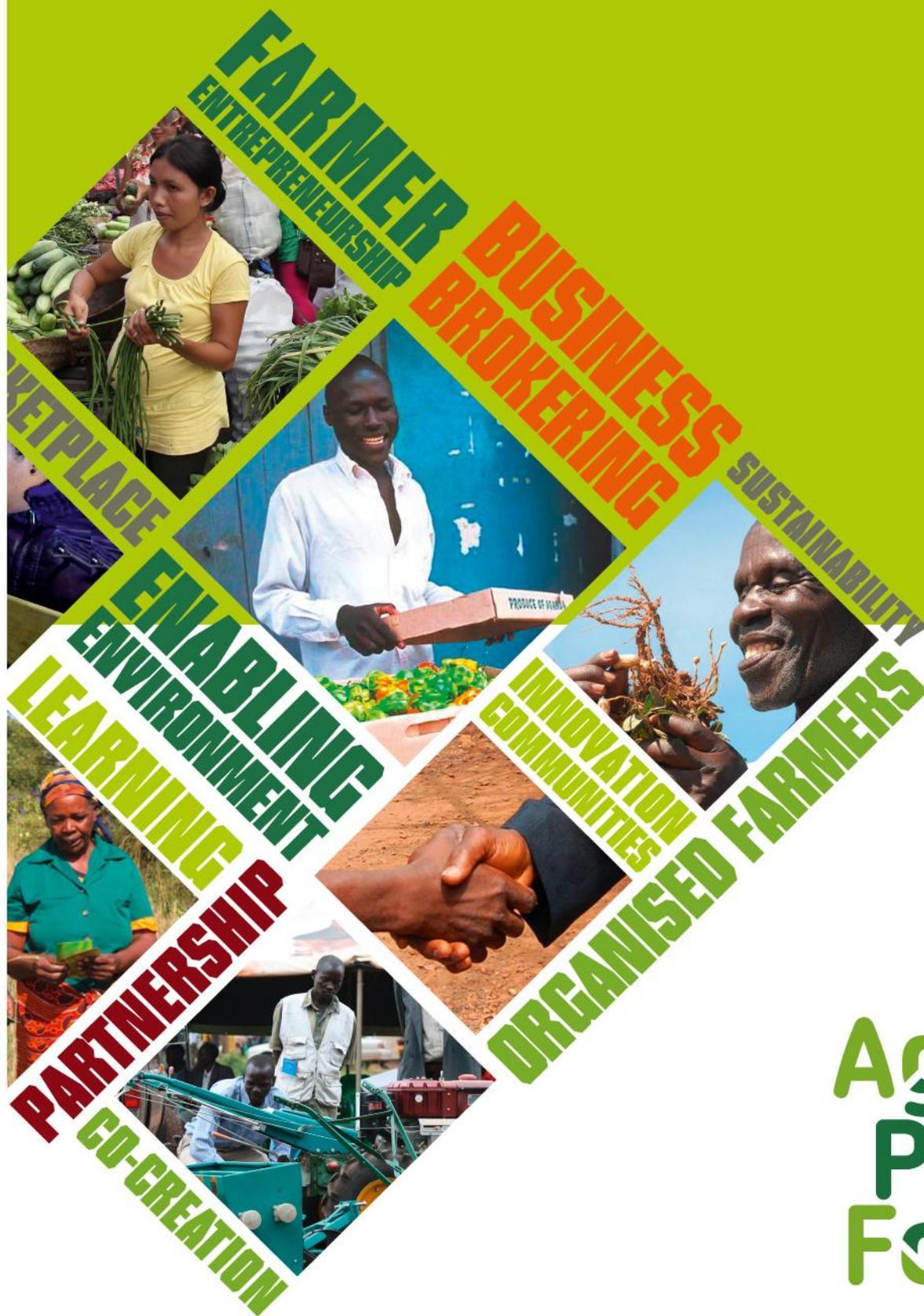


# Youth in Agribusiness Breakfast meeting

22<sup>nd</sup> March 2017, Jacaranda Hotel



# Agri Pro Focus

Promoting farmer entrepreneurship

## Introduction

AgriProfocus Kenya hosted partners for a Youth in Agribusiness stakeholders breakfast roundtable meeting on 22nd March 2017. The objective of the meeting was to share our journey as a network and get member inputs and commitments on our various ideas for the year 2017 and beyond. This included what have we been able to achieve towards supporting more young entrepreneurs in the agribusiness sector and what are our plans to support more successful youth led agribusiness enterprises and increase youth participation in key decision making processes within the agriculture sector.

The meeting was an interactive session that engaged various stakeholders within the Dutch Diamond in discussing the importance of engaging young people in the agriculture business. In order to set the pace for the day, Alpha Gitau, the Youth in Agribusiness lead in AgriProFocus asked the members to pair up to introduce themselves while highlighting the change they would like to for youth in the sector. The feedback is summarized in the bullet points below:

- More youth should be informed on opportunities and challenges that are present in the sector so that they can be able to make informed decisions.
- More youth need to take lead in the agribusiness space, for instance being in cooperatives management. Their voices should be heard and policies that favor their business growth implemented. It is imperative that youth be not only participate, but also facilitate conferences and meetings that involve them, rather than elderly people always being at the centre of these discussions.
- Young people should tap into the opportunities presented by integrated gender and social inclusion programmes. They should consequently be able to make more money out of their businesses.
- Youth should also tap into the technological and innovation opportunities to create products that provide solutions to the challenges facing the sector. Private sector, government and research institutions need to invest in youth by making access to finance and technical skills available.
- More youth should take advantage of the existing digital information as they are the biggest consumers of technology. They should take lead rather than waiting to be provided with handouts.
- Financial sector should also appreciate the role of youth in accelerating sector growth; and therefore provide products suited for this group. More youth need to change attitudes on farming and venture into the green economy.

## 1 Welcoming remarks

In her welcoming remarks, Mrs Maureen Munjua, the Country Coordinator for AgriProFocus Kenya thanked the participants for honoring this invitation. She said that she was pleased that discussions on youth in agribusiness were being done mainly by youth and with stakeholders that are committed to working with and supporting them.

While introducing AgriProFocus network to new stakeholders present, she said that this multi-stakeholder neutral platform was founded in the Netherlands in 2005 by Dutch organisations that had invested in Africa and saw the need for synergies and experience sharing. The network has since grown to 11 African countries and 2 in South East Asia.

AgriProFocus aims to make agribusiness work for development. In order for this to happen, AgriProFocus provides linking to resources and skills; learning and sharing more and platforms for networking and building on each other's initiatives and leadership to influence policy in the sector. She concluded by calling on the partners present to brainstorm mechanisms for more collaboration and partnerships for sustained impact in youth in agribusiness.



*Mrs. Maureen Munjua, AgriProFocus Kenya Country Coordinator making her welcoming remarks*



*From left - Mrs. Lucy Kioko of Mercy Corps, Mrs Maureen Munjua and Mr. Peter Nduati of Africa Turn Around Ltd*

## World Café sessions: Reflecting on 2016 activities

In 2016, AgriProFocus Kenya undertook three main activities on youth thematic area: youth in cooperatives management with Agriterra, business simulation with USIU and a mapping exercise with the Food and Business Knowledge Platform and INCLUDE. The activities addressed issues of youth leadership, skills development among young entrepreneurs, and knowledge gap in the role of and opportunities for the youth in the agribusiness space.

The stakeholders present broke into three world café sessions to discuss in detail the outcomes of these network activities in 2016, with the aim of informing follow up action. Below is a summary of the key highlights from these sessions:

### 1. Youth in Agribusiness Mapping Exercise

AgriProFocus, Food and Knowledge Platform and INCLUDE conducted a scan mapping exercise of youth in agribusiness in Kenya, Mali and Ghana. The aim of the mapping was to identify the existing knowledge gap in youth in agribusiness and the stakeholders present in the sector. The scan provides an outlook of the developments in the agriculture sector and the challenges that hinder youth from contributing meaningfully to the growth of the economy. The main findings from the scans are:

- There is government willingness to support youth in agriculture; however the information regarding opportunities for youth within government is either not accessible or not available to all the youth and stakeholders;
- There are a lot of stakeholders in the sector doing capacity building support to youth-led agribusinesses, but with minimal coordination and collaboration. This has resulted in duplication of efforts and wastage of resources.
- There is existing literature on policies, frameworks and strategies on how to support youth in agriculture. However, these reports remain shelved and are not properly and widely disseminated. This has led to missed opportunities to learn from best practices on past initiatives.

From these discussions, various opportunities for future partnerships were identified, such as the need to do another follow up meeting with more stakeholders involve. The government plays a critical role and should be invited to future events to present on the existing opportunities for youth. As a way forward, it was agreed that AgriProFocus organizes platforms for the county government, youth entrepreneurs and private sector to interact and forge collaborations and partnerships that will support the agenda of more youth as key actors in the agrifood sector.

The issue of family succession planning was identified as a gap in agriculture. While this is common in all sectors, the agriculture sector is adversely affected due to the persistent stereotypes and misconceptions about the sector as being shady, dirty or for the poor. It was suggested that partners develop programmes that shift the perceptions of the youth. For example, ILRI is planning to work with school garden programmes to instill the value of farming, as a business among the young people to prepare them to succeed their family farming businesses.

It was also highly recommended that the findings from this scan should be shared as widely as possible with all the stakeholders within the network and beyond. More importantly, the stakeholders were encouraged to take up some of the recommendations put forward in the scan.

For more information find the report [HERE](#).

## 2. Enhancing business skills for young entrepreneurs

AgriProFocus aims to support more successful youth-led enterprises through enhancing their business skills. In partnership with the United States International University [USIU], AgriProFocus conducted a business simulation activity for young entrepreneurs in 2016. This programme aims to provide business training to agri-entrepreneurs whereby they create business scenarios and find innovative ways to solve them. This helps them manage their finances, stock and overall enterprise.

The main aim of this business simulation program is to help entrepreneurs earn profits, be able to clear their debts and learn practical mechanisms of dealing with business problems. Through business training, they are trained on how to access funds, market and eventually understand how to carry out customer focused businesses that improve their lives. The programme has seen many entrepreneurs in Kenya who previously did not know how to separate their business profits from personal investments begin to keep records of their gains and even open bank accounts in which to save their money. From small saving kits like pencil pouches, they develop a habit of saving.

It emerged that participants of agriculture are fixated on simply making ends meet for their families. Young people are evidently few in this field either because they are unaware of the skill or have not been nurtured into it. Other challenges were lack of basic knowledge of technology which limits the methods through which training can happen. However USIU has been able to incorporate both theory and practical sessions making the program effective for the entrepreneurs. Stakeholders present were interested in looking at how this could be replicated more in other areas and made available to more people.

## 3. The Role of Youth in Cooperatives Management

AgriProFocus aims to increase the participation of youth in key decision making processes in the agri-food sector. This includes their participation in cooperatives management team. The network in partnership with Agriterra, were able to bring young people who are members to Agriterra's cooperatives for a workshop to help them design effective ways and steps in which they can be involved in their cooperative management. The youth were able to design a plan to help them in their cooperatives to come up with a Youth Council.

Agriterra is currently active in 16 African countries and has been supporting youth involvement in business through joining cooperatives. In its quest to support more youth in cooperatives management, Agriterra is championing the formation of youth councils within cooperatives which is meant to advocate for young farmers issues. The youth councils are meant to select a representative from their team to sit in the cooperative's board of management.

For more information, find the full report [HERE](#).



*Hillary Maket of Agriterra sharing the outcomes of the Youth in Cooperatives Management Conference held in Nyeri in 2016*

## Plans for 2017 – A gallery walk session

AgriProFocus Kenya aims to focus on 3 key flagship projects through the year 2017: A regional youth activity, Youth in Agribusiness learning labs and business to business activities. A gallery walk was done to engage participants in the exchange of ideas on which thematic areas of interest to them; but also an opportunity to commit in supporting the activities with the network either financially, technically or both.

The table below is a summary of the issues that members thought were of interest and that they would be willing to be a part of:

Activity	Stakeholder areas of interest
<b>Regional Activity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth in Leadership – how to engage more youth in cooperatives management</li> <li>• Role of the private sector in supporting youth in agribusiness engagement</li> <li>• Doing business/ making money among young people.</li> <li>• How to build sustainable partnerships among all stakeholders with youth at the centre of discussions</li> <li>• Enhancing opportunities for mentorship for young people</li> <li>• Exploring what are the opportunities for value addition for youth and how do we enhance them?</li> </ul>
<b>Learning Labs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to support knowledge sharing among young people on opportunities and success stories in agriculture (Role of bloggers and mentors). – organizing a hackathon</li> <li>• Support on business development skills among young entrepreneurs.</li> <li>• How to enhance opportunities for value addition across value chains</li> <li>• Exploring the opportunities for youth in enhancing nutritional improvement across dairy value chain and food safety?</li> <li>• Value chains development and engagement of young entrepreneurs.</li> <li>• Host an event on the opportunities for youth in the livestock sector(dairy and beef)</li> </ul>
<b>Business to Business activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance support to young entrepreneurs on components such as market and financial linkages.</li> <li>• How to build sustainable businesses in the agribusiness sector.</li> <li>• Communicating impact among young entrepreneurs</li> <li>• Capacity building of young entrepreneurs through skills development.</li> </ul>

# Conclusion

Maureen from AgriProFocus reiterated participants in the room had enriched the day's discussions. She urged members to further explore ways of how to collectively work to ensure entrepreneurial youth are fully supported. She also emphasized the need for stakeholders to not only share lessons from their activities, but also to encourage the uptake of recommendations. Dorina also invited the stakeholders present to register on the online platform to be able to widely disseminate information, meet new contacts and engage in debates that are relevant to the sector. The URL for signing up is [www.agriprofocus.com](http://www.agriprofocus.com).

Sample photos from the meeting



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