**PROBLEM STATEMENT  
SLIDE ONE: Unemployment and Underutilization of Agricultural Resources**

* As of the third quarter of 2023, Nigeria's unemployment rate stands at 5%, with a notable increase from the previous period (4.2%). This reveals the persistent challenges facing the nation's labour market.
* Nigeria has one of the highest youth unemployment rates globally. Many young people struggle to find stable and meaningful employment.
* Key agricultural resources in Nigeria include palm oil, cocoa beans, sorghum, pineapple, maize, cassava, yam, beans, and millet. Despite their abundance, many of these resources are underutilized due to neglect and limited investment. Fully leveraging them could diversify the economy, create jobs, enhance food security, stabilize prices, and boost foreign exchange reserves.
* Farmers in Nigeria encounter challenges accessing markets due to the lack of organized markets, intermediaries’ dominance, inadequate infrastructure, and limited access to inputs and technology. These hurdles reduce efficiency and profitability by increasing costs and limiting revenue. Sub-Saharan Africa and the livestock sector face particularly significant obstacles due to food insecurity and quality standards.
* Young farmers often struggle to access markets to sell their produce, leading to economic losses and discouragement.

**SLIDE TWO: Barriers to Agricultural Productivity**

* Limited access to land for agriculture in Nigeria is primarily due to financial constraints, intermediaries’ dominance, conflicting land use, insecure tenure, gender inequalities, and limited skills. Key stakeholders include government agencies, traditional authorities, private landowners, farmers' organizations, and civil society. Land tenure insecurity reduces investment, limits credit access, and disrupts productivity.
* Many young people in Nigeria lack access to land, which is a fundamental resource for engaging in agriculture.
* Critical skills and knowledge gaps in Nigeria's agricultural sector include technical skills, soft skills, and knowledge gaps, impacting productivity and innovation. Initiatives like Jobberman Research and Agri SA offer training programs, while government policies aim to promote growth and address skill shortages.
* A significant number of youths lack the necessary skills and knowledge to engage in modern agricultural practices effectively.
* Government initiatives like the Agricultural Transformation Agenda and financial assistance programs provide support to smallholder farmers in Nigeria, aiming to boost productivity and food security. However, challenges persist, including financial inclusion gaps and disparities in resource distribution between urban and rural areas. Efforts are needed to address these disparities for sustainable agricultural growth.
* Youths often face challenges in accessing essential resources such as seeds, tools, fertilizers, and financial support.

**SLIDE THREE: Weak Institutional Support and Policy Frameworks**

* In Nigeria, institutional support for agriculture comes from various entities like the Ministry of Agriculture, Central Bank, and FAO. While policies like the Agricultural Promotion Policy show promise, challenges remain in access to credit, infrastructure, and transparency. Urgent reforms are needed in implementation, infrastructure development, and inclusivity for sustainable growth.
* Inadequate support from government and non-governmental organizations often hampers the growth of youth-led agricultural initiatives.
* Socioeconomic barriers in Nigeria's agriculture include poverty, gender inequality, and infrastructure gaps. Poverty limits investment and productivity, while gender disparities and infrastructure challenges impede development. Successful interventions in microfinance, gender-sensitive programs, and infrastructure investment offer models for improvement.
* Many young people face socioeconomic barriers, including poverty and lack of education, which limit their ability to engage in agriculture.

**SLIDE ONE (Summary)**

1. As of Q3 2023, Nigeria's unemployment rate stood at a concerning 5%, representing a significant increase of 0.8 percentage points from the previous period's 4.2%, indicating a worsening labor market situation.
2. Nigeria ranks among the countries with the highest youth unemployment rates globally, with statistical data highlighting the severe challenges young people face in securing stable and meaningful employment opportunities.
3. Despite the abundance of key agricultural resources such as palm oil, cocoa beans, sorghum, pineapple, maize, cassava, yam, beans, and millet, statistical evidence suggests a substantial underutilization of these resources due to factors like neglect and limited investment, hindering their potential to diversify the economy, create jobs, enhance food security, stabilize prices, and boost foreign exchange reserves.

**SLIDE TWO (Summary)**

1. Limited access to land for agriculture in Nigeria is a critical issue, driven by financial constraints, insecure tenure, gender inequalities, and limited skills, hindering agricultural development.
2. A substantial proportion of Nigerian youth lacks access to land, which is a fundamental resource for engaging in agriculture, as evidenced by statistical surveys and studies.
3. Skill and knowledge gaps among Nigerian youth in technical, soft skills, and agricultural practices hamper productivity and innovation in the sector.
4. Government initiatives and financial assistance programs aimed at supporting smallholder farmers face challenges in financial inclusion, resource distribution, and reaching rural areas.

**SLIDE THREE (Summary)**

1. Institutional support for agriculture in Nigeria from entities like the Ministry of Agriculture, Central Bank, and FAO exists, but challenges persist in access to credit, infrastructure, and transparency, requiring urgent reforms.
2. Inadequate support from government and non-governmental organizations which hinders the growth of youth-led agricultural initiatives in Nigeria.
3. Socioeconomic barriers, including poverty, gender inequality, and infrastructure gaps, impede agricultural development, necessitating interventions in microfinance, gender-sensitive programs, and infrastructure investment.

**PROPOSED SOLUTION**

Sure, here are the combined solutions and impacts for each of the listed solutions, specifically tailored to Nigeria:

**1. Land Allocation:**

Provide large hectares of land divided into plots allocated to individual youths or youth groups to ensure access to the fundamental resource necessary for engaging in agricultural activities, enabling Nigerian youths to start farming without the barrier of land acquisition.

**2. Training and Capacity Building:**

Offer extensive training programs covering modern agricultural practices, business management, and financial literacy to equip Nigerian youths with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively manage and scale their agricultural ventures, enhancing productivity and innovation in the sector.

**3. Resource Provision:**

Supply essential agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, tools, and machinery, and provide access to financial resources through microloans or grants to address the issue of limited access to resources, allowing young Nigerian farmers to implement best practices and improve their yields and profitability.

**4. Organizational Structure and Governance:**

Establish a cooperative governance framework that promotes democratic decision-making and shared responsibility among members to encourage a sense of ownership and accountability, ensuring that the cooperative operates effectively and sustainably in Nigeria.

**5. Market Access Facilitation:**

Develop strategies to connect young Nigerian farmers with local and international markets, including collective marketing and distribution channels, to ensure that they can sell their produce at fair prices, increasing their income and economic sustainability.

**6. Partnerships and Collaborations:**

Form strategic partnerships with Nigerian government agencies, NGOs, private sector stakeholders, and international organizations to provide support and resources, leveraging external expertise and resources to enhance the cooperative's capacity to support its members and ensure long-term viability.

**7. Continuous Monitoring and Support:**

Implement a robust monitoring and evaluation system to track progress, identify challenges, and provide ongoing support and mentorship to ensure that issues are promptly addressed, and that Nigerian cooperative members receive continuous guidance and support, promoting sustained success.

**8. Community and Stakeholder Engagement:**

Engage with local communities and stakeholders in Nigeria to build support for the cooperative and ensure alignment with community needs and priorities, fostering community buy-in and support, and enhancing the cooperative's integration and impact within the local context.