UNDERSTANDING RURAL YOUTH: 
SKILLS AND DECENT WORK IN 
TANZANIA

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Preface

This research is conducted as partial fulfillment for the Masters of Development Practice Degree. The research was done, between June - July, 2018, during the researcher’s field placement assignment at the Embassy of Ireland in Tanzania. Though there was a time pressure during the assignment, the researcher was able to provide key findings and lessons which may be used to inform program design and further research.
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Tanzania demographic pattern features a labor market which is dominated by youth, according to the National Bureau of statistics (NBS) 2014 report, who account for 60 percent of the labor force out of which 58 percent is represented by rural youth. This youth trend presents the country an opportunity and a risk. If harnessed well, it can be a positive transformational driving force for Tanzania, backing its shift from agrarian to industrial economy, providing innovative solutions in the education, health, technology and manufacturing sectors. On the contrary, if the country fails to harness this opportunity, it implies there will be increased unemployment and dissatisfaction of the youth which might lead to security risk due to political instability and socio economic crises.

Tanzania’s unemployment rate declined from 13.2 in 2006 to 11.7 percent in 2014, yet for same period this rate rose among rural youth from 7.9 to 8.2 percent. The rural youth livelihood is mainly dependent on agriculture. Tanzania’s agriculture sector generates 69% of the employment while contributing 31 percent to the GDP. Though agriculture holds potential to provide employment to rural youth, the sector is plagued by low productivity which is featured in poor quality of employment, in terms of return/income.

The government of Tanzania has set “National Strategy for Youth Involvement in Agriculture (NSYIA) 2016-2021.” The NSYIA acknowledges the Sustainable Development Goals – ‘Decent Work and economic Growth’ SDG-8’s, particular focus to youth and the need to increase education and training access to youth with two goals set under it, ibid. Yet the success of the SDGs and global community in meeting the youth challenge will heavily depend on countries like Tanzania’s ability and commitment to understand youth, develop their skill and overall harness the opportunities of the demographic dividend. This research hopes to augment in this regard by identifying the areas where the rural youth are enthusiastic to develop their livelihoods, their main skill gaps and the support that is required.

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4 Ibid
1.2 Definition of terms and concepts

Youth- this paper uses the Tanzanian definition for youth, accordingly youth in this report refers to a person between ages of 15-35 ibid, for statistical figures, unless and otherwise specifically specified.\textsuperscript{v} However, any reference of youth from the primary data implies youth between18-35 years, as the researcher only included this age group during the survey.

Decent work- The ILO defines decent work as a concept that "...sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men."\textsuperscript{vi} This paper, however, focuses on the productivity and income aspects.

Underemployment- This paper uses the working definition used by the NBS. Accordingly, underemployment is referred as underutilization of productive capacity of employed population. This could be in the form of partial lack of work, low income, low productivity and inadequate use of skills of the employed population.\textsuperscript{vii}

Value chain- The definition used in this paper borrows FAO’s value chain concept, which involves an entire range of actors and their interlinked value-adding activities involved in the production, aggregation, processing, distribution, consumption and disposal of food products be it crop production or livestock.\textsuperscript{viii}

1.3 Statement of the problem

The figures from the 2014 labor survey show there is sever underemployment and job vulnerability in rural jobs. Out of the total youth employed, 82.3 percent or approximately 9.059 million youth are in vulnerable employment of which 93.7 percent (8.5 million youth) are found in the rural areas. This clearly shows the prevalent poverty among the rural youth and the employment condition which is not formal and decent. The working condition the rural youth engaged in are, thus, low earning low productivity, with poor working environment including workers safety and rights. The low productivity is also manifested in the high underemployment conditions among rural youth. The rural youth

\textsuperscript{v} Ibid
\textsuperscript{vii} NBS, 2014
underemployment rate is the highest among male youth at 14.2, followed by rural female youth at 12.8 percent. One of the common reasons is that the rural economy is seasonal and youth who are engaged solely in agriculture find themselves unproductive/idle in off seasons.

In a background paper for Feed Africa action plan, Sanginga outlines that, “rural youth face various challenges when trying to develop their livelihood on agriculture or agribusiness, though there is high potential in the sector.”\textsuperscript{ix} On the other hand, the gap between the labor supply and the absorption capacity of the economy to offer decent employment can be linked with existence of lower, yet developing level of the formal economy. However, it is hard to deduce that the unemployment and underemployment as the sole result of it. Therefore, un/underemployment is not only a function of the robustness of the economic activity, but also the skill and education level of young people. The degree of employment vulnerability among youth increases with the lower the education level of the youth. The NBS 2014 reported that 94.8 percent and 85.4 percent of youth who never attended primary school and who only finished primary level are in the vulnerable employment, respectively.\textsuperscript{x} This implies that majority of the rural youth who are engaged in agriculture fall in this category and are in the vulnerable employment. However, according to Sanginga, the quality of training along agricultural value chains, coupled with credit and transfer of technologies can have a huge influence upon both the livelihoods of youth and the process of agricultural transformation.\textsuperscript{xi} Therefore, for the transformation of Tanzanian agriculture, it is critical to support the rural youth access training and other support programs.

Given the above, this paper aimed at identifying the value chain where the rural youth are located currently and where they aspire to shift to. It also assessed the skill gaps and other challenges that are impending their endeavor, so as appropriate training and other support systems can be designed to make them more economically empowered.

1.4 Objectives

To contribute to better understanding of youth skills, existing perceived barriers and opportunities to decent employment and upgrading in the agricultural value chain, so as this knowledge can be mainstreamed in designing new and/or improving of existing livelihood and youth empowerment projects.

\textsuperscript{x} NBS, 2014
\textsuperscript{xi} Sanginga, 2015
The specific objectives include:

- Identify the current agricultural activity youth are engaged in the study area
- Identify activities youth are enthusiastic about as their future engagements
- Examine perceived barriers that are limiting youth from moving to the value chain they are interested in, and secure decent employment with special focus given to skills
- Provide recommendations that may inform program design by development partners and others.

1.5 Research Question

The central research question is

- What are the perceived barriers of rural youth in the agriculture economic activity to secure decent employment and upgrade in the agricultural value chain?
  - Which agricultural value chain is more attractive for the rural youth and regarded as having opportunities that meet the youth need?
  - Which points in the chain are the youth specifically attracted to given their current potential and aspirations?
  - What are the skills and other area of support that are required by the rural youth to ensure decent employment in their selected area of the value chain?

1.6 Methodology

This research is primarily a qualitative research. The research used primary data and secondary data sources. Triangulation approach aimed at increasing the validity of the whole research has been put in place by collecting data from: literature review, key informant interview (KII) with stakeholders and field data from rural youth.

Selection of study area

Arusha region was selected as a study area based on two reasons. Firstly, during the KII and literature review, horticulture production came up as one of the top areas where rural youth are shifting to and Arusha was identified as one of the major producers of horticulture. Moreover, the region has other livelihoods like crop production and livestock. Secondly, Irish Aid, which is the host organization of the researcher, had previously worked in the area. This has provided the researcher an advantage to be linked with organizations working around agricultural skills development and horticulture.
Data collection process

Two rural and one semi rural wards\textsuperscript{xii} have been selected from Arusha district, based on proximity and livelihood opportunities. In Olorien ward which represents the semi rural, the instrument was pilot-tested and the result was used to provide glimpse of the semi rural setting. The other rural wards are Oltroto and Nduruma. Oltroto was selected for having diversified livelihood between livestock and horticulture while Nduruma is dominated by crops and horticulture.

A combination of various data collection method was used in accordance with the theme of the research:

- **KII with various development partners and agricultural member association** was carried out in Dar es Salaam and Arusha. The organizations were selected in consultation with Irish Aid.
- **Focus group discussions (FGDs) and In-depth Individual Interview (IID)** were carried out to collect data from the field. Enumerator administered structured questionnaire was pilot tested and implemented in the research. A half day was spent with the aim of familiarizing the enumerator with the questionnaire. Pilot testing of the instrument was also performed.
  The FGDs included one mixed, three men only and two female only groups.
  Using random sampling, youth (18-35) engaged in agriculture as their main activity and other non agricultural activity were drawn to participate in the FGDs. On average 8 people participated in each FGD.
- **Nine IIDs were carried out with youth.** Youth who are regarded as successful were identified using snow ball method, thorough asking FGD participants to identify their peer whom they regard as “successful”. Yet IIDs was mixed in terms gender and of those referred by the FGDs and randomly selected by the researcher.

Data Analysis

Results from the various sources are analyzed in accordance with the set objectives and research question. Themes summarizing the key findings coming from the field were summarized together.

\textsuperscript{xii} It is an administrative level just above village. The administrative levels in Tanzania are Country- region- District- Ward- Village
1.7 **Limitation**

Survey was initially considered as option instead of FGDs in order to augment the qualitative part and perform quantitative analysis. The number of respondents required to make the survey representative was estimated to be around 500. Yet this option could not be pursued due to shortage of time and budget.

2. **Findings and Discussion**

2.1 **Findings**

2.1.1 **Location of youth in the value chain**

Productions of crops and vegetables with limited level of livestock keeping are the common activities among majority of the youth in the study area. The majority of the youth cultivate potatoes, broccoli, spinach, beans, and maize. Many of the rural youth are highly involved at production level do activities in land preparation, planting, fertilizer application, weeding and harvesting storage at farm level and selling to the market. Other activities performed by the youth include security guards, selling vegetables in retail and food preparation.

The youth in the semi urban village has shown a different mix of livelihoods with less dependency in agriculture than their counterparts from the deep rural villages. They explained that engaging in agricultural activity is becoming more difficult, mainly because their parents are selling their family land to housing developers and creating a scarcity of farming land. Therefore, the common activities that the youth in semi urban areas of the village engage on include, driving Bodaboda (rickshaw and motorcycle taxis), shop keeping, and hairdressing.

Many youth engaged in agriculture said they are making their primary living by working on their parents land. Some of them they use their parents land and cultivate for themselves while others work for the family.

> “I do not own farm but I grow crops in my parent’s farm but the crops belongs to me. Last week I worked from 7am to 12 pm, I worked in the farm and I worked from Monday to Thursday. We have 2 seasons in a year whereby I do all season, so this means that I engage in agriculture throughout the year. I grow maize and potatoes separately, but sometimes I mixed them in farm.”

*Male participant, Age 23, Standard Seven*

Few youth employ other young people to work for them in the farm as daily laborers. There are also few youth who own their own land and others who rent, to cultivate crops
and vegetables. Many of those who engaged in bodaboda driving or shops keeping are working as paid workers.

There are few exceptions to the above way of making living. There are youth who are engaged in input provision such as seed multiplication and welding. They sell these farm inputs to other farmers in the area and outside of the region.

2.1.2 Time spent on agriculture

The majority of youth who said they engage in agriculture indicated that they work for about half day in their farms.

Those engaged in paid jobs indicated that they work for very long hours for small pay which is not enough to cover their living expenses.

“I am a shopkeeper and I am paid at the end of the month. I don’t own farm. I am depending on my salary for living. I work from 8am to 9 pm from Monday to Monday. I am not satisfied with this kind of work because of salary I get; it’s too low I can’t even start my own business.”

Male participant, Age 28, Form Four

Some of the married female respondents believe that they spend too much time on the farm as they have to also engage in the livestock feeding afterwards.

“I am a farmer I am growing maize, beans, green gram and vegetables and I am 20 years old, I own a farm. I am spending lot of time in farm, and wait for produce after long time but when I sell them I don’t get enough money compared to the money I spend and the time I spent, I cannot even pay for medical charges when I get sick.”

Female respondent, Age 20, Form Three

Yet the women also confirmed that during the dry seasons they do not diversify and engage in other activities as they are not allowed engaging in activities that requires going far from the household, hence they stay “idle” for most of such a season.

“…women because they have children, they will have to grow vegetables outside the house in order to get money to buy for her children food. So they had to work extra time.”

Female Youth FGD Participants

“Married female they are not allowed to work like being employed because they don’t have someone to live their children with, so most of the female are staying home idle and there is the time of the year where is dry season and they cannot grow crops so they have to stay home until the season starts.”

Female Youth FGD Participants
For the unmarried men living with working on their parents’ land they also have to do livestock feeding afterwards, while the married men said the livestock feeding is mainly for the wife.

*I work as unpaid livestock keeper for my family livestock, but when we sell milk there and I get 30% of money from selling milk. We do keep cows and goats and feed them so that we can get milk and sell them, we don’t sell livestock. I own 7 acres of land but it’s not cultivated yet, I have rent out for someone to cut trees and burn charcoal so that it can be cleaned. He is not paying anything because it is like he is helping me to clean it.

I only work 4 hours per day every day, and I go to collect food for them once in a week. I am not happy about this because most of the times I stay without work. Also the money I get is not enough for me because we don’t get sufficient milk, and we only have 3 cows.*

*Male participant, Age 23, Form Four*

All agree that they are not happy with the income they earn and it was worse for those who are doing paid work in. Some youth work during the night as security guards in order to supplement their income from agricultural activities. One young man said, he diversified his activity between farm and trading which also allowed him to use his time more efficiently.

*“I own farm and I grow my crops in it. I worked in my farm throughout the year, I cultivate beans, maize and potatoes. I worked from 8am to 12pm, for just three days and the other days I go to the market to sell tomatoes and onions and I buy them at the market and sell them there.”*

*Male participant, Age 23, Form Four*

2.1.3 Driving factors for current positions in the value chain

*“I am doing agriculture because of the skills I got from my parents, since I was young at my family we used to practice agriculture activities. Also I like this work because I don’t have something else to do and I don’t have capital to start another business.”*

*Female participant, Age 20, Standard Seven*

Most of the participants in the Arusha region indicated that they engage in agriculture as this is the only economic activity they could find given their education, skill and exposure level. Agriculture is also viewed as an activity that can be pursued when other options for employment are not possible due to lack of sufficient education, training or other employability skills, when there is not sufficient capital to start another business.
The majority of the youth who participated in the study had only completed primary education which is between grade one and seven. Therefore, most of these youth directly transitioned to agriculture as their primary activity after school. A large portion of the youth also tried various activities such as, livestock keeping, poultry farming, trading of food crops like sorghum and tour guiding before shifting in to agriculture as their primary activity.

Some of the challenges in animal husbandry include finding fodder, as well as low profits which were insufficient to meet their basic needs. The tour business produced even less profit and due to its seasonal nature youth were unable to find work for several consecutive months. Majority of the youth said that they have shifted to agriculture specifically horticulture, after hearing about its profitability from friends. Youth, who are engaged in the production of vegetables, especially potatoes explained that the income from this activity is better compared to other engagements and the task does not require a lot of investment.

Many of the youth gravitated towards the production of vegetables due to the belief that it would provide them with more return than what their parents received from agriculture.

“Youth in our ward have engaged growing vegetables like onions, tomatoes, broccoli, cabbage and other vegetables, but in our village most youth are growing potatoes because they don’t have knowledge in growing vegetables, also they grow potatoes because it is easy to sell them and you can get customers easily, also we grow potatoes because our parents used to grow maize so we cannot grow like them.” (Bold letters (emphasis)-by author)
Male participant, Age 30, Standard Seven

Most youth also mentioned that they engaged in agriculture because they like being self-employed. In addition, even though they could not secure enough income, they will still have food. Many however agree there are opportunities in agriculture if support is extended by government to alleviate current challenges.

“What made me to engage in growing crop is that, even when you don’t have money for input you can find someone to do share with and you can grow together when you harvest you divide the profit and you get some money for living. Opportunity in my agriculture is even when I don’t have money people will invest in my farm and the end we will get profit and it will be divided.”
Female participant, Age 24, Standard Seven
2.1.4 Aspiration of youth and value chains they want to relocate to

The rural youth have a diverse set of aspirations to what economic activities they would like to engage in the coming time span from short (6 month) to longer term (2-3-5 yrs). They are currently attracted to growing horticultural produce, like broccolis, potatoes, cauliflower, spinach and others. They see opportunity in horticultural as the produce can be ready in short period of time and they will be able to reap the benefits quickly compared to maize and beans.

“I own 1.5 acres of land and my plan is to shift in to growing vegetables because the prices of other crops are varying. So it’s better to grow vegetables which will be short period of time, and during dry season the price of vegetables tends to rise, since few people grow vegetable due to the absence of water. So when I get capital I will dig the bow hole where I will plant vegetables and sell them to different people. The biggest challenge is capital; if I get someone to lend me money without interest I will borrow and invest.”
Female participant, Age 25, Standard Seven

Many of the youth indicated that they would like to diversify their activities- expanding their productivity by moving to large scale farming while also engaging in trading activities. They aspire to increase their productivity by renting more land, use improved seed and fertilizers and use irrigation. The trading of agricultural produce range from buying vegetables from other farmers in their village and selling to the market, to buying crops and selling to other regions and neighboring country Kenya. Youth indicated that some older people are successful doing this and they would like to try it as well.

“I want to add business and I will continue with farming too, I want to engage in crop selling to other regions as a group. I also want to buy potatoes from my village and other villages and sell it outside of Arusha. Challenges will be permission to transport outside the country, also crops when are destroyed by pests and insects.”
Male participant, Age 23, Standard Seven

Some of the FGD participants also indicated that they want to open shops. Those who are currently employed want to change to self-employment by establishing their own while those who have closer engagement with livestock indicated that they would like to open veterinary shops.
2.1.5 Challenges rural youth face when trying to upgrade or expand to their desired value chain

The main driving factors behind youth interest to make shifts from their current economic activities is the desire to acquire better income to transform their lives while the main challenges remain capital, land, skills, inputs- fertilizer & pesticides, market and market information.

Capital

Agriculture in its current state is regarded as a low capital and intensive economic activity compared to the areas where youth aspire to upgrade to. The youth in the study area indicated that they would like to expand their agriculture and improve their productivity through use of improved seeds, fertilizers, and pesticides, yet these require more capital than they are investing now. Youth also explained that the inputs such as pesticides for vegetables are more expensive than that of maize, which makes their endeavor even harder.

“In agriculture the challenge I face is when the rain is low I don’t get anything because I don’t do irrigation because of low capital. During land preparation the challenges I get is capital, so when I don’t have capital at the beginning of the season I will get late to plant, so even the produce will be low.”
Male participant age 32, Standard Seven

Almost all youth who want to diversify their livelihood by engaging in trading or opening small business such as shops or food catering indicated the shortage of capital and the difficulties involved in accessing loan were their main challenges. Some youth mentioned that they will stay in production to accumulate capital in order to shift to other business.

Skills and information

The rural youth in the area explained that they have the basic skill engage in agriculture, but when it comes to application of modern technologies they lack the skills. This problem is a bit worse for rural female youth in the area, though some mentioned that they have the basic knowledge and skills to do farming.
The youth in the study area, lack technical skill such as selecting good variety of seed, pesticide, identifying the right type of seed that match the soil and the environment.

“I have all the skill of distance, but I don’t know about the best seed by just looking at it. This costs me sometimes because I plant something which is not good at all. For the security guard activity, I went to security guide training and I have covered well all needed.”
Male participant, Age 30, Form Four

“We don’t have those skills that are considered good farming practices, such as distance, good seeds etc. We just plant in traditional way, also about the market we are selling them at the farm and we don’t get enough profit.”
Male participants, Age 19, 23, 27, Standard Seven

They also lack skills to assess the market trend and make decisions regarding what to cultivate when.

“Youth do not have all the skills; they plant in traditional ways and don’t apply proper pesticides and fertilizers. They plant like other people and like their parents because that is what they have inherited and know. This made them to get lower produce. Another thing they don’t have storage facilities and knowhow on good storage practice. For example green vegetables when you leave them for a day or 2 days they perish and cause loss. Another problem is the market; we don’t know where to sell our produce in high price to get profit.”
Female FGD participants

“During selling vegetables, the produce is sold at a very low price compared to what the costs used to produce and this is due to the fact that there are lots of vegetables around, this happen especially during rainy season.”
Male participant, Age 24, Standard Four

“Education should be given to youth concerning agriculture, they should be told how to plant potatoes, how to plant vegetables and at what time is the best. Also they should be given loans by the government to pay later after harvesting. Also education should be given on the use of money in their business, they should tell they how to proper use money in order to invest well and get profit.”
Male participant, Age 35, Standard Seven
Most of the participants indicated that they have not attended any skills development training program, to upgrade their knowledge on better farming practices or improved technology. When asked about the use of technology, especially mobile phones, they indicated that they use their phones to access information about market, get in touch with buyers and for doing mobile money transactions. However, when it comes to information about best farming practices and other skill development program, there is a gap. This idea is also shared by stakeholders who are working with rural youth.

“I think rural youth should get access to information, access to agricultural extension information, I told you I myself are a farmer almost everything I am doing including spacing and how many seeds to use per acre I have downloaded from the internet the international article, and so for me at least I am blessed to understand that the information in here.....so I think there is a need for more channels for young people to learn about this things.” Key Informant Interviewee

Many rural youth in the area also lack information regarding available government supports. The Majority of them are not aware of the current support program by the government. It is only very few who have indicated that they have heard in the radio or informal means that the government has ordered districts to allocate fund. Yet none of the participants said they have been approached by the government officers, nor do they know that the scheme targets their area.

**Unfavorable national policies**

Few youth, who have tried trading activity before shifting back to production, indicated that there are various taxes from the government that discouraged them from engaging in trading. This idea is also shared by almost all of the KII participants. Majority of the KII participants indicated that the current agricultural commodity governance system including ban on exports and sometimes dictating the market prices, discourages not only the youth who are in the trading but also those who are at the production level.

“First place if you are dictating price, second place if everybody has to take the commodity to the cooperatives where are there are lot of taxes and fees, and if you put ban on exports... youth sees obviously these and think this typically is not helping us we are not going to make money if price is going to be dictated”

Key informant Interviewee
2.1.6 Challenges specific to women

The rural women youth face a different mix of challenges than their male counterparts. In addition to the common challenges discussed women youth in the rural areas have social and cultural constraints that hinder them from securing economic empowerment. One of the main challenges is the wrong perception that some men have regarding the women participation in agriculture. Many rural men during the FGD said women do not face any challenge in the agriculture as this is not their main activity. Yet this is not a perception shared by women who said they work hard on the field in addition to their household activity. Yet some women said they work in the farm with their husbands but they may not get money when crops are sold.

Female youth have different challenges when it comes to agriculture when you are married you both go to the farm in every stage, but after selling the produce, the man will be the one to take care of the money and sometimes they don’t give us money.

Also women because they have children, they will have to grow vegetables outside the house in order to get money to buy for her children food. So they had to work extra time.

Married female they are not allowed to work like being employed because they don’t have someone to live their children with, so most of the female are staying home idle and there is the time of the year where is dry season and they cannot grow crops so they have to stay home until the season starts.

Female FGD participants

Moreover, female youth who engage in vegetables in their backyard do it to get additional food for the household. This activity is beneficial for the household, yet it is an additional burden and not done in/for a commercial way. The skills gaps are also severe for some women. Women are not also allowed to travel far distances, though they have other IGA ideas which may involve traveling to the city/town. Therefore, the only economic opportunity they can explore is limited to the area close to home only and at times they also stay “idle” example in dry seasons.

The other misperception is related to access to finance for women. Some male FGD participants expressed that women have higher financial access than male. Yet, according to the FDT 2017 report this is not true. The report suggests that of the total excluded population, rural adults who are farmer, youth, and female have higher likelihood of being excluded. Therefore, for young rural female, being female compounds the likelihood of exclusion.
2.2 Discussion and conclusion

Tanzania’s labor market is dominated by youth out of which majority is represented by rural youth. This indicates the rural youth are the basis for the country’s transformation from agriculture to the manufacturing sector while also playing key role in food security. FAO in its study report on Youth and agriculture indicated that “facilitating the participation of young people in agriculture has a potential to drive widespread rural poverty reduction among youth and adults alike”\textsuperscript{xiii} Yet this requires appreciating the characteristics of this cohort, understanding where they are located in the agricultural value chain, the key challenges that are hindering them from securing decent employment in agriculture and achieving their aspirations.

The study conducted in the three wards of Arusha finds out that most youth are found in the production level of the value chain and there are very few of them who have engaged in the input supply. The figures on vulnerable employment and the under-employment in Tanzania, tell the majority in these categories are found in the rural areas and mainly in agriculture. Moreover there is a higher underemployment in the rural areas compared to urban places\textsuperscript{xiv} These data imply rural youth are facing serious challenges in securing decent jobs as they aspire to advance in agriculture.

Aspiration of rural youth varies depending on the available opportunities and resources in their respective area. The youth in the more rural areas indicated, they aspire to expand their production, overcome the subsistence farming, do commercial agriculture in crops and livestock, move up in the value chain and participate in marketing/trading. Few youth who engaged in the seed multiplication showed their interest to expand the operation as this is untapped area. On the other hand, those in the semi-rural areas want to diversify by starting up various small businesses applicable to their area such as shops for building material, second hand clothes, veterinary medicine and fodder.

Rural youth are interested in diversifying their income source in order to help them overcome the seasonality of agriculture and the unpredictability of the income due to price changes. In a study conducted by IFAD for its “Facilitating access of rural youth to agricultural activities” implemented in three continents Africa Asia and Latin America, indicated that “almost 50% of young farmers that responded to the survey are involved in more than one agricultural sector and for approximately 70% of them farming is not their only income generating activity (IGA)\textsuperscript{xv} This rural youth preference for income diversification suggests that, rural youth would like to widen their income source in order

\textsuperscript{xiii} Youth And Agriculture: Key Challenges And Concrete Solutions. 2014. PDF. FAO. http://www.fao.org/3/a-i3947e.pdf;\hspace{1em} \\
\textsuperscript{xiv} NBS, 2014 \hspace{1em} \\
\textsuperscript{xv} Facilitating Access Of Rural Youth To Agricultural Activities. 2012. PDF. IFAD. https://ypard.net/resources/facilitating-access-rural-youth-agricultural-activities.
to overcome the underemployment and vulnerability issues that are pertinent in the agriculture section.

The aspiration of female youth on the other hand factors in their household responsibility and social norms. Female youth are not allowed to travel far from the village and work. As a result most of the activities female youth prefer are activities that do not require a lot of mobility, so that they can remain close to the house or village.

In summary the youth appreciate the opportunity for self employment provided by agriculture, yet they would like to get decent income from it and sustain their income by diversifying their source.

The rural youth want to shift from the traditional farming practices they saw being done by their parents. They have strong desire to make changes by adopting improved farming practices, switching to high return and fast items and diversifying their income source. Yet the same challenges that have pushed the rural youth to remain in their current state are the reasons, which they perceive are pulling them back from advancing to activities they aspire to move to. These obstacles are related to capital, lack of skill, information, market, land access and at times unfavorable government policies. The constraints are limiting youth from achieving full economic empowerment in their current value chain and engaging in more profitable activities.

Most youth have the basic skills to do farming; nonetheless, despite their enthusiasm to adopt improved technology in agriculture they have indicated that they suffer from clear gaps in these areas. Most youth employ the traditional farming skills they inherited from their parents with only few improvements. Besides, there is not any tailored training service provider or extension support for youth who are transitioning to agriculture. The majority of these youth in the study area did not make it to secondary school. Thus, they did not qualify for the Vocational Education and Training (VET) offered, which implies this population is a forgotten segment when it comes to training. "Poor and inadequate skill limits productivity and acquisition of skills, while insufficient access to knowledge and information hinders the development of entrepreneurial skill" ibid.

The other challenge is capital. Access to affordable and suitable financial services especially working capital loan was mentioned as the biggest hurdle to moving up in the value chain and securing decent employment for the rural youth. According to FDT report 2017, "despite the fact that over 78% of the rural adult population in Tanzania lives within 5km of an access point, 28% of the adult population are still financially excluded, of which 79% are rural adults with higher likelihood of them being farmer, female, youth or dependant." This implies that access level is not same across all demographics and there should be efforts to provide appropriate products for youth and

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**xvi** Youth and Agriculture, 2014

women. Moreover, the access of 5km is mainly taking in to account the mobile agents and this does not tell about usage. For usage to materialize there should be suitable products on offer to the people while at same time people are informed about the available financial services.

Rural youth interviewed also explained that they are affected by unfavorable agriculture governance issues such as export bans and different taxes. This is also experienced by those youth who have tried to move to trading but had to return to production due to taxes. This implies that various formality costs adversely affect the efforts of rural youth in gaining greater economic empowerment in the agriculture value chain.

At the national level, the government has set a national rural youth development strategy that recognizes the various challenges youth are facing, yet it lacks concrete steps to address some of the challenges. The strategy acknowledges that unpredictable restriction on crop movements and multiple taxes and levies are some of the key challenges for rural youth. Nevertheless, this issue does not form any of the strategic intervention pillars Ibid.xviii

In summary, the rural youth in the study area are keen to improve their livelihood through increasing their productivity at the production level and moving up in the value chain to marketing/trading. Youth are clear about the importance of diversifying their income source, yet they are mainly focusing on the production and trading and few understand the opportunities at the other levels of the value chain such as at the inputs and small-scale processing stages. Youth are keen to apply modern farming practices and prove that they can engage in more efficient farming practices than their parents. On the other hand, this aspiration faces various setbacks, including access to finance, skills, lack of extension support, higher prices of inputs and lack of market and market information. Technology has a potential to act as source for information regarding good farming practices, yet in the study area none use their phones for such purposes other than mobile money.

### 3. Recommendation

In order to ensure rural youth increased economic participation in the agriculture value chain it is critical to understand their characteristics, challenges and opportunities. Based on this study results and probably further project viability study, various interventions might be designed to alleviate challenges in terms of capital, market access, information and skills.

In order to fill the skill gaps, programs that are well tailored to youth should be designed. This may start from making systemic changes in the education system such as mainstreaming agriculture courses in the curriculum, and/or designing shorter trainings for youth who could not make beyond  level 7( grade1-7).

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xviii Ibid, NSYIA 2016
Though skills training are required to solve many of the challenges, it is not a panacea. Therefore, designing interventions which are holistic in their nature may render better results, given the multifaceted and interconnectedness of the challenges youth face. For example skill trainings should include both technical (ex. good farming practices) and soft (ex. identifying opportunities, assessing market). This type of training not only make youth become technically proficient at doing certain tasks, but also it enables them navigate through the challenges, and understand the various opportunities at the different levels of the value chain. Moreover, skills training needs to be linked with interventions that can solve other challenges such as access to finance, market, or market information. One thing not to overlook here is, support programs should also consider the unique challenges of rural young females.

Lastly, availing of information in a modality that suits youth context and background is important. Easy to understand and practical information toolkits can help rural youth tremendously beside practical hands on trainings. Information technology can be an option that can be explored, as such rural youth indicated that, they use mobile to connect with buyers and check market prices. Thus, it may be worthwhile to explore the potentials of using this platform to address the information and skill gap.
Bibliography

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