulthood means being responsible for provisioning a family, so having an income is critical. We asked the 108 life history respondents to share insights of how they obtained financial resources to support their transitions from youth to adulthood and 106 responded of them responded. Crop production, livestock production and casual/age labour in the agricultural systems were mentioned by 63% of the respondents (Figure 4).

Fifteen percent of the respondents reported that parental support was their source of financial resources. If the parental support was assumed to originate from crop and livestock production, over 78% of the financial resources used for transition were sourced from agriculture. Formal employment as a source of finance was reported by only 6% of the respondents and petty trade (small businesses) was mentioned by only 6%.

The general focus group discussions spoke of social support rendered to the youth during transitions by different types of social, governmental and non-governmental organisations. To verify these claims, we asked the life history respondents if any of them had benefitted from government or NGO social support programs. OF 108 respondents, 77.8% said that they got no support from formal organisations. 14.8% had received support from their extended families, especially uncles, aunts and grandparents. Local support groups, individual sponsors, non-governmental and governmental organisations were mentioned by less than 3% of the respondents (Figure 5).
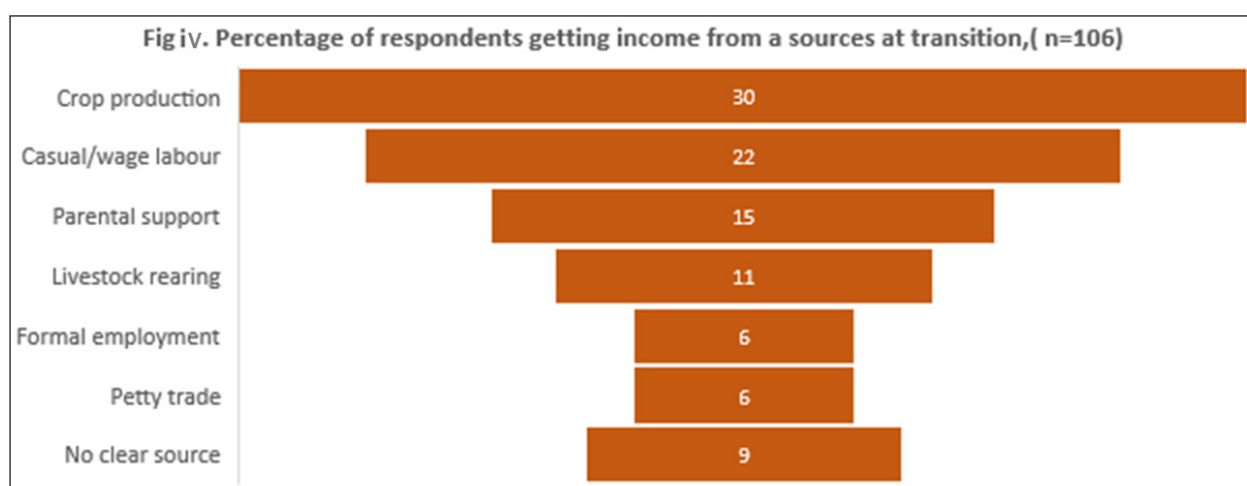

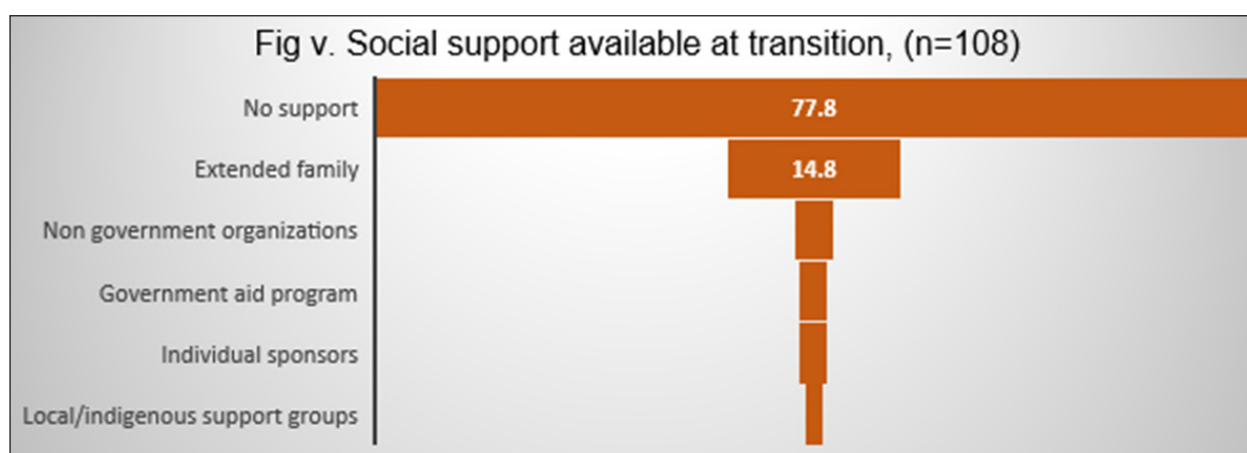Figure 4. Source of money to support transition to adulthood.

Figure 5. Social support available at transition.

Education as an alternative or parallel transition pathway?

Investment in an education has been shown in most household surveys to be one of the first three priorities for rural households' income expenditures in Africa. Education is viewed as an ultimate pathway to a successful job or off-farm business, escaping poverty and challenges in the rural drylands. A transition pathway that is based on formal education (primary school to secondary to college) would be considered ideal and what most development agents, governments and parents would push for. Having a child in school has the ultimate impact of disrupting the cultural process of transitioning through the rites of passage and early marriage pathways. When one is in school, the identity of student delays assuming the title of youth. Being a student somehow shields girls and boys from the pressures to conform to social expectations. It's the desire of most young people to excel in school, to be able to proceed to higher levels of education and to eventually pursue careers. However, few young people attained that aspiration.

During the life histories, we asked respondents the highest education they had attained by the time they transitioned; 20% had no schooling, 57% had some primary education (including dropping out of primary school), and 20% had managed to get to secondary school (Figure 6).
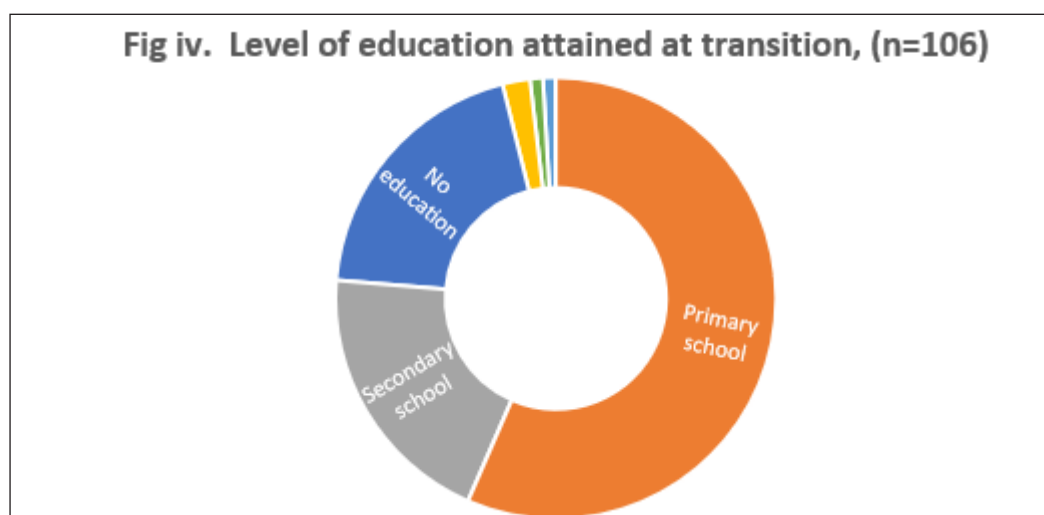
Figure 6. Level of education attained at transition.

Only 2% of the respondents had post-secondary school qualification. 2% had alternative education pathways through religious education or adult education.

The education pathway may be an alternative to the rites of passage pathway. When a young person pursued an education, they often found themselves delayed or unable to participate in some of the traditional rites of passage. The age for marriage was also delayed, counter to the norm of getting married immediately after the rite of passage. However, few youths move along this ideal, education-based transition pathway, less than 5% of the respondents in our sample.

Where did the youth end up?

About 80% of the key informant respondents eventually stayed in dryland agriculture, but in combination with other enterprises like business, and employment (Figure 7). Some young people migrated to the cities but returned to the drylands to farm. That experience of migrating to the city and coming back elevated the standards at which they operated their farms and their engagement with the value chains, such that some of them were considered role models in dryland farming (Box 2).[2]

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2. *+++ means that the respondent was not only doing the identified occupation but is combined with other enterprises, but the one reported is the 'main' occupation.*

Fig viii: Current occupation of the life histories respondents, n=108)

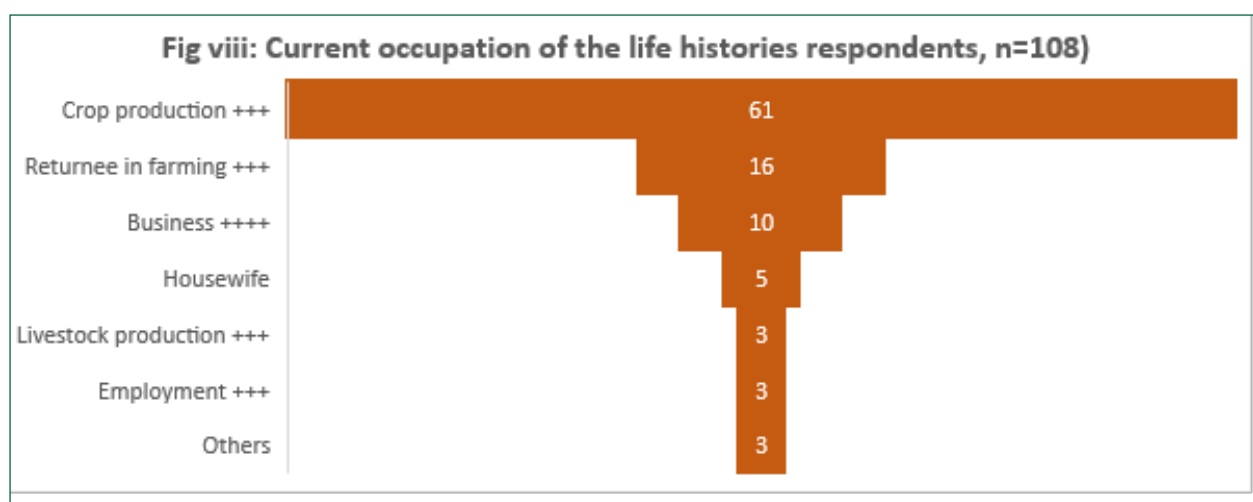| Occupation	Count
Crop production +++	61
Returnee in farming +++	16
Business ++++	10
Housewife	5
Livestock production +++	3
Employment +++	3
Others	3

Figure 7. Current occupation of life history respondents.

Agriculture is an integral part of the rural livelihoods in the drylands. Since young people marry young, when we (as research and development agents) visit the rural communities, we don't identify them as youth. They present themselves to development and research workers as farmers, so we register them as such because they have already transitioned into farming as married people. In our study, we found that the youth who are leaving agriculture are the educated ones, who are less than 5% of the total. Maybe because they are more vocal, and stay documented as youth for much longer, youth policies are designed with this 5% in mind, while most young people (male and female) who stay in agriculture are identified as farmers, rather than as youth.

However, there is a critical group of especially young mothers, who may not be supported by the male-biased land inheritance patterns, who are continuously marginalised and left out of farming with very few other opportunities for livelihoods. Any situation that makes it difficult for young men or women to access land (e.g., political conflicts, climate change, or large population displacements) impacts young people negatively and makes it difficult for them to engage in agriculture, especially in the drylands.

For rural youth born and bred in drylands, agriculture is a significant source of livelihood, which they often combine with other income-generating activities to increase their resilience (Hajdu et al. 2013). Those with much higher education take jobs, but they still remain tied to their rural homes and continue farming (by hiring workers or using extended family labour). As illustrated in Box 3, youth in our study areas dream of a place where they can have a more comfortable life with less poverty for themselves and their families, where they farm better – with more ease and higher yields, and also more conveniences like good roads and better markets as well as prices for their produce. For well-educated urban youth, small-scale farming is not an attractive career option unless it makes viable business sense. Productive assets like improved access to micro-credit and markets, as well as addressing agrarian institutional challenges and bottleneck dynamics like land and climate shocks would change their engagement dynamics (Sumberg et al. 2015).

Box 2: Left or right, farming in the drylands is the end game

A 27-year-old male youth from Masasi in Mtwara Region, Tanzania, completed secondary school in 2010. He was unsuccessful in getting into the university, so he earned a diploma in agriculture at the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources in Dar es-Salaam (2013 to 2015) after which he went back to the village. In 2018 he relocated to a town in Masasi where he was a hired as a salesperson in an agrovet shop, earning 150,000 Tanzania shillings ($64). At the time of the interview, he had returned into the village where he was engaged in agriculture and the petty fish trade. He was cited as a model youth farmer in a focus group discussion with fellow youths (both male and female). They praised him for his success and progress in agriculture and saw him as a person to emulate. This came as a response to the question "What economic activities supported youth livelihoods in their community?" He gave hope and made fellow youths aspire to agriculture, for he had managed to purchase land in the village, build a house and had established a sustainable business in agriculture. He demonstrated that agriculture is an economic venture that could sustain the youth. We wanted to unravel what economic activities he was engaged in and how he had surpassed all his peers who had been in the village engaging in similar activities.

Like many youths he indicated that when growing up he wished to migrate to town where life seemed better than in the village. His chance came in the sales job, but he soon realised that urban life was not as grand as it was romanticised to be.

First off, he was now independent and had responsibilities such as house rent, clothing and feeding himself which until this point were all done for him by his parents. He quickly had to learn the art of living within a budget, time management, saving, setting goals and the need for investment. Through the people he was staying and interacting with in the city, he began to see the need to practice agriculture to supplement his income at his job. While he was earning 150,000, he managed to save up to 100,000 each month, living strictly on a 50,000 budget. On getting back to the village when his job ended, he carried with him these lessons he had learnt. He treated his sales of agricultural produce as a salary, saved some if it (through chama, the locally organised revolving savings and credit schemes managed by farmers) and invested the returns in other things such as his fish trade. Through this he has been able to buy pieces of land in the city where he worked before. He managed his time properly, ensuring that he did not waste his time hanging out with other youths. He said that a positive attitude towards agriculture as well as appreciation of it as a worthwhile venture played a big part in his success. In the city he saw that even the big people were engaged in agriculture, which changed his perspective. Farming was no longer the backward, unrewarding and frustrating work he grew up with.

Living in urban places, with different life experiences, widened his perspective of life; he now had dreams, things to aspire to. Support from his dad when he got back to the village also helped, because he was laughed at when he first got back and looked upon as a failure for failing to make it big before returning to the village. His fellow youths who he had left behind at the village had a head start in life while he was only just starting out resettling into the village life. Social support from his family ensured that he was resilient and did not wallow in self-pity, but rather worked hard and smart to make something of himself. This paid off as within some time he became the pride and example of the very people who were making fun of him.

Box 3: A case study from Ethiopia

The popular narrative of youth as haters of agriculture and rural life is mistaken. The reality in the study areas showed that the youth respect agriculture and consider it a noble profession. For the vast majority of the rural youth respondents, agriculture was more than just a profession. It is also a lifestyle with deep sentimental and cultural values and a bridge that connects them with rural life. Many youths went to Arab countries hoping to accumulate the capital to access agricultural land and a place to build a house. The youth perception in agriculture can be demonstrated by the many successful returnees from Arab countries. Most successful youth returnees have established a future in their own place of origin (in both study regions). This is the case for Hassan**, a male returnee from Shewa Robi district. Hassan was working as a hired labourer in agriculture for other farmers. Until one day he decided to liberate himself from what he calls "modern-day slavery"'. He went to Saudi Arabia and came back with some money. He invested part of his savings to lease land and buy oxen. His current plans are to start his own goat farm business as soon as he secures a small plot from the local administration.

** not his real name

Policy strategies, their effectiveness & institutional support

Policy strategies, their effectiveness and institutional support

Common challenges faced by rural youth and agriculture in the drylands system

The drylands account for two-thirds (66%) of sub-Saharan African cropland (USAID 2014). Three quarters of the world's food supply (rice, wheat, maize, sorghum, millets and potato) are grown in this region (FAO 1999). Dryland ecosystems also house the world's poorest and have erratic rainfall, recurrent and unpredictable droughts, high temperatures and low soil fertility, hence continuing concerns for malnutrition (Bantilan et al. 2006). Water scarcity, land degradation, and poor infrastructure are significant constraints to intensive agriculture but "despite extreme conditions, agriculture and related land use have always played a leading role in dryland economies and societies" (Bantilan et al. 2006:1).

"Some of the inherent features of dryland agriculture that reflect its dynamism and potential and are essential in developing a strategy to stimulate growth as well as in drawing implications for policy reform include, but are not limited to people's resiliency and adaptability," including its youth (Bantilan, et al., 2006: 2). The youth in dryland areas often express their unfulfilled primary needs such as inadequate access to education, potable water, heath care, and lack of infrastructure in their villages, compared to youth living in urban areas (Giuliani et al. 2017). Trends suggest that young people are leaving farms to seek non-farm employment in both rural and urban areas (White 2012). However, Kristensen and Birch-Thomsen (2013) illustrate that rural youth in different places are following diverse employment trajectories. While youth in rural Uganda are migrating in droves to urban areas, in Zambia, more youth are migrating from urban areas to rural areas – a form of counter-urbanisation (Gough et al. 2013, Potts 2012), see case study from Tanzania (Box 4).

Box 4: A case study from Nanyumbu District, Mtwara Region, Tanzania

Many rural folk dream of a life in the city. The bright lights, well-stocked markets, amenities like medical attention and vocational training centres, and jobs. Youth may also be motivated to migrate after being orphaned or divorced, lured by the prospects of a good life, and freedom. These youth, most aged between 10 and 24, try to find accommodations and work in the city through networks of kin and friends. However, due to their low skill levels, they often end up doing odd jobs in the informal sector like hawking on the streets, working as domestic servants, and guards, among other jobs. Life in the city is much tougher for most of them because of lower social support than in rural areas, and when it is no longer tenable to survive, some opt to go back home, instead of turning to crime.

Such was the case of Juma, who comes from Namajani village, Nanyumbu District. In his view, it was very shameful to go back and have to face the fact that he did not achieve the great things he had set out to accomplish in the city. He would have given up like his friend Mari had he not had a strong support system from his family, and especially his father, who bequeathed him some two acres of farmland. He was grateful that he had a second chance to prove to his peers that he was not a failure. He applied the skills he learned in the city, like frugal living, to save up as much as possible and accumulate some form of wealth. The savings were made possible by the fact that food and accommodations were free in his village. The city life had exposed him to vital market information and made him understand how market linkages worked. These insights enabled him to plan his farm activities better, tap into market value chains that his peers in the village could not, and sell his produce to make good profits. The savings have enabled him to buy more land to expand his farming activities, and he has now almost finished building a house. Rather than shame, he now has fame and is a role model to is peers in the village

"Why a focus on youth and agriculture is important?" The rationale for mainstreaming youth in agriculture in Africa

Africa has been experiencing a demographic shift to a bulging youth population structure which continues to surge. Africa's working-age population (15 to 64-year-olds) will grow by 150% by 2030 (Katindi Sivi-Njonjo, unpublished data). This is happening as those in search of employment outstrip the pace of jobs created. Currently, only three million formal jobs are created annually, despite the ten to twelve million youth that enter the workforce each year (AAYMCA 2018). This means that the continent will have to create an average of about 7 to 9 million high-productivity jobs per year - an extremely rapid and possibly unprecedented rate, to absorb the new entrants in the labour force (AfDB 2016, Adams et al. 2013). Persistent rural poverty, renewed urgency created by population increase and ensuing food insecurity, climate change and more importantly the rising youth unemployment have made the agriculture sector one (if not the) obvious place for policy makers and development professionals to look for solutions (Bernard and Taffesse 2012).

The agricultural sector is the leading employer in many African countries, particularly in rural areas, where more than 60% of Africans continue to live and one of the places where poverty continues to be concentrated (Baulch 2011). Between 2011 and 2016 an average 51% of jobs were in agriculture, where wages were lower than in the industry and services sectors (AfDB 2018). According to Bhorat and Tarp (2016), in Ghana, wages in agriculture were 3.7 times lower than those in the energy sector and 4.9 times lower than in the public sector, while in Kenya, people working in the finance and energy sectors earned four to six times more than workers in agriculture. Since the mid-1990s, the contribution of agriculture to GDP has fallen while that of industry has risen from 25 percent to about 30 percent between 1970 and 2000 as populations became increasingly urbanised (Canning et al. 2015). Productivity is generally believed to be lower in agriculture than in other sectors in Africa and

is associated with worse labour market outcomes than industry or services (Canning et al. 2015). Yields from cereal crops such as maize increased by less than 40% in Africa, but in other places, the increase was phenomenal, 164 % in Brazil, 81% in Uruguay, 69% in Chile, and 43% in Malaysia (AfDB 2018). The low productivity of the agricultural sector in Africa is due at least in part to the low share of value added (about 15% between 2011 and 2016) in terms of investment, quality inputs, and adoption of improved production technologies (AfDB 2018).

According to Timmer (2016), "no country has been able to sustain a rapid transition out of poverty without raising productivity in its agricultural sector." Chen and Ravallion (2008) for example, found that poverty reduction in China was mostly driven by growth in the agrarian sector, which in turn reduced inequality more than growth in other sectors. A rise in the productivity and the labour absorption of agriculture would pull up earnings and gradually reduce absolute poverty for the many people living in the drylands, including youth, who rely on the sector for livelihood. Higher agricultural productivity would mean modernised farming that yields high food production for the increasing population hence food security, higher demand for labour and through industrialisation and market linkages, more jobs, higher incomes that boost domestic consumption, hence the growth of other non-agricultural sectors in rural areas, growth of infrastructure and savings (Mpofu 2018). This rise of productivity would entail policy reforms that help manage the price of inputs vis-a-vis food prices including favourable terms of trade, subsidies, tax credits, extension services, and land product diversification, as well as linkages between agriculture and other sectors like industrialisation to add value (Cook 2012, Guner et al. 2008).

Review of youth focused policy strategies. What they have achieved or failed to achieve hence strengths, gaps and opportunities, including an analysis of whether they are youth-friendly and inclusive

The first main issue around policy is the policy narrative on young people and agriculture which is predominantly framed from the point of view of either "youth in peril" or "agriculture in peril", resulting in oversimplified pictures of either agriculture as the saviour of young people or young people to the rescue of agriculture, informed by:

- The fact that bright, educated and ambitious young people do not find small-scale farming an attractive employment or career option, and therefore the challenge is to make them aware of the opportunities available and provide them with entrepreneurial attitudes, skills and the resources needed to move into farming as a business.
- The challenges in the sector such as lack of land, poor climate conditions, the high risks of farming, the drudgery of traditional farming and the unglamorous promise of intense poverty and a life in dull rural areas (which becomes a placeholder until youth find something better to do).

Policy makers and development professionals see the apparent agricultural investment for youth employment through group farming schemes, training in entrepreneurship, and engagement in agricultural value chains (such as improved access to information, markets, micro-credit and leasing land). The unfortunate bit about these investments is that:

- **The investments are usually in agriculturally viable areas rather than in fragile dryland ecosystems.** The investment packages often include improved seeds, chemical fertilisers, enhanced farm technology including irrigation which are successful in escalating productivity and increasing yields hence higher food supplies that improve food security. However, few of these initiatives are in the vast dryland regions as policy often favours investment in the fertile regions of the countries. The initiatives therefore bypass the poorest smallholders with small or no markets, often justifying the non-viability of the business model (Evenson and Gollin 2003).
- **Over-focus on the fragility of land more than the economic well-being of people.** According to Anderson et al. **(**2003) and Bantilan et al. (2006), past policies on drylands "focused primarily on the presumed limitations of the natural resource base and failed to focus on the people, their knowledge, skills and capacity for innovation in overcoming or circumventing environmental

constraints" (Bantilan et al. 2006: 1). However, the equity, efficiency and sustainability concerns have brought to the fore the need to improve the productivity of dryland agriculture where agricultural transformation is yet to take off and given that the growth opportunities in fertile and irrigated areas are slowly being exhausted (Bantilan et al. 2006).

The second main issue around policy is the problematic nature of the policy process itself. Generally, policymaking is the mechanism through which the government identifies a public problem and puts a framework to address it. Traditional policymaking is linear and includes identifying the problem and framing it, policy formulation, policy adoption, policy implementation, and policy evaluation. At the problem identification stage, issues are generalised and viewed as stand-alone and not as a function of a whole system. For example, policy categorises youth within certain age brackets, implying that they are a homogenous group of people while ignoring their socio-economic differences. This totalisation of social groups constrains the policymakers' capacities to acknowledge and respond to various sub-categories of youth such as male and female, young and older youth, those from poor versus rich households, the disabled, early married or single pregnant youth, or refugee and returnee youth. As highlighted in Box 5, policy-makers' definitions of youth which eventually serve as foundations for state-mediated inclusion or exclusion (McDonald 2009).

Box 5: Case study – How the term 'youth' marginalises young women in rural Tanzania

Amina is 30 years old. She was orphaned at the age of five and was taken to live with a relative who had seven children of her own. Because of the financial difficulty experienced in the home, Amina had to drop out of school at only class two to work on the farm. It became an unsaid means of earning the right to eat and live in that home. Life was tough, to say the least, mainly because she loved school. It was the place where she would escape momentarily from her life's woes. Farm labour was also excruciatingly hard, but what was more difficult to bear was an older cousin who secretly molested her. By the age of 14, she ran away to get married and to escape her life of misery. She got pregnant immediately and at that tender age, had to figure out how to take care of another child. Although things were not as hard as in her relative's place, there were many days she did not have food to feed her baby. She took up paid farm labour to make ends meet, but her poverty did not allow her to keep her daughter in school for long. Like her, her daughter dropped out of school in class five, and at the age of 14, she too got pregnant and married. Amina is now a grandmother of a two-year-old grandson, and she is simply grateful to be alive to see this bundle of blessings. Through her numerous engagements in casual labour, she has been able to start a small business of hawking groundnuts in the nearby town centre. This trading activity, which she does in the afternoons, supplements her meagre income from the farm produce to feed her other four children. She sees opportunities to engage in value addition like making peanut butter to sell, but she does not have the money to get started. When asked why she cannot access government youth funds set aside to aid the financing of her business idea, she says she can no longer define herself as a youth. At 30, she is still eligible by age to access the various government-sponsored business training to qualify for the government youth funds (that are available for youth aged 18 to 35). Yet, as a grandmother, she will never allow herself to sit in the same forum with the youth. Nor will the social stigma allow her to think of doing such a thing. On the other hand, her husband, who is now 31, is a grandfather, yet he does not experience any self-barrier or social stigma when he attends such trainings. Unfortunately, any benefits that accrue, like transport refunds, are for his glass of the local brew, and that is just the way life is for Amina.

Workable policy interventions

Government ministries also work in silos. Sometimes, due to the politicisation of mandates, there is little cross-sectoral collaboration and networking to implement youth policies and programs, which are cross-cutting by nature. There are cases where politically correct policies and programmes have been put in place to attract donor funds, but lack of political accountability and commitment in implementing these youth policies see the budget allocations syphoned off for personal gain.

From the above, it is evident that policy needs to recognise that youth are not homogenous and that **rural communities do not apply the term "youth" to all of their young people**. The youth are also embedded in wider social, political, and economic structures, which must prompt a rethinking of the definitions of youth, policy-making approaches, and interventions. This means that youth employment policies have to adopt a lifecycle approach, which recognises that what happens at one stage is affected by (and affects) opportunities at other stages (Coenjaerts et al. 2009). For example, child labour curtails education, and diminishes job prospects in adulthood (OECD and POVNET, 2009). Compulsory education and elimination of child labour, therefore, become mainstreamed as part of youth employment policies, because well-educated youth are likely to become better farmers.

Policy also needs to treat agriculture not in isolation, but as part of an economic structure that complements other sectors like manufacturing and services. Therefore, to provide transformative youth employment options while increasing food security and climate smart solutions, requires longer-term, multi-faceted and inter-linked policy development processes of structural transformation to provide the necessary opportunities for youth to effectively engage in the labour market. These include:

1. Infrastructure— Increasing green urban infrastructure (e.g. potable water, electricity) in rural areas often increases efficiency and productivity. The intended outcome is to improve links between farms and agro-industries for processing, to connect farms with input-output markets and to grow non-farm economies for multiplier effect (of regular wage work and liquidity in the local economy).

2. Economic restructuring from unproductive agriculture, underdeveloped manufacturing and an elite service sector that absorbs the few educated youth, to move to:

   a. Modern farming methods with improved inputs like seeds, higher demand for labour e.g. through industrialisation, as well as market linkages hence more jobs, higher incomes that boost domestic consumption, policy reforms to manage input prices, regulate cost of food, terms of trade, subsidies, tax credits, extension services, and producing more diverse farm products.

   b. Formalise the haphazard, informal economic sectors. Professionalise economic actors to increase customer base. Widen tax base without making it punitive. Incentivise formal infrastructure and markets. Social welfare policies such as insurance. Encourage growth from household enterprises to SMEs. Provide training and subsidise equipment.

   c. Add value to raw material through manufacturing to produce high output of finished goods, create jobs, pay wages that increase the missing middle which would drive the demand for more goods and services, while linking the agricultural, manufacturing and service sectors.

   d. Leapfrog certain developmental stages through technical advances by facilitating market and non-market interactions through communication, exchange, cooperation, competition, and command. Promote the use of new technologies and attract youth to translate technology into development opportunities. State intervention on industrial policy (tariff protection and subsidies to protect new industries, social protection laws for industrial workers).

   e. Use the green economy to address environmental concerns. Enhance robust linkages between greening, poverty alleviation, and everyday access to necessities like water, food, and energy.

   f. Transmit economic growth into new jobs and higher wages.

Theory of Change for GLDC Youth Strategy in Dryland Agriculture

A. Impact: Eastern African female and male youth in the drylands are actively participating and equitably benefiting from selected grain legumes and cereal value chains.

B. Main components:

i. **Research and empowerment** (recognition and profiling, strategic youth and dryland agriculture research, human capacity building—technical, psychological, life skills and behavioural change and appreciating their diversity within their cultures)

ii. **Service provision and infrastructure development** (female, male, rural, urban youth-friendly financial, technology promotion and dissemination, information communication, access to inputs, markets and processing and value addition infrastructure)

iii. **Addressing social-cultural and political barriers** (land access, early marriage, school dropout, human rights, divorce and discriminatory policies, laws and by-laws. Conflicts and political instability)

iv. **Strategic management, monitoring, learning and evaluation** (communication, dissemination, coordination, feedback mechanisms, reflection and learning).

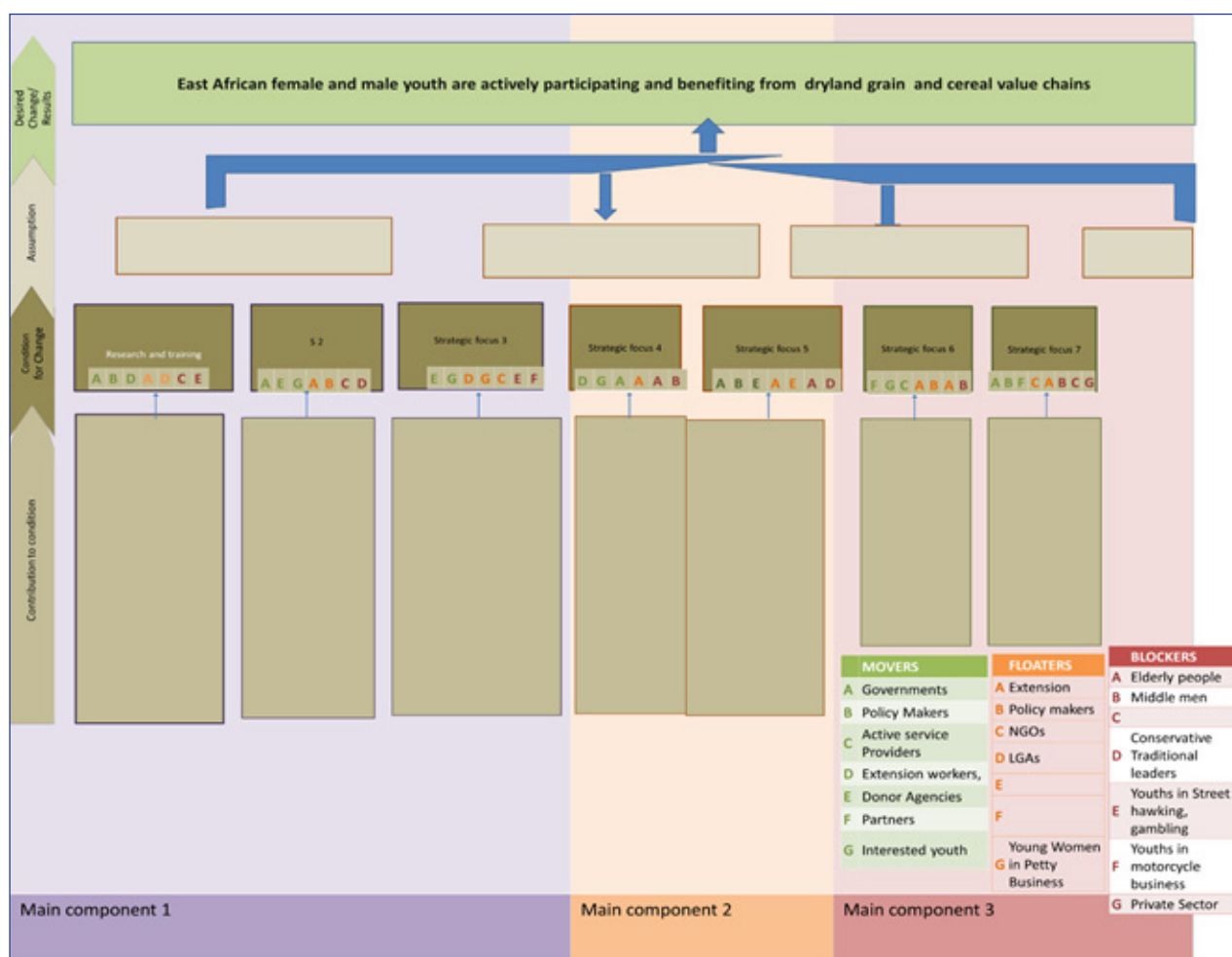See Figure 8 for the theory of change.

Figure 8. Theory of change.

C. Expected outcomes:

i. Empirical evidence gathered on youth and youth diversity in their communities

ii. Youth agency and capacity to engage in dryland agriculture enhanced

iii. Youth-sensitive technologies developed and disseminated

iv. Youth-friendly financial, inputs, market and information systems and infrastructures enhanced

v. Social, technical, political and cultural barriers constraining female and male youth from engaging in dryland agriculture addressed

vi. Youth engagement in entrepreneurship and employment in dryland agriculture enhanced, and

vii. Youth strategy properly managed and lessons and learning shared.

D. Main activities:

i. Profiling dryland youth and generating evidence that informs decisions and choice targeting

ii. Awareness creation (youth, parents, religious and cultural leaders, schoolteachers, policymakers and community leaders) on various strategic issues –the potential of agriculture, climate change and coping strategies,

iii. Capacity building (dryland youth, researchers, service providers etc.) on basic, work-related and soft and life skills

iv. Formulate mentoring, counselling and apprenticeship programs

v. Carry out strategic youth and dryland agriculture research

vi. Support youth groups and organisations for engagement in dryland agriculture (social capital).

vii. Develop, test and demonstrate youth-sensitive innovative technologies

viii. Develop context-specific financial, inputs and information access systems

ix. Improve access to suitable output markets, inputs and extension services

x. Advocacy and lobbying for policy changes and

xi. Forging collaborations and partnerships

xii. Managing and coordinating the implementation of the strategy

E. Key assumptions for the TOC

Assumption 1: Successful engagement of female and male youth in dryland agriculture is determined by factors associated with their readiness and demand factors associated with local, socio-cultural, economic and ecological environment.

Implications to CRP-GLDC: programs must be market-driven to address both sides of the market equation and bridge the gap between them (**consider both demand and supply**)

Assumption 2: Skills (basic[3], work-related [4]and soft and life skills[5]), competences, access[6] and support[7] contributes to youth readiness to participate in grain legumes and cereal value chains.

[3.] *Functional, numeracy and financial,*

[4.] *Technical, entrepreneurship, experience with work internships, apprenticeship*

[5.] *Citizenship, positive identity, social and professional competences and character*

[6.] *Market information, inputs, value addition, age and context-appropriate financial services and extension*

[7.] *Supportive networks and relationships: with peers, family and other adults in the community as well as positive affiliations, networks and economic cooperation*

Implications for CRP-GLDC

Consultations are carried out with key actors when designing programs and where appropriate collaboration with like-minded partners will be undertaken to provide appropriate services. For example, youth profiling, identification and promotion of value chains and nodes where females and males can benefit most: training needs assessments, technical assistance and services, mentoring and sourcing of funds. Besides, the aim should be to support comprehensive services that go beyond traditional skill-based training, perhaps featuring several overlapping and cross-cutting interventions.

Assumption 3: Female and male youth with a strong foundation of developmental assets, relevant technologies and infrastructure have increased likelihood to engage in dryland agriculture.

Implications for CRP-GLDC

Focus or invest in the long-term for enhancing positive development of female and male youth through an asset-based approach, where the emphasis is on people's and communities' assets, alongside their needs (Kretzmann and McKnight 1993). It is hypothesised that youth livelihood programming will be most effective when it:

1. Promotes assets and relationships in the context where youth live
2. Enables youth to contribute to the development of their community (as this also impacts their development)
3. Increases sustainability through the strengthening of the enabling environment.

Assumption 4: Actively engaging female and male youth and supporting them to become active citizens with sustainable livelihoods will help break the intergenerational cycle of poverty.

Implications to CRP-GLDC

Focus on developing programs that guide female and male youth during critical life stages so they become successful adults, and break the inter-generational poverty cycle.

Assumption 5: Attracting female and male youth in dryland agriculture and harnessing their potentials requires a multidimensional approach (education, research, modernising infrastructure, access to resources and advocacy for appropriate policies good governance and socio-political movements).

Implications to CRP-GLDC

Collaborations and learning, interdisciplinary youth and dryland agriculture researche are key elements to be emphasised.

F. With whom: Private and public institutions service providers, NGOs, private sector companies, policymakers, donor and government-funded programmes, dryland youth, development partners

G. Pre-conditions: inclusive participation, equity, facilitating youth agency, human rights, environment and anti-corruption.

Strategic Interventions

Part 1: Strategic Direction

The Youth Strategy for Crop Research programme on Grain Legumes and Dryland Cereals (CRP-GLDC) seeks to provide a guided vision and direction to the governments, development partners, academia and all relevant stakeholders towards enabling youth targeting, inclusion and equitable benefits of agricultural programmes in the East African region. The strategy is premised on the understanding that unlocking the potential of youth to engage in dryland agriculture requires an understanding of their needs, aspirations, transition realities, opportunity structures and prevailing constraints. This will in turn enable better response to youth participation and benefits, specifically, through the Grain Legumes and Dryland Cereals value chains and accelerated commercialised rural economy. The strategy envisions a comprehensive multi-dimensional, multi-sectoral, transformative approach that is responsive to youth diversities to achieve the goal so that no male or female youth is left behind.

VISION

Dryland rural communities where different youth categories actively engage in, and equitably benefit from the Grain Legumes and Dryland Cereal value chains

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The strategy draws on a broader UN 2030 development framework structured around 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) and targets, for which the East African countries are signatories. Six of the goals (2, 4, 5, 8, 10 & 13), and their targets allude to the critical role of youth in development. The strategy further draws on the knowledge base on empowerment, particularly drawing on **four pillars**: 1) recognition of youth differences and realities, 2) inclusive participation, 3) equitable distribution of opportunities, and 4) facilitating one's agency to act, as described below.

1. **Recognition of youth differences and realities**: Recognition and appreciation of youth with different gender, individual, community and geographical realities

2. **Inclusive participation**: Both male and female youth are targeted to participate in relevant agricultural activities, in consideration of their needs and realities

3. **Equity**: Both female and male youth are enabled to access and use resources and opportunities relevant for agricultural transformation

4. **Facilitating youth agency**: Providing a conducive environment (socially, economically and supportive policies) for youth to exercise their potential as active agents of change.

GOAL

Enabling active participation of female and male youth, and equitable benefits from the Grain Legumes and Dryland Cereal value chains.

OBJECTIVES

i. To build and maintain evidence of gendered youth trends in the drylands as well as linkages to other sectors: their numbers, the key drivers of their transitions and innovations that lead to transformative change

ii. To start interventions that promote female and male youth active engagement in, and equitably benefit from the Grain Legumes and Dryland Cereal value chains

iii. To create an enabling environment (including building strong actor partnerships and policy frameworks) that enhance youth engagement, inclusion and sustainable benefits of Grain Legumes and Dryland Cereal value chains.

STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS

- Strategic focus 1: Youth recognition and evidence, conduct strategic youth and agriculture research, build evidence base
- Strategic focus 2: Building human capacity
- Strategic focus 3: Youth-friendly financial services
- Strategic focus 4: Psychological, life skills and behavioural change training
- Strategic focus 5: Youth-sensitive technology & climate adaptation
- Strategic focus 6: Stimulate youth entrepreneurship and employment
- Strategic focus 7: Address social-cultural barriers

KEY TARGET GROUPS

The youth strategy targets the following.

Work with the cultural definitions of 'youth' vs 'young farmers'

Primary targets: these are key stakeholders that live in dryland regions, and often make major decisions that influence youth engagement in, and benefits from, Grain Legumes and Dryland Cereal value chains.

- Young men and women (youth)
- Parents
- Elders and community members

Secondary targets: these include influential members of the society.

- Political leaders
- Community leaders
- School teachers
- Regional and district development officers
- Regional and district agricultural officers
- Cultural leaders
- Religious leaders

Tertiary targets: these include key actors relevant for financial, research and generating evidence, technical advice and designing and implementing relevant youth-responsive policy frameworks, programmes and interventions.

NGOs and civil societies

- Research and development agencies
- National and international funding agencies
- National, regional and continental policy makers

Part 2: Proposed Strategic Interventions

The proposed interventions are based on eight key thematic areas deemed critical for enabling dryland youth's meaningful engagement in and benefits from Grain Legumes and Dryland Cereal value chains. The interventions are designed to address the needs of the youth in consideration of their realities at individual, community and regional levels as stipulated in the conceptual assumptions of the strategy.

Strategic focus 1: Youth recognition and evidence: Conducting strategic youth and agriculture research

1.1. Avoid treating youth as a homogenous group. Programs and interventions should be grounded in research evidence of the target region

1.1.1. Consider individual variables (including gender, tribe, marital status, economic status, schooling status); and community or regional level variables (alternative livelihood sources for youth, culture and historical background of the target geographical area)

1.1.2. Recognise the community's definitions of youth, the gendered dynamics arising, the key intersecting factors that marginalises either young women or men of certain circumstances and negotiate those so that the language of the program is inclusive and not alienating for the intended beneficiaries.

1.1.3 Conduct interdisciplinary research on the viability of the legume and cereal crops attractive to the youth in dryland areas, and what is required to improve their productivity, enhanced market, and associated technology that reduces drudgery.

1.1.4 Interdisciplinary research teams should consist of biophysical and social scientists (e.g., gender, anthropology, economics and agriculture) to ensure suitability of technologies developed to the social, economic, and cultural context of youth.

1.2. Establish sustained collaborations between research institutions, government, private sector, NGOs, CBOs that have long-standing, community-level programs, to conduct gender and culturally sensitive participatory and action-oriented research, innovation and dissemination that meets the needs of male and female youth.

Strategic focus 2: Building human capacity

2. Create female and male youth awareness about the potentials of agriculture to help them achieve their dreams and aspirations. (How? What would be different from what is currently done? What kind of communication?)

2.1.1. Propel the youth towards appreciation of farming as a job rather than "a last resort' livelihood, but a "cool" investment.

2.1.2. Equip female and male youth with skills to manage multiple businesses that feed into each other e.g. earnings from non-agricultural activities can be invested in viable commercial agricultural enterprises.

2.1.3 Introduce short courses to retool female and male youth farmers, and ensure that both males and females access the opportunities. Such trainings should be conducted in the language that most rural youth understand. Short courses could target:

2.1.3.1 Enterprise development and management, business and financial literacy and management, record keeping, marketing, procurement, processing, seed selection, harvest and postharvest handling and storage, information technology (ICT), modern agricultural practices (GAP) such as proper application of fertilisers, value addition, packaging, soil and water management and conservation, and entrepreneurship.

2.1.3.2. Support district female and male youth groups for benchmarking and study visits in other areas with successful value chain interventions to learn and apply to their contexts

2.1.4. Establish strong and well-funded youth mentorship programmes targeting promising female and male youth value chain actors who can act as role models for other youth.

2.1.4.1 Provide scholarships for female and male youth in dryland areas to take agricultural courses at university and tertiary vocational institutions

2.1.4.2 The university colleges should send youth interns to the dryland communities to inspire and share knowledge with the rural youth and support them to organise inspiring agricultural talks and exhibitions.

2.1.4.3. Staff on youth agricultural livelihood programs should possess skills in gender and youth empowerment, counselling, social work, business and entrepreneurship, besides agriculture, to address holistic needs of the youth.

2.1.4.4. Create youth awareness on climate change and coping strategies that reduce risk and vulnerability to climate change.

Strategic focus 3: Youth-friendly financial services

3.1 Ensure availability of locally adaptable rural finance. Put in place youth and gender responsive rural financial services accessible to female and male youth e.g., interest-free credit and affordable collateral

3.2 Eliminate complex bureaucratic procedures to access youth funds. This requires a political commitment and willingness to work closely with male and female youths.

3.3 Youth niche areas such as seed multiplication, value addition, processing, and marketing should be financially supported to yield sustainable profit for the youth

3.4 Support and fund the crop value chain enterprises that are most attractive and profitable to both male and female youth related to:

Tanzania: sorghum (Momba), groundnut, beans, and maize (Mbozi), green gram, pigeon peas, groundnuts and sunflower (Nanyumbu and Masasi)

Uganda: sorghum, maize, beans and groundnuts as primary crops, with additional regional specific preferences e.g.: sunflower in Karamoja, rice, millet, soybeans, and cowpeas in Northern Uganda, and sesame, soybeans, cowpeas, and green grams in Eastern Uganda.

Ethiopia: maize, sorghum, teff and groundnut as primary, and other culturally specific crops (sesame, mung beans, and cotton).

Strategic focus 4: Psychological, life skills and behaviour change training

4.1 Include a component of counselling and guidance for the youth that have to deal with specific personal, family, community and regional crises and traumas.

4.2 Key areas for counselling should include trauma and conflict management targeted at; dealing with loss of parents, dropping out of school, early marriage and pregnancy, rape, war (most relevant to Uganda's dryland female and male youth), resource-based conflicts.

Strategic focus 5: Access to affordable technology & climate adaptation

5.1 Include interventions and technologies that rebrand agriculture as an attractive sector for the youth

    5.1.1 Demonstrate that the grain, legume and cereal value chains are viable commercial ventures that youth can engage in to make enough money without drudgery.

    5.1.2 Strengthen functional youth groups with climate-smart agricultural technologies

    5.1.3 Promote production of high value, early maturing, drought resilient and disease resistant crop varieties suited to the dryland ecology and socio-cultural landscape.

    5.1.4 Provide quality and affordable agro-inputs

5.2 Promote innovative farming practices that optimise land use and climate resilience.

Strategic focus 6: Stimulate youth entrepreneurship and employment

6.1 Focus on the post-production nodes of the GLDC value chain especially value addition and processing that the youth already consider to be lucrative

    6.1.1 Leverage the opportunities of commercialised cereals and legume crops and build capacity for higher yield production, value addition and create essential market linkages and incentives within and outside the country to initiate and sustain agricultural momentum.

6.2 Nurture innovative youth agri-businesses and market-driven enterprises by providing youth-friendly loans, technical support, incubation and mentorship opportunities.

6.3 Link youth to supporting services and infrastructure for value addition; establish pilot demonstration units.

6.4 Invest heavily in critical rural agriculture infrastructure such as: sustainable and affordable solar-powered irrigation systems, rural electrification, feeder road networks and ICTs to accelerate innovativeness in agribusinesses.

6.5 Support involvement of the youth and capacitating them as value chain actors such as brokers and service providers.

Strategic focus 7: Address social-cultural barriers

7.1 Sensitise communities on negative aspects of discriminatory social norms, beliefs and practices that inhibit female and male youth from engaging and benefiting from development programmes.

    7.1.1 Sensitisations should target inequalities associated with access to land, early and forced marriages that cut short children's education, bodily harmful practices like female genital mutilation (FGM), the burden of domestic work that limit girls' mobility and associated community stereotypes.

    7.1.2 This could be done through local radio, peer education and drama, religious and cultural ceremonies.

    7.1.3 Sensitisation approaches should leverage highly respected and influential members of society such as elders, cultural, religious leaders and role models to serve as change agents.

7.2 Work in partnership with youth and gender focused NGOs to reduce gender-based constraints in communities.

7.3 Enforce implementation of existing laws that guarantee inclusive development, keeping young people in school and against early and forced marriages. By-laws against these harmful practices should sensitively be initiated and implemented at the community level.

7.4 Support local governments, police and human rights agencies to penalise perpetrators of early marriage practices.

7.5 Enhance the status and participations of female youth and young mothers in dryland agricultural value chains.

Strategic focus 8: Building youth-friendly social capital and strengthening local institutions

8.0 Make an inventory of locally existing mutual support groups male and female youth utilise to mobilise different types of resources

8.1 The inventory should focus on mapping and identifying the different types of mutual support groups along with the types of services (resources) they provide to the different types of male and female youth

8.2 Support and capacitate pre-existing mutual support youth groups as service providers

    8.2.1 Support includes injecting capital (youth-friendly loans), technical support, organise incubation and mentorship opportunities for youth groups with good reputation

    8.2.2 Provide technical assistance, training on financial literacy, record keeping, and management

8.3 Recognise mutual support groups as a vehicle to target and reach out to the most vulnerable groups the youth. (Dryland communities have distinct notions of social justice and redistribution of resources, which includes identifying those who deserve support the most. Informal networks and groups have readily available information on network participants that can improve the targeting of the different types of youth with minimal disruptions of the social networks of the poor).

8.4 Establish strong relationship between functional local youth groups, government, NGOs and others. Work closely with mutual support group leaders and youth leaders to acquire more reliable information on those in dire need of assistance

8.5 Support efforts to improve co-operative behaviour and mutual trust between community members (efforts to build on and strengthen household and community resilience must focus on promoting and deepening existing social relationships)

    8.5.1 In this regard, greater efforts must be undertaken by development partners and policymakers to improve grass-root social capital and community-based mutual support groups by designing a tailor-made program and more socially inclusive, participatory community development projects that can cut across several clans and tribal divides within and across villages.

    8.5.2 Link youth from different villages and across different societal cleavages to facilitate the opportunity for the youth to understand each other more expand their social networks and acquire novel and diversified resources. In addition, such efforts could also help resolve resource-based conflict.

Part 3: Key Stakeholders and Actors

Effective implementation of the youth strategy requires multiple actors to address the various needs. This requires effective, efficient and well-co-ordinated institutional mechanisms that run from national to the local government level, including public works, gender and youth, and local government, with the Ministries of Agriculture in specific countries taking the leading role. The strategy also targets local government administration officials, technical teams and committees, development partners, research institutions, civil society organisations and the local community men and women, girls and boys. The different roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders engaged in the implementation of the strategy are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Key stakeholders and their roles implementing the youth strategy.

Key stakeholders	Role
National Ministries of agriculture	• This is the main coordinating agency for implementing the strategy. It will provide overall leadership, coordination, monitoring and evaluation • Providing technical support in terms of access to relevant technologies
National Ministries of Gender, Labour and Social Development	• This will be a key partner in ensuring that programmes are gender-responsive, and leave no one behind by facilitating gender awareness and collaborations to reduce social gender inequalities
National Ministries of Education	• To work in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture to implement sector-specific interventions regarding education and capacity building skills.
National Ministries of Justice, Law and Constitutional Affairs	• To provide legal oversight and support
National Ministries of Finance Planning and Economic Development	• To provide sufficient resources in the national budget - especially the key sectors of education, agriculture and gender
National Ministries of Local Government	• The delivery of policies and action plans will take place in local governments with the agriculture officers, community development officers and gender officers involved to provide technical oversight and supervision. • Local government will offer the primary structures for the implementation of the strategy
Development partners for example FAO, DFID, EU, ICRISAT	• These will largely provide financial, material and technical resources for the implementation of the strategy. • In addition, they will play a key monitoring role.
CSOs	• These shall be operational partners to implement the strategy
National research institutions, - Universities, NARIs etc.	• To provide technical advice and conduct local and regional research and knowledge generation
Community members (men, women, cultural and religious leaders)	• The community consists of key gatekeepers of social norms and practices. They will be the major implementers, support links and beneficiaries of the strategy
Dryland youth: male and female	• These are key actors and beneficiaries of the strategy. They will be engaged at all levels in all activities to participate in, and benefit from dryland cereal and grain legume value chains

Part 4: Information Flow and Feedback Mechanisms

Proper information flow and feedback during the implementation of the strategy will help to resolve uncertainty, ensure stakeholder interests are met and assure quality. The national Ministries of Agriculture in the East African region will produce quarterly and annual reports to document the extent to which the set targets of the strategy are being achieved. The reports highlighting progress on key performance indicators as pointers for measurement of progress in achieving strategic objectives shall be circulated to all stakeholders.

The agriculture ministries shall also put in place arrangements for communication with other stakeholders. They will define, document and control the quality of the reports produced. Review meetings will be conducted to assess progress, quality of programs, roles of different actors and reporting relationships. This information flow and feedback is instrumental for detecting deficiencies and timely correction.

Part 5: Coordination and Collaboration Mechanisms: National and Sub National

The implementation of this strategy is premised on a holistic approach involving multiple partners and key actors at all levels. It is a shared responsibility of all identified government agencies and institutions, CSOs (civil society organisations), the private sector, religious and cultural institutions, and development partners. The national Ministries of Agriculture will be the overall coordinator for implementation of activities. A coordination unit under the ministry will be established and supported to spearhead the implementation and monitoring of the strategy. The coordination unit will be headed by a senior officer with wide experience on youth, gender and dryland agriculture. The unit should be financed within the ministry financial framework and provided for in the medium and long-term government budget.

Responsibilities of the Ministry of Agriculture's Coordination Unit

- Popularise the youth strategy at all levels
- Mobilise key stakeholders and actors to participate in the implementation of the strategy
- Establish and coordinate a network of key national and international partners and actors (government departments, research institutions, civil society, international NGOs, religious institutions and development partners)
- Coordinate and develop annual work plans and budgets for implementing the strategy.
- Prepare performance reports in line with the reporting requirements of the ministry and the implementing partners.
- Carry out monitoring and evaluation of the strategy related programs.
- Coordinate the development, production and dissemination of information and publications of associated programmes and interventions.

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About CRP-GLDC

The CGIAR Research Program on Grain Legumes and Dryland Cereals (CRP-GLDC) brings together

research on seven legumes (chickpea, cowpea, pigeonpea, groundnut, lentil, soybean and common bean) and three cereals (pearl millet, finger millet and sorghum) to deliver improved livelihoods and nutrition by prioritizing demand driven innovations to increase production and market opportunities along value chains.

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