

Youth Inclusion Interventions

A Best Practices Guide

The Rainforest Alliance is creating a more sustainable world by using social and market forces to protect nature and improve the lives of farmers and forest communities.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Of the 1.3 billion young people (aged 15 to 24) in the world, one-fifth are not employed, not in education, nor in training (NEET). Young people are three times as likely as adults to be unemployed, and globally, young women are twice as likely as young men to have NEET status. This troubling youth employment crisis is shaped by many factors, including social exclusion of marginalized youth, lack of employment opportunities for rural youth, and a lack of skill readiness for those entering the job market. Formal education and training systems often do not reach or cater to the needs of marginalized youth, leaving them without the skills needed to realize their aspirations. Of those who are employed, young workers continue to face high rates of poverty, in part because in most developing economies, opportunities for young people are mainly in the informal sector, where job security is scarce, wages are low and learning opportunities at work are limited.

The average age of farmers globally is 60 years old, and young people are increasingly choosing careers outside of agriculture and forestry. As the demand for commodities such as coffee, cocoa, and wood products continue to rise globally, it is crucial to find approaches that both motivate youth to choose careers in these sectors and ensure that these careers can offer a stable future. Young people can provide the innovation, leadership, and ambition necessary to ensure the

long-term sustainability and well-being of agricultural communities. However, they often face barriers to meaningful inclusion in these sectors, pushing many to migrate to seek work in other areas. Barriers include lack of access to land, finances, and the market; lack of participation in local policy-making; skills mismatch in the labor market; and lack of educational and capacity building opportunities. Working toward youth inclusion requires addressing these barriers and gaps to create an environment in which young people have the access and ability to fully participate in society.

This guide aims to provide an overview of best practices of youth inclusion programming in sustainable agriculture and forestry. It first provides context on global trends in youth employment, as well as regional and sector-specific characteristics related to youth. This guide then outlines the main barriers to youth inclusion across regions and sectors. Using a combination of desk research and past learnings, it provides an overview of key interventions to promote youth inclusion which address those barriers. These interventions include training and capacity-building, awareness-raising, experiential learning opportunities, fostering intergenerational dialogue, and mentoring, among others. This guide concludes with advice on monitoring and evaluating youth inclusion interventions, with examples of potential indicators and budget considerations. Links to resources with additional information are also included throughout the guide. The aim is that this document serves as a tool of reference for those who wish to develop youth-related projects in the regions and sectors in which they work.



FIGURE 1

Overview of the global labor market for youth. *Source: International Labour Organization*

extremely poor	moderately poor	not poor
13%	17%	71%
NEET	not employed but in education	employed
267 million	509 million	429 million

CONTEXT

Global Trends

Of the 1.3 billion young people worldwide, 70 percent live in rural areas¹, and 20 percent are not employed or in school (i.e., in basic education or technical training)². 13 percent of young workers suffer extreme poverty, while 17 percent live in moderate poverty. 67 million young people between the age of 15 and 24 report are actively seeking work but cannot find it. One challenge influencing these trends is that formal education and training systems often do not reach marginalized youth or cater to young women, rural or indigenous youth, or youth with disabilities, leaving them without the skills needed to realize their potential or aspirations.³ In most developing economies, opportunities for young people are concentrated in the informal sector, where job security is scarce, wages are low and learning opportunities at work are limited.

While “youth” is a relatively fluid term, the United Nations defines “youth” as people between the ages of 15 and 24, and it is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood’s independence.⁴

The average age of farmers globally is 60 years old, and young people are increasingly choosing careers outside of agriculture.¹ Youth are less attracted to agricultural and forestry jobs because of the barriers they face entering and profiting from the industry and the presence of other, more attractive options for their future. However, the demand for commodities such as coffee, cocoa, and wood products continue to increase globally, with no slowdown in sight. To meet the demand for agricultural and forestry products, it is crucial to find approaches that both motivate youth to choose careers in these sectors, and to ensure these commodities can provide a stable future.

There are many reasons why fewer youth are engaging in the agricultural and forestry sectors: The unavailability of land and access to finances, market connections, training on business skills; the limited modernization; low wages; negative stigmas all make careers in agriculture and forestry less accessible and attractive for young people. The present challenge lies in creating jobs for the expanding youth population and addressing working poverty, the skills mismatch, and the suboptimal school-to-work transition.⁵ There is no single panacea to the problems, but there is a need for a holistic, participatory approach between communities, the private sector, governments, and all stakeholders.

Social Inclusion

In every country and sector, certain groups face barriers that prevent them from fully participating in political, economic, and social life. Groups may be excluded through legal systems, land and labor markets, discriminatory attitudes, beliefs, and/or perceptions⁶, among other reasons. Working toward youth inclusion requires addressing these barriers and gaps to create an environment in which youth have the access and ability to fully participate in society. According to the World Bank, social inclusion is the process of improving the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society – improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged based on their identity.⁷ Both barriers to, and opportunities for, inclusion intersect in three domains: markets, services, and spaces;⁸ policies and programs must be connected across these domains. Attitudes and perceptions are also key to social inclusion. Feeling included and respected is central to people’s participation in society, while conversely, people’s attitudes shape which groups get included and excluded.⁹

Youth and the Sustainable Development Goals

Engaging youth has become a key priority in international development efforts, particularly in the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This set of 17 goals, launched by the UN

1 www.fao.org/publications/card/en/c/CA8209EN/

2 The status of not being in employment, education, nor training is also known as NEET. This indicator provides a measure of youth who are outside the educational system, not in training and not in employment, and serves as a broader measure of the youth labor market than youth unemployment. (ILO)

3 <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2018/12/WorldYouthReport-2030Agenda.pdf>

4 <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-definition.pdf>

5 Ibid

6 <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/social-inclusion>

7 Ibid

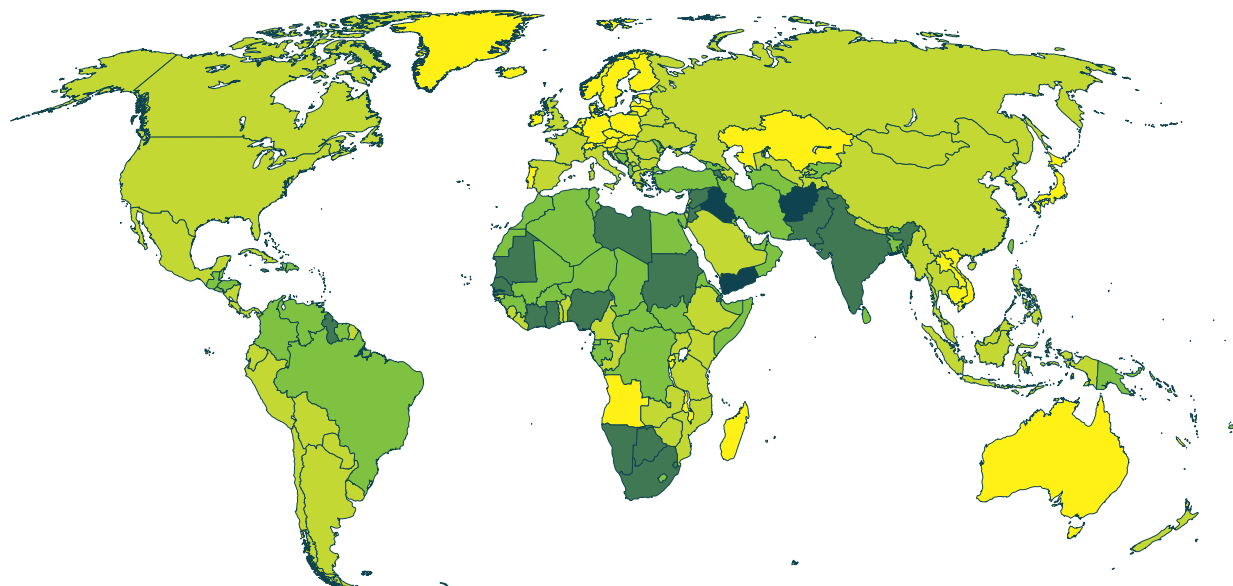
8 <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/16195>

9 Ibid

FIGURE 2

Share of youth aged 15–24 not in employment, education or training (NEET), modeled estimates for 2018. *Source: ILO modelled estimates, ILOSTAT*

● 0–10% ● 11–20% ● 21–30% ● 31–40% ● 41–50%



in 2015, aims to achieve social inclusion, economic prosperity, and environmental sustainability for all people.¹⁰ While all the SDGs are critical to youth development, the areas of education and employment feature prominently, as well as gender equality, good health, reducing inequality, combating poverty and hunger, and action on environmental issues.¹¹ Of the 232 global indicators in the SDG framework, 90 can be considered related to youth development.¹² There is increasing recognition of the importance of engaging youth in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Referred to as the “torch-bearers” of the 2030 Agenda, youth play a pivotal role as both beneficiaries and partners in its implementation.¹³

REGIONAL TRENDS

Africa

With almost 200 million people aged 15 to 24, Africa has the youngest population in the world.¹⁴ As an increasing number of African children complete primary school and transition into young adulthood, most face the challenges of unem-

ployment and underemployment.¹⁵ As illustrated in Figure 2, the African region has disproportionately high shares of shares of youth not in employment, education, or training.¹⁶

The population of Africa is expected to double from the current estimate of 1.2 billion to 2.4 billion by 2050,¹⁷ which will put huge strains on the—under-productive—traditional agricultural sector. As it stands today, agricultural productivity of subsistence crops needs to be radically strengthened to increase food availability. Vulnerable employment and working poverty are higher in sub-Saharan Africa than any other region. “Vulnerable unemployment” includes own account workers (i.e., self-employed) and unpaid contributing family workers (i.e., those working for a family business or farm for no wage). “Working poverty” refers to the status of those that continue to live in poverty despite earning an income; it stood at an estimated 40 percent in 2012.¹⁸ Marginalized youth—including young women, youth with disabilities, youth from minority populations, and youth living in remote rural areas—face particular challenges in accessing work, and risk being trapped in vulnerable employment and working poverty.¹⁹

10 [http://www.youthsolutions.report/blog/2019/9/25/youth-solutions-report-2019-showcases-50-initiatives-for-the-sdgs#:~:text=The%20Sustainable%20Development%20Goals%20\(SDGs,all%20193%20UN%20member%20states.](http://www.youthsolutions.report/blog/2019/9/25/youth-solutions-report-2019-showcases-50-initiatives-for-the-sdgs#:~:text=The%20Sustainable%20Development%20Goals%20(SDGs,all%20193%20UN%20member%20states.)

11 <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2018/12/WorldYouthReport-2030Agenda.pdf>

12 <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2018/12/WorldYouthReport-2030Agenda.pdf>

13 <https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2018/12/WorldYouthReport-2030Agenda.pdf>

14 African Union – Youth at the AU website: www.africa-youth.org/

15 Unemployment refers to those that do not have a job while underemployment refers to those employed at a lower level than their qualifications

16 <https://ilostat.ilo.org/topics/youth/#>

17 CTA (2016) *An ICT Agripreneurship Guide: A Path to Success for Young ACP Entrepreneurs*

18 Moore, Karen. (2015). Fostering economic opportunities for youth in Africa: A comprehensive approach. *Enterprise Development & Microfinance*, 26 (2). 195–209.

19 Moore, Karen. (2015). Fostering economic opportunities for youth in Africa: A comprehensive approach. *Enterprise Development & Microfinance*, 26 (2). 195–209.

In most Sub-Saharan African countries, agriculture is the largest employment sector, employing about 65% of the total labor force.²⁰ Particularly in rural areas with limited education opportunities, agriculture employs about 60 percent of people aged 15–34 years.²¹ However, they typically earn low wages, are employed under casual or seasonal arrangements, and often face unsafe, exploitive working conditions with very limited opportunities for skills development.²²

Latin America

There are approximately 106 million young people between the ages of 15 and 24 in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), representing 20 percent of the region's total population, and there are over 100 million adolescents between 10 and 18 years of age.²³ Approximately 35 million youth work and 13 million combine work and school. However, of those that work, over half (56%) are employed in the informal sector.²⁴ Of the total youth population in Latin America and the Caribbean, 19.6 percent are unemployed, and an average of 39 percent live in poverty.²⁵ The situation is even more dire in Central America, where more than 1 million youth between the ages of 15 and 25 are out of school and unemployed.²⁶ In Central America in particular, economic opportunities in the formal market are limited and inaccessible to the most at-risk youth. In addition, continued violence in Central America has caused a decline in investments and economic growth.²⁷

In 2018, 14.1 percent of total labor force in LAC was employed in agriculture. Countries such as Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Haiti, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and Peru employed more than a quarter of their labor forces in the agricultural sector.²⁸ Latin America's agriculture and forestry-producing communities are in rural areas, often isolated and neglected by their governments. They face rampant poverty and isolation which leads to limited access to social services and information about new farming techniques or services to boost productivity.

In many rural communities in LAC, a dearth of higher education and employment opportunities often leads youth to migrate and seek work in other areas. This leaves rural regions without the leadership, innovation, education, and ambition of their best and brightest young residents.²⁹

20 AGRA. (2015). "Africa Agriculture Status Report 2015: Youth in Agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa."

21 <http://www.fao.org/3/MV562EN/mv562en.pdf>

22 <http://www.fao.org/3/MV562EN/mv562en.pdf>

23 UNICEF (no date). *Fast facts on Adolescents and Youth in Latin America and the Caribbean*.

24 Accessed on January 26, 2020: <https://youtheconomicopportunities.org/blog/8480/future-work-youth-latin-america>

25 UNICEF (no date). *Fast facts on Adolescents and Youth in Latin America and the Caribbean*.

26 <https://www.crs.org/our-work-overseas/program-areas/youth/youth-employment>

27 <https://www.crs.org/our-work-overseas/program-areas/youth/youth-employment>

28 OECD-FAO (2019). *Agricultural Outlook 2019–2028*.

29 <https://www.cepal.org/es/publicaciones/45048-situacion-juven-tudes-rurales-america-latina-caribe>



Asia-Pacific

Over 60 percent of the world's youth live in Asia-Pacific, translating into more than 750 million young people aged 15 to 24 years.³⁰ While significant achievements have been made, young people in this region continually struggle with barriers to accessing education, especially in rural areas. In Indonesia and the Philippines, for example, around a quarter of youth are not in education, employment, or training, and this figure increases to almost one-third for young women and girls.³¹ Of those who do complete a formal education, many face obstacles transitioning into the workforce. This challenge is in part due to the skills-mismatch between education and training systems and the demands of the modern labor market.

Fewer young people are living in rural areas of the Asia Pacific region, because of urbanization and outmigration. Almost half of the region's population now lives in urban areas, a trend that continues accelerating.³² In addition, the demand for jobs in manufacturing and construction is leading to a contraction of employment in agriculture.³³

Transitioning between education and employment is one of the main obstacles youth face in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.³⁴ Despite accounting for only 20 percent of the region's workers, young people aged 15 to 24 account for almost half of Asia-Pacific's jobless population.³⁵ Young people remain nearly four times more likely to be unemployed than their adult counterparts, and as much as 5.4 times more likely in South-Eastern Asia.³⁶ This phenomenon points to fundamental mismatches between education and skills desired in the job market, as well as a lack of decent jobs.

30 <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-regional-escap.pdf>

31 <https://www.un.org/esa/socdev/documents/youth/fact-sheets/youth-regional-escap.pdf>

32 FAO (2015), "Reducing distress migration through decent rural employment", *Rural Transformations – Information Note No. 4*, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Rome

33 <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/9789264298521-5-en/index.html?itemId=/content/component/9789264298521-5-en>

34 <https://social.un.org/youthyear/docs/ESCAPFinal15.pdf>

35 https://www.ilo.org/asia/areas/WCMS_117542/lang-en/index.htm

36 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/documents/publication/wcms_534363.pdf



Youth visit to cocoa farmers in Jembrana, Indonesia. Photo: Auditya Sari / Kalimajari Foundation

BARRIERS & GAPS TO YOUTH INCLUSION

Many challenges to youth inclusion are consistent across sectors and regions. This section will delve into these challenges, which include negative perceptions towards work in the field; lack of access to land, finances, and the market; lack of youth participation in local policymaking; and the challenge of skills mismatch in the labor market.

Low Productivity Linked to Poverty

Low productivity coupled with price fluctuations and low farm gate prices are all factors that keep many farmers in poverty. Most smallholder cocoa farmers in West Africa (producing 70% of the world's cocoa) live on less than US\$1.25 per day.³⁷ Low productivity can also prevent farmers from accruing savings and reinvesting in their farms.³⁸ Without improved access to land and capital, modern farming techniques, and markets, the pathway out of poverty is unclear for many.³⁹ The difficulty many farmers face in earning a profit is one of the several factors causing youth to pursue careers outside of the agricultural sector.

Negative Perceptions Towards Agriculture

Youth generally do not regard agriculture as a viable career option. Vulnerable employment is particularly high for youth on family farms; some are expected to work for no payment, especially if their family is struggling to make ends meet. How-

ever, despite the many challenges, millions of youth continue to engage in agriculture, not as a “last resort,” but because it is the only reality they have known, and often the only productive sector where they live.⁴⁰ While many young people are uninterested in working as farmers, they are quite interested in working in other areas of the value chain, which are seen as more profitable and more skills-based.⁴¹ Still, despite the interest in skills-based training to access jobs in the formal sector, these jobs are often reserved for the highly educated or those with family “connections”.⁴² While there are often skills-based trainings available, many of these trainings do not teach skills that are in high demand, and employer preferences for experienced workers can put youth at risk of remaining jobless or underemployed.

Intergenerational Tensions and Lack of Access to Land

Access to land is fundamental, but several factors make it difficult for youth to acquire. Youth are rarely given their own plots of land while parents are alive—and in countries where land must be subdivided amongst large numbers of siblings, youth can be left with small or fragmented land parcels, or with no land at all.⁴³ Buying land is complicated by a lack of access to finances and credit, and the general unavailability of land. The best way to attain land as a young person is through inheritance. However, land rights are not always straight forward, particularly in Sub Saharan African countries.

40 Ibid

41 USAID. 2014. *Youth and Agriculture in Uganda: An Assessment Combining agriculture improvements and youth development shows promise for both.*

42 Moore, Karen. (2015). Fostering economic opportunities for youth in Africa: A comprehensive approach. *Enterprise Development & Microfinance*, 26 (2), 195-209.

43 AGRA. (2015). “Africa Agriculture Status Report 2015: Youth in Agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa.” p.46

37 <https://sites.unicef.org/csr/css/synthesis-report-children-rights-cocoa-communities-en.pdf>

38 ICI. December 1, 2017. “Cocoa farmers in Ghana experience poverty and economic vulnerability.”

39 Feed the Future, 2016. “Youth Engagement in Agricultural Value Chains Across Feed the Future: A synthesis Report”



In many of these countries, customary land ownership systems still exist, and land and property rights are often unclear and weak. Land tenure varies greatly by region. In the ejido system in México, youth whose families are not among the founding members will never inherit land, nor have a voice in making decisions about communal land.

Complicating matters, customary land tenure systems usually dictate that women's rights to land are linked to their relationship with men, even in cases when the law protects their rights. Yet, land is the most fundamental resource required for improving the livelihoods of rural women.⁴⁴

There also exists a general mistrust of youth with the responsibility to take on agricultural and forestry jobs by themselves. Tensions arise between the traditional means of farming, practiced for generations, and new farming techniques. One result is increased frustration among youth with their inability to make decisions that could enhance production, efficiency, and profitability. While skills training is lacking in the agricultural sector, youth seek more independence to try new techniques for economic growth.⁴⁵ With parents making the decisions, youth are neither developing new skills nor contributing to their families' livelihoods. In this sense, youth are not given a real opportunity to impact their family farms.

44 AGRA. (2015). "Africa Agriculture Status Report 2015: Youth in Agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa." p.47

45 AGRA. (2015). "Africa Agriculture Status Report 2015: Youth in Agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa." p.46

Lack of Access to Finance and Financial Literacy

Young farmers have a considerably difficult time accessing formal credit and finance. In a global survey conducted with young farmers, over 70 percent of respondents stated that access to finance is their most significant difficulty.⁴⁶ Youth rarely meet minimum lending requirements due to limited credit history and collateral.⁴⁷ As a result, their access to finance is typically limited to family or community resources, which are often very minimal.

Some of youth's main challenges in accessing financial services include:

1. A limited presence of such financial service institutions in rural areas.
2. Inappropriate financial services: The lack of understanding of youth farmers' financial capabilities and objectives causes a mismatch with financial products that are not affordable or appropriate for first time borrowers.⁴⁸
3. Youth's limited financial capabilities: Youth tend to have limited knowledge and skills to make sound financial decisions due to their limited or lack of any previous access. For many young people in cocoa and coffee communities, financial illiteracy may be transgenerational, as parents might also have had little experience with financial services. If youth perceive financial services as non-accessible, this will limit their desire to even try.
4. Negative perceptions of youth by finance service providers: Young people's lack of knowledge of financial services creates a negative bias against them by service providers, which in turn makes lending to youth riskier. Gender discrimination can also affect the ability of young women to develop their own financial capability.⁴⁹

Lack of Access to Markets

Access to markets for youth has traditionally been difficult, and is further complicated by the growing influence of standards in global commodity supply chains. Without access to markets, youth will not be able to engage in viable and sustainable agricultural ventures. Barriers to youth entrepre-

46 IFAD. 2014. *Summary of the Findings of the Project Implemented by MIJARC in Collaboration with FAO and IFAD: Facilitating Access of Rural Youth to Agricultural Activities.*

47 https://www.agrilinks.org/sites/default/files/using_agricultural_finance_to_drive_youth_employment_webinar.pdf

48 [http://www.youthsolutions.report/blog/2019/9/25/youth-solutions-report-2019-showcases-50-initiatives-for-the-sdgs#:~:text=The%20Sustainable%20Development%20Goals%20\(SDGs,all%20193%20UN%20member%20states](http://www.youthsolutions.report/blog/2019/9/25/youth-solutions-report-2019-showcases-50-initiatives-for-the-sdgs#:~:text=The%20Sustainable%20Development%20Goals%20(SDGs,all%20193%20UN%20member%20states)

49 Ibid

neurship include a lack of an enterprise culture in many countries; unfavorable legal, policy and regulatory frameworks for youth entrepreneurship; the lack of entrepreneurship education across formal and informal education systems; the lack of access to affordable financing for start-up, investment

or working capital; and little knowledge about and access to business development services and support schemes for youth interested in being entrepreneurs.⁵⁰

Some programs that teach skills development to youth fail to link these skills to the marketplace and their employers. In some cases, the data on the market may be unavailable. In Uganda, for example, a USAID study found that there is a lack of publicly available data on the labor market. This indicates a need to conduct, for example, a coffee value chain assessment/market analysis to understand the coffee labor force, the extent of this market, projections on its growth, how people make money in coffee, and what skills and resources would be needed to access opportunities in this sector.

Lack of Access to Capacity Building

One of the biggest challenges young people face is a lack of skill readiness. Youth and adults alike often have insufficient access to knowledge, information, and education, which limits the possibilities in modernizing and changing farming practices. There is a real need to incorporate agricultural skills into rural education, through schools and vocational training. Agricultural training and education should be adapted to ensure graduates' skills meet the needs of its rural community and labor markets.⁵¹

Skills needed include:

- Foundational skills: literacy and numeracy
- Technical and vocational skills: vary according to market demand and youth interest
- Transferable skills: business and entrepreneurship skills, financial literacy and capability, employability skills
- Soft skills: job searching, networking, comportment on job and interviews, teamwork, communication, customer relations, leadership
- Life skills: positive behavior, cognitive skills for analyzing and using information, personal skills for developing personal agency and managing oneself, and interpersonal skills for communicating and interacting with others
- Technology skills: use of technical software, GIS systems, drone technology, website management, etc.



Lack of Inclusive Policy Frameworks

Too often young people's voices are left out of all policy decision making, program planning, and community assessments, etc. There are only a small number of organizations representing rural youth in the policy-making process, and youth do not receive as much political attention from their governments because they tend to have fewer resources.⁵² When youth are ignored, their multifaceted needs are not discussed or are likely to be misunderstood, leading to poor policy and program planning and intervention. As a result, policies fail to account for the heterogeneity of youth, and do not provide them with effective support.⁵³ In addition, youth often feel excluded from and undervalued by community and family decisions, serving to push them away from a future working on their family farms.

Many countries where cocoa, coffee, and forestry products are produced do not have adequate policy frameworks for youth inclusion, nor sufficient government capacity for implementing these policies, should they exist. Some NGO- and corporate-funded programs have faced challenging implementing environments, where the government is either not on the same page or lacks the will and resources to sustain good practices.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT INTERVENTIONS

Young people are critical to the Rainforest Alliance's mission. Investing in the future of forests and communities means investing in the next generation of leaders, community members, and technicians in sustainable farming and forest management. For this reason, it is critical to design interventions which engage youth and meet their needs, as well as the needs of their communities and the market. This section will outline several youth interventions that can be implemented to address the barriers to youth inclusion.

50 http://ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/---ro-geneva/---sro-moscow/documents/publication/wcms_345719.pdf

51 FAO. "Facilitating Access of Rural Youth to Agricultural Activities".

52 USAID. "How to use agricultural finance interventions to drive youth employment". https://www.agrilinks.org/sites/default/files/using_agricultural_finance_to_drive_youth_employment_webinar.pdf

53 FAO. "Facilitating Access of Rural Youth to Agricultural Activities"



General Guidance on Youth Interventions

Steps to Designing an Intervention

1. Identify needs: Include the voice of young people in baseline assessments to understand their interests, challenges, and opportunities. Not all young people are the same; the opportunities are different for men and women, for young people from urban areas and rural areas, for those who will one day inherit land and those who will never be able to. It is important to understand that while many of the challenges young people face can be similar, situations and opportunities can be very diverse. Including this diversity of perspectives is important for all diagnostics, not just those that focus on social issues.

2. Find opportunities to include activities with young people within projects: Interventions working with young people have more impact when developed along with other interventions in a landscape and not in isolation.

3. Assign budget and appropriate staff to address inclusion issues: To be effective, youth interventions need the right budget and attention—not just a minimum percentage of budget. Technical staff should be trained on social inclusion issues and strategies.

4. Define interventions in a participatory way: It is important to define who the interventions are aimed at, and what activities would be most impactful for these groups and the local context. Activities will differ if working directly with youth, with teachers and academic institutions that shape these young people, with community leaders, or other stakeholders.

5. Create indicators to measure opportunities for young people: Indicators for measuring progress in activities with young people go beyond counting the number of young people in an event. It is important to see the representation of young people in various spaces, but also to create indicators that measure impact on knowledge, skills, attitudes, job opportunities, and participation in decision-making, among others.

Key Interventions

a. Training and Capacity-Building

Youth capacity-building is essential to addressing the skills mismatch and promoting job readiness. It is important that training activities respond to diverse needs, complement existing opportunities, and respond to the labor market. Several key considerations when designing a capacity-building intervention with young people include:

1. Focus on needs of youth and labor market: To ensure that capacity-building meets the needs and objectives of young professionals and the labor market, a clear youth-focused needs assessment should be used.⁵⁴ It is crucial to understand labor and market conditions to support practical avenues for employment for young people. For that reason, market assessments should be used which explain the relationships among private sector actors, highlight profitable and expandable markets, and describe the market environment.⁵⁵

2. Design a holistic approach: Like any youth intervention, capacity-building should not be carried out in isolation. Rather, it should complement other programming/interventions. A holistic approach to capacity-building integrates both formal and informal systems of learning. In other words, it is necessary to consider the ways that formal schooling influences vocational learning, and how each of these interacts with informal learning among peers and between generations.⁵⁶ Effective programs integrate these learning contexts by involving families, the local community, educational institutions, and the workplace.⁵⁷

For capacity-building within schools, one approach is to adapt curricula to address key areas and skills in sustainable agricul-

54 <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5024e.pdf>

55 <http://www.acdivoca.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/LEO-Youth-Engagement-Ag-VCs-Across-FTF.pdf>

56 <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5024e.pdf>

57 <https://www.fhi360.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/re-source-yp-guiding-principals-soft-skills.pdf>

ture and natural resource management. This could be complemented by vocational training for young people geared towards emerging opportunities in local value chains, and addressing gender dimensions such as household work distribution, access to productive resources and inputs, and land rights.⁵⁸

3. Gendered Approach: Gender is an important dimension that influences opportunities to work with youth. Young women are frequently constrained by household workloads, traditional customs and beliefs, and sometimes even limitations on their mobility. In many cases, the challenges of reaching young women with education and training initiatives may be greater than those related to reaching young men.⁵⁹ It is important to ensure that gender dimensions—for example restrictions on women's land rights (either through formal laws or gender-discriminatory social norms) in some societies—are incorporated into training and sensitization activities.⁶⁰

4. Invest in training educators and trainers: Equipping educators and trainers with specific and contextualized materials and knowledge is key to effective capacity-building. Training of trainers and peer-to-peer training are also effective methods of building the scale and longevity of the program.⁶¹

b. Awareness-raising and exposing youth to the future employment opportunities

There are many young people who would like to engage with the agriculture or forestry sectors but find it unclear where to begin or how they could contribute. Building greater awareness of careers in agriculture and natural resource management among young people is critical, particularly by exposing them to opportunities to enter the market, and farming and forestry as a business.⁶² Awareness-raising can spark interest, address gaps in knowledge, and expose youth to the many ways they could contribute.

Awareness-raising can cover a huge range of activities, including anything that involves people understanding, learning, or doing something new, envisioning the future, working out how to change something in their lives, or talking to someone else about what they have done.⁶³ There are several key elements of successful awareness-raising interventions. These include setting clear goals, developing tailored messages for target groups, engaging other stakeholders and partners, and using proper communication channels.⁶⁴ These elements are all interrelated and can strengthen the impact of an awareness-raising activity.

One method of awareness-raising is through partnering with formal educational institutions. For example, in Calakmul,



Mexico, the Rainforest Alliance worked with a local technical forestry school to provide over 250 hours of coursework to a cohort of 70 young people through a program called, “Nuestra Selva, Nuestro Futuro” from 2016–2019. These courses integrated capacity-building and awareness-raising by focusing on deepening students’ content knowledge about the forest and their communities and exploring job interests and opportunities with the students.

Effective awareness-raising also leverages the power of the media and communication technology. Communication technology can be used to educate and train those unable to attend higher education institutions, and it can help young people spread knowledge, build networks, and find employment.⁶⁵ The Rainforest Alliance and Bali-based partner, the Kalimajari Foundation harnessed this potential through awareness-raising activities in Jembrana, Indonesia. Through the Sustainable Action and Advocacy in Kakao (SUBAK) project, students participated in an in-depth research program about the cacao sector in Jembrana and shared their experiences through social media networks. This allowed them to disseminate this information widely, broadening the reach of awareness-raising beyond those who participated in the program.

c. Experiential Learning Opportunities

Experiential learning is a widely used approach to teaching that links the students’ education, work, and experience.⁶⁶ In this approach, educators engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop people’s capacity to contribute to their communities.⁶⁷ Best practice in youth programming indicates that young people—particularly those with low literacy levels—fare best in experiential settings that build on their previous knowledge and facilitate learning

⁵⁸ <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5024e.pdf>

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² <https://ypard.net/news/9-ways-engage-youth-agriculture>

⁶³ http://www.eli-net.eu/fileadmin/ELINET/Redaktion/user_upload/The_key_features_of_successful_awareness_raising_campaigns_10-15_LM_ELINET.pdf

⁶⁴ http://www.eli-net.eu/fileadmin/ELINET/Redaktion/user_upload/The_key_features_of_successful_awareness_raising_campaigns_10-15_LM_ELINET.pdf

⁶⁵ <https://ypard.net/news/9-ways-engage-youth-agriculture>

⁶⁶ <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/43766169.pdf>

⁶⁷ <https://www.aee.org/what-is-ee>



skills.⁶⁸ A key principle of experiential education is that experiences require the learner to take initiative, make decisions, and be accountable for results.⁶⁹ Social and emotional skills are also critical to experiential learning, as it often requires skills in teamwork, collaboration and relationship-building.⁷⁰

Work-based learning experiences typically incorporate career awareness, career exploration, career practicums, and career preparation.⁷¹ Activities include worksite tours, job shadowing, internships, and apprenticeships. A preliminary step when designing experiential learning opportunities with businesses is identifying labor market needs. Key questions to ask before identifying potential partners are “What do we need and how can business/industry help us?” and “Who are our local employers and what are their needs?”. These inquiries can be supported with data on occupational and industry growth to provide a long-term view of labor market needs and their relation to student work-based learning experiences.⁷²

The benefits of experiential education include job preparation, leadership skills development, social management and interaction, facilitation of dialogue and critical thinking, and knowledge for personal growth. Practical experiential learning allows young people to practice their skills while being exposed to potential employment opportunities, as well as community members and leaders.

68 <http://www.acdivoca.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/LEO-Youth-Engagment-Ag-VCs-Across-FTF.pdf>

69 <https://www.aee.org/what-is-ee>

70 <https://teachingcommons.unt.edu/teaching-essentials/engaged-learning/components-experiential-learning>

71 <https://www.gssaweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Best-Practices-in-K-12-Business-Partnerships-1.pdf>

72 <https://www.gssaweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Best-Practices-in-K-12-Business-Partnerships-1.pdf>

d. Partnerships with educational institutions

Schools are one of the most influential developmental contexts that shape youth.⁷³ Therefore, partnering with educational institutions can be an effective way to address many of the barriers youth face, from lack of career-readiness to exclusion from community decision-making structures.

Partnerships with schools could focus on developing new educational tracks focusing on technical skills, providing training and professional development with teachers and administrators, and carrying out awareness-raising activities with students. Schools can be valuable partners, as they can provide recruitment avenues, legitimacy and networks within the community, and resources such as facilities, staff, and data.⁷⁴ These kinds of partnerships enable the sharing of capacity to achieve common goals of engaging youth with agriculture and providing skill development.⁷⁵

A key first step in establishing a school partnership is to assess the needs of the students and schools and determine how a partnership could enhance the educational experience.⁷⁶ It is important that the potential contributions of the organization or business match the needs of the students and schools (i.e., human resources for tutoring and mentoring, and technical training and equipment).⁷⁷

e. Creating safe spaces for young people to build social and emotional skills

An important part of youth work is creating spaces of trust where participants can share experiences and support each other. Strategies to promoting strong relationships and group cohesion include acquaintance exercises, collaborative group work, perspective-taking exercises, and peer modeling.⁷⁸ Experiential learning opportunities such as internships and apprenticeships can also provide spaces for young people to build responsibility, communication, teamwork, and other soft skills, in addition to field-specific technical skills.⁷⁹ Social and emotional programming has been found to improve students’ academic achievement and positive social behavior, while reducing their conduct problems and emotional distress.⁸⁰ Social and emotional development for youth includes developing capacity to: (a) form close and secure adult and peer relationships, (b) experience, manage, and express a full range of emotions, and (c) explore the environment and learn—all in the context of family, community, and culture.⁸¹

73 <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED537764.pdf>

74 <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED537764.pdf>

75 <https://innovate.cired.vt.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Eissler-BrennanYouth-EngagementFINAL.pdf>

76 http://www.nhscholars.org/School-Business%20How_to_Guide.pdf

77 http://www.nhscholars.org/School-Business%20How_to_Guide.pdf

78 <https://www.fhi360.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/resource-yp-guiding-principals-soft-skills.pdf>

79 <https://www.fhi360.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/resource-yp-guiding-principals-soft-skills.pdf>

80 <https://casel.org/preschool-and-elementary-edition-casel-guide/>

81 https://naturalstart.org/sites/default/files/journal/5_final_carter.pdf



f. Creating an enabling environment for youth participation

There are many spaces that young people do not have access to, including decision-making spaces, as well as training, management, and entrepreneurial spaces. One way to address these access issues is to work with local decision-making bodies to create an environment that enables youth participation. The first step to any approach to increasing youth participation is to understand the structures in place, current youth civic engagement efforts, and the barriers young people face.

It is crucial to work with local governing bodies to create an environment that enables authentic youth civic engagement. According to the National League of Cities, the four critical elements of authentic youth civic engagement are:

1. A **Setting** in which the civic climate is welcoming and inviting to youth, acknowledging their role in public policy, planning and decision-making.
2. A **Structure** in which the organization and system that supports youth civic engagement meets the needs of the local government and the interests of the young people.
3. A **Strategy** that offers a wide range of activities and provides youth with a breadth and depth of meaningful opportunities for participation in local government.
4. **Support** from adult allies, both within and outside local government, which enables the young people involved to have a real impact on issues that concern them.⁸²

82 <https://4-h.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/authentic-youth-engagement-gid-jul101.pdf>

For additional guidance, see the National League of Cities' framework for authentic youth civic engagement.⁸³

Creating an enabling environment also involves supporting entrepreneurship, as youth often face challenges in the legal, cultural, and educational business environments. Strategies for promoting youth entrepreneurship include: entrepreneurship culture campaigns, the promotion of young successful entrepreneurs as role models, business idea competitions, awards, media coverage, youth business events and entrepreneurship education.⁸⁴ Improvements of the legal and regulatory environment could focus on tackling the administrative and regulatory burdens—such as business registration, the time it takes to register, the cost, the number of steps/procedures, minimum capital requirements, and property rights—which disproportionately impact youth-owned businesses.⁸⁵ As with most interventions, in order for entrepreneurship policies to be effective, they should be integrated within the context of wider employment policies and programs, across multiple sectors and levels.⁸⁶

g. Fostering intergenerational dialogue

Advancing youth inclusion does not just involve working with young people. This work also requires the participation of older adults and spaces of coexistence and intergenerational dialogue.

83 Ibid.

84 http://ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---europe/---ro-geneva/---sro-moscow/documents/publication/wcms_345719.pdf

85 Ibid.

86 Ibid.

Promoting intergenerational dialogue is a process of relationship-building between younger and older generations through shared experiences and regular contact.⁸⁷ Beyond the human component of relationship-building, intergenerational models are also increasingly being designed in which participants explore local issues and work together to improve local conditions.⁸⁸ In general, effective intergenerational programs emerge as partnerships in which: (a) organizations have complementary goals and objectives, (b) the project involves multiple partners, and (c) the partnerships work toward meeting existing needs.⁸⁹

h. Creating mentoring opportunities

Access to other professionals for communication, inputs and support is very valuable for young people. Mentoring relationships enable youth to develop relevant skills and competencies for rural development,⁹⁰ and can even support capacity-development among trainers and trainees.⁹¹

Mentoring can support professional and career development through the transfer of knowledge, skills and networks, and can also be a way to excite and encourage young people to become leaders in their fields.⁹² “Mentoring” is the process of direct transfer of experience and knowledge from one person to another, and a “mentor” is anyone who makes a positive, guiding influence on another person’s life.⁹³ Mentorship may include organizational staff and representatives from other groups, companies, and academic institutions. It is a two-way relationship where young people also actively contribute.

When designing a mentoring program, it is important to understand the needs and motivations of the potential participants to define the objectives and approach.⁹⁴ Approaches to mentoring include in-person mentoring, online/remote mentoring, and event-based mentoring (both one-time and long-term).⁹⁵ It is important to choose the mentoring approach that is appropriate for your audience and objectives.

i. Facilitating access to finance

Access to finance is crucial to improving the ability of young people to pursue viable careers in the agriculture and forestry sectors. Interventions can focus on altering the requirements around accessing finance so that more young people can open accounts, take out loans, etc. Designing a financial service intervention begins with understanding the regula-

tory environment and market conditions for youth financial services and identifying providers that want to offer youth financial services in rural areas.⁹⁶ The long-term commitment of financial service providers to including youth is also critical. Offering youth financial services should be clearly aligned with an organization’s mission and long-term strategy.⁹⁷ Non-financial services can also be provided to increase youth access to finance. This includes financial education, business/technical training, mentoring for start-up businesses, and linking youth clients to an experienced NGO.⁹⁸

j. Facilitating market linkages with the private sector

Involving the private sector can be an effective way to increase employment opportunities for young people and to make sure that skills development reflects the needs of the labor market. The private sector can support youth by providing incentives to engage in agriculture, forestry and agribusiness—for example, through internships, apprenticeships, and training programs to prepare youth to lead and manage rural businesses.⁹⁹ These kinds of partnerships are typically characterized as public-private partnerships (PPPs) and they are a form of cooperation between public sector and private sector actors working toward a common goal, while sharing risks, resources, and competencies.¹⁰⁰

A key consideration in working with private sector partners is that most youth in developing economies work in the informal sector, where training is typically done through informal apprenticeships. In those contexts, it would benefit both youth and employers to extend to apprenticeships the kind of skills certification systems normally applied to formal technical training.¹⁰¹ Entrepreneurship training can increase economic activity and business start-ups among youth, and sometimes even their incomes. These positive outcomes result when training is combined with mentoring, support services, and financial assistance to start an enterprise.¹⁰² Crucial to the success of working with the private sector on youth interventions is to ensure that the private sector is involved in the design of the intervention. The intervention must be demand-driven; the participation of firms in the design of interventions, and in all subsequent stages, is therefore essential to ensure effectiveness.¹⁰³

87 <https://aese.psu.edu/outreach/intergenerational/curriculum-and-activities/intergenerational-activities-sourcebook>

88 <https://aese.psu.edu/outreach/intergenerational/program-areas/environmental-education/generations-united/generations-united-for-environmental-awareness-and-action>

89 Ibid.

90 <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5024e.pdf>

91 Ibid.

92 Kovacevic, Michelle, Sarah Dickson-Hoyle, Dorothy Mukhebi, and Pamela Yoga-Yieko. 2018. *Coordinating A Mentoring Program: A Toolkit for Agriculture, Forestry, Landscapes and Other Sectors*. pdf. Young Professionals for Agricultural Development. https://ypard.net/sites/default/files/resources/toolkit_v4_1_0.pdf.

93 https://ypard.net/sites/default/files/resources/toolkit_v4_1_0.pdf

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.

96 https://static.globalinnovationexchange.org/s3fs-public/asset/document/ryfs_how_to_0.pdf?ZHQLiwenRk9dUyWHIAaAxSH4INixKC57

97 Ibid.

98 Ibid.

99 <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/15396/Feed-the-Future-CaseStudy-Youth-Ag-ICT.pdf>

100 <https://www.s4ye.org/sites/default/files/2017-06/The%20Private%20Sector%20and%20Youth%20Skills%20and%20Employment%20Programs.pdf>

101 Ibid.

102 Ibid.

103 <https://includeplatform.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/One-pager-private-sector-youth-employment-final-version-1.pdf>

MONITORING AND EVALUATING YOUTH INTERVENTIONS

Appropriate indicators are crucial to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of a youth intervention. Monitoring refers to setting targets and milestones to measure progress and achievement during a program; evaluation is a process of assessing the success of a program in meeting its goals and reflecting on the lessons learned at the end of the program.¹⁰⁴

Indicators

There are no standard indicators for measuring young people's development.¹⁰⁵ They vary depending on the interven-

tion, the intended outcomes, and the audience. There are also several strategies for measuring these indicators. These include pre- and post-program tests, surveys, interviews, and focus groups with participants and other stakeholders. The table below shows some examples of indicators and the interventions they could be used to evaluate. This is not a comprehensive list, and more indicators and specific guidance about measuring them exist. It is important to note that wherever possible, indicators should be disaggregated by relevant social segments including gender, geographic location, marginalized or at-risk populations, and age.¹⁰⁶

104 Kovacevic, Michelle, Sarah Dickson-Hoyle, Dorothy Mukhebi, and Pamela Yoga-Yieke. 2018. *Coordinating A Mentoring Program: A Toolkit for Agriculture, Forestry, Landscapes and Other Sectors*. pdf. Young Professionals for Agricultural Development. https://ypard.net/sites/default/files/resources/toolkit_v4_1_0.pdf.

105 <https://amg.um.dk/en/tools/youth-in-development/standard-youth-indicators/>

106 <https://www.youthpower.org/youth-dhrg-toolkit-m-and-e>

107 <https://www.youthpower.org/ye-indicator-youth-level>

108 Ibid.

109 Ibid.

110 <https://www.youthpower.org/sites/default/files/YouthPower/resources/PYD%20Measurement%20Toolkit%20Final.pdf>

111 Ibid.

112 https://static.globalinnovationexchange.org/s3fs-public/asset/document/PYD%20Measurement%20Toolkit%20Final.pdf?FmETOPj28pX-hWjfwDXARknamNBVG_r

113 Ibid.

TABLE 1

INDICATOR EXAMPLE	TYPE OF INTERVENTION	DESCRIPTION
Increase in content knowledge / understanding of subject area	Capacity-Building, Awareness-Raising	Measures the effectiveness of learning activities, the degree to which youth gain a deeper understanding of the subject area.
% increase in youth full-time employment	Capacity-Building, Experiential Learning, Market Linkages with Private Sector	Measures the degree to which interventions better equip youth to gain meaningful employment.
# of youth participating in local governing body ¹⁰⁷	Create an enabling environment	Measures the level of engagement of youth in decision-making bodies, and the degree to which the intervention lowered the barriers to youth involvement in local government
Increased youth report of positive value and/or recognition by adults ¹⁰⁸	Intergenerational dialogue, Mentoring	Measures changes in attitudes, the degree to which youth feel valued by community members, and that community members recognize that youth can positively impact the community. ¹⁰⁹
Increased interpersonal skills ¹¹⁰	Social and Emotional Learning	Measures development of skills that are needed to communicate & interact with others, including verbal and non-verbal communication, listening, assertiveness, conflict resolution and negotiation strategies ¹¹¹
# of youth-friendly laws and policies, # of youth who report living in a society with youth-friendly laws and policies ¹¹²	Create an enabling environment	Measures the degree to which youth have a stronger voice in, and are better served by, local and national institutions. ¹¹³

Budget Considerations

For the above interventions to be effective, it is crucial to assign the right budget and people to carry them out and to monitor and evaluate the impact which will depend on context and sector. The table below describes some budget considerations to account for when designing youth inclusion interventions.

TABLE 2

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS	
Staff	Ensure there is sufficient time of dedicated staff. Consider hiring a new position to focus on youth or other inclusion issues.
Materials/Equipment	In addition to workshop materials/costs, consider funds for technical equipment for school partners that would enhance student learning (GPS, tree measurement tools, etc.)
Travel Costs for Students/Stipends	If developing experiential learning opportunities, consider including stipends for student participants to enable their travel and expenses for participating.
Expert Facilitators	If introducing students to experts in the field, consider per diems for facilitators or support in travel/meal cost of mentors.
Monitoring and Evaluation	Ensure dedicated funding to design, collect and monitor indicators specifically for youth inclusion, including baseline assessments and interviews of youth.
Seed funding for entrepreneurs	If developing an entrepreneurship program, consider providing funding for youth participants to take first steps in carrying out their business ideas.

