



Investing in rural people



Youth, Challenges and Opportunities

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IFAD at a glance



An overview of IFAD's creation, mission and goals

IFAD

UN Specialized Agency

International Financial Institution

The International Fund for Agricultural Development



Founded in **1977** in response to the global food crisis in the 1970s



Focused on agriculture and rural development, targeting the most marginalized populations with deep reach into **remote areas**



Composed of **178 member states** and active in **93 countries**



Provide financial assistance **through low-interest loans and grants** to governments and private sector



What makes IFAD unique?



Prioritize locally led development – empowering rural people to take charge of their own development; investing in resilience and lasting results



Multi-stakeholder approaches – forging alliances and providing leadership at global, regional and country level



Assembler of Finance – leveraging AA+ rating and cofinancing to turn every \$1 of core into \$6 dollars on the ground



Driven by tangible results and impact – most effective and efficient multilateral development organization globally (2021)



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Rural Youth



The Rural Youth Factor



- Almost **800M youth live in rural or semi-urban areas** of developing countries. 3 youth in every 5 are unemployed and the majority are **underemployed** in the **informal economy**.
- They frequently **face constraints** including a lack of skills, limited access to land, credit and inputs, and scant connections to markets.
- In terms of participation and **decision making**, rural youth are one of the **least engaged groups**.

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- ✓ Youth are more open to **risk-taking, innovation, and technological adoption** that are crucial for food system reform.
 - ✓ Importantly, young people generally tend to have stronger aspirations for work that **benefits society, the environment and the climate**.
 - ✓ **Investing in young rural people and creating opportunities for them in the agri-food sector** is essential for **sustainable, resilient food systems, environmental protection, addressing climate change**, enhancing **food security, reducing poverty**, and promoting **peace and political stability**.



Unlocking the potential of rural youth



RURAL TRANSFORMATION AND ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

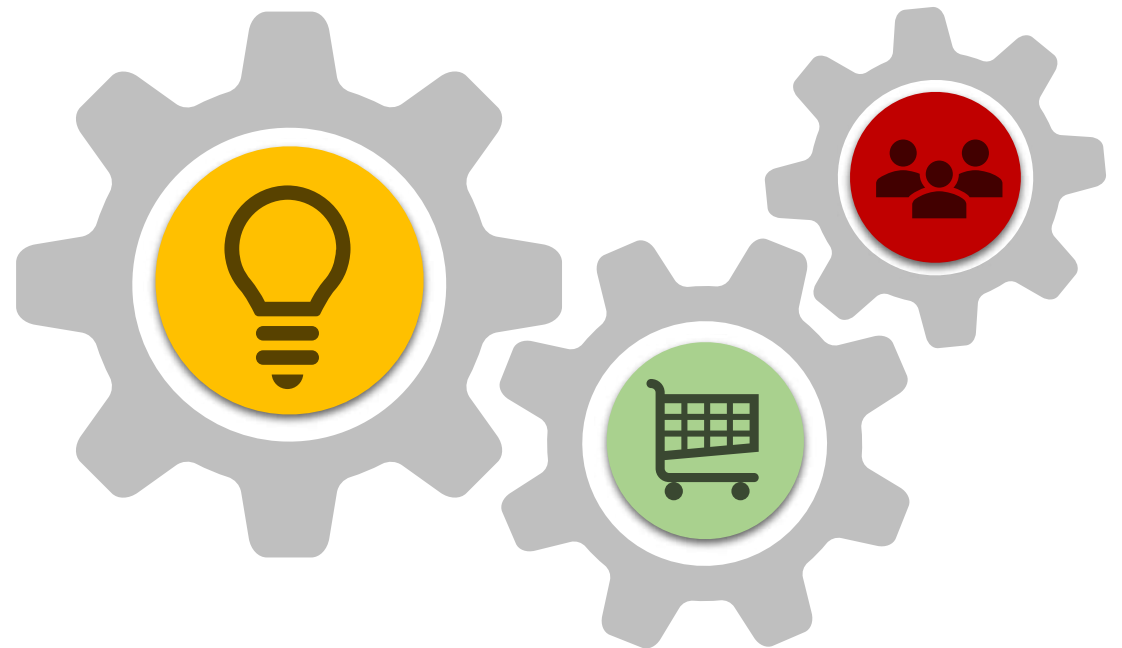
Rural areas and agriculture need to be an overall policy priority, including enabling labour market and investment conditions

"If there are no general opportunities then youth opportunity is not possible"



RURAL YOUTH-CENTERED INVESTMENTS

- Tailored interventions that enable rural youth to thrive
- Wage / self-employment opportunities
- Access to productive resources
- Access to capital, services, inputs
- Access to new market-relevant skills and education
- Image of rural vs urban



IFAD integrates youth as a key driver of rural transformation



IFAD Rural Youth Action Plan developed in 2019 and will be updated in 2025



100% of IFAD **Country Strategies** integrate youth

60% of new IFAD projects are **youth-sensitive**



Strong focus on green and digital opportunities (**digitization**, **renewable energies**, **green skills** and **technologies**).



IFAD's pro-youth interventions

IFAD pro-youth interventions



Vocational and Technical Training



Business Development Services



Credit and Equity Financing



Focus on Green and Digital Opportunities



Investments in Mechanisation and Modern Technologies

IFAD Flagship Youth Programmes



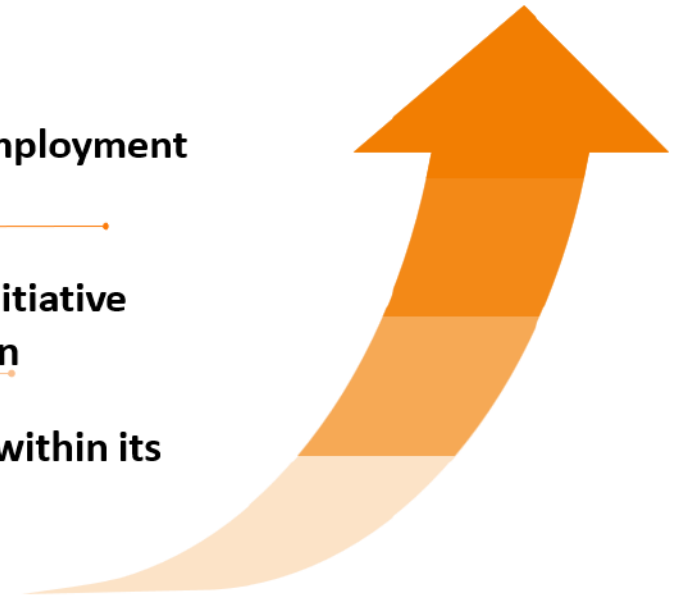
Holistic packages for youth employment and entrepreneurship



Youth Grassroots Alliance (YGA) initiative empowering youth voices to action



Rural business incubation approaches within its Youth Agribusiness Hubs



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Challenges and Opportunities for Youth in Cooperatives



Benefits of rural youth participation in cooperatives

Benefits of inclusion for youth

- ✓ Development of self-confidence, entrepreneurial spirit, collective action and social capital
- ✓ Access to and management of natural resources such as land and water
- ✓ Input and output markets
- ✓ Financial services
- ✓ Information, communication and knowledge
- ✓ Participation in policy dialogue to strengthen youth lens
- ✓ Reduced barriers of entry and increased sustainability of ventures

Benefits of youth inclusion for cooperatives

- ✓ Intergenerational renewal of cooperative membership and long-term sustainability
- ✓ Youth dynamism, energy and creativity to revitalize and strengthen cooperatives
- ✓ Propensity to modernize management and operations by adopting new agricultural practices and technologies

Challenges to effective youth participation in cooperatives

Joining a cooperative.

Membership conditions, such as landownership or the payment of membership fees.

Youth-only organizations.

Informal and lacking human and financial resources.

Mixed organizations.

Limited youth participation and often excluded from decision making and managerial roles.

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IFAD's work with cooperatives



Senegal - Agricultural Value Chain Support Project

Objective. Improve the livelihoods of smallholder farmers in Senegal's groundnut basin.

Intervention. Assisting youth associations with financial support, capacity building and access to quality inputs and equipment.

Approach:

- Youth targeted through sporting/cultural associations
- Youth associations supported to negotiate land
- Farmers organisations with strong youth participation favoured
- Youth associations participated in market negotiations and value chain roundtables

Lessons learnt and successes:

- ✓ *Building on existing institutions, youth sport and cultural associations.*
- ✓ *Targeting approach to favour producer organisations with youth participation to encourage intergenerational support.*
- ✓ *Youth have a greater ripple effect in spreading stories of success and best practices effectively to other youths*

Kenya - Smallholder Dairy Commercialization Programme (SDCP)

Objective. market-driven development of Kenya's informal dairy industry

Intervention. Leveraging retirees for youth empowerment in cooperatives

Approach:

- Engagement of retirees trusted by the community
- Youth mentored by retirees in management and leadership roles
- Knowledge transfer on best practice

Lessons learnt and successes:

- ✓ *Better milk collection rates*
- ✓ *Improved strategic plans and business plans*
- ✓ *Enhanced resource networks*
- ✓ *Spill over jobs created in ICT to manage the dairy Market Information System*

The retirees dedicate their time to improve the day to day running of the cooperatives, thus “giving back to the society”

The Farmers' Organizations for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (FO4ACP) programme

Country	Example
Tanzania	Engaging youth and women in SRI through farmers organisation
Eswatini and Esnau	Youth policy engagement at Agri Youth Indaba
Global	Ensuring diverse voices of rural youth were heard at the International Young Farmers Summit (IYFS)

FO4ACP
Farmers' Organizations for
Africa, Caribbean and Pacific



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Conclusions and Recommendations

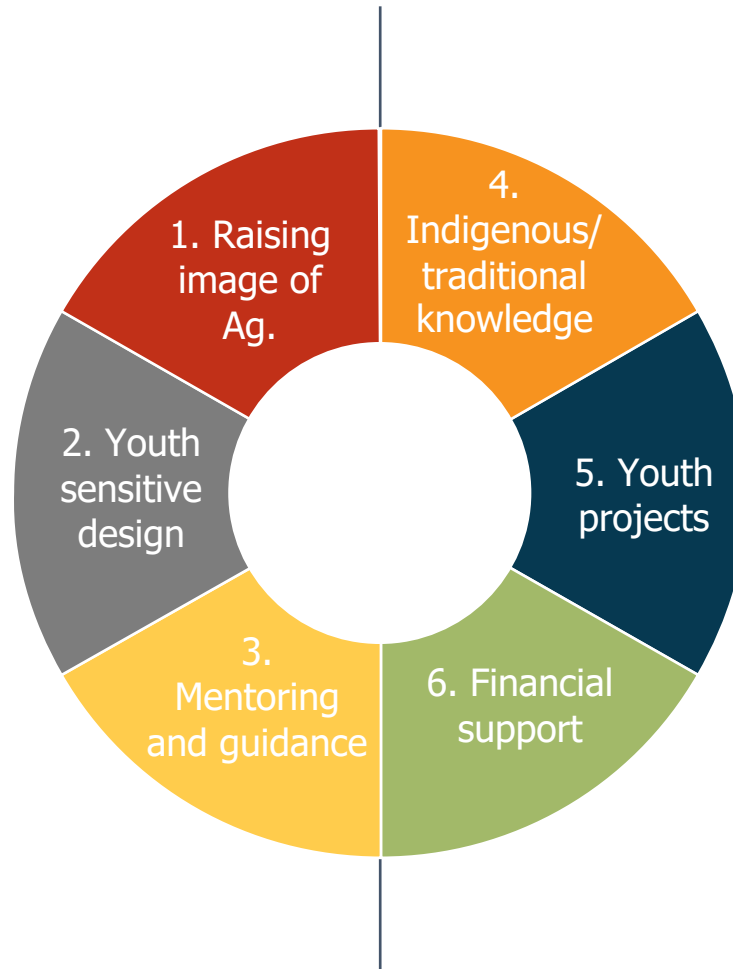


Recommendations for increasing agricultural cooperatives' empowerment of youth

1. Cooperatives, governments and the international community should play a proactive role in **raising the image/profile of agriculture.**

2. Cooperatives should become **youth-sensitive, particularly in their representation and governance.**

3. Cooperatives should provide **mentoring, guidance and advisory** services



4. Value **indigenous/traditional** agricultural knowledge and practices

5. Cooperatives, donors and governments should formulate and implement **youth focused agricultural development projects and programmes.**

6. Donors and governments should provide specific **financial support** for the development or strengthening of cooperatives that involve and/or engage with young people.



Thank you!

