# Research study on youth and agriculture in the Drylands CRP

The lack of engagement of rural and urban youth in agriculture, compounded with the declining interest among young professionals in pursuing agricultural development related careers has resulted in an ageing system. Despite the recognition of the importance of engaging youth within the agricultural development community, a cohesive approach has not yet been defined and efforts remain fragmented and piecemeal.

While some research has been undertaken in this field, it is still emerging and more information is required to develop appropriate strategies, policies and programmes. Youth remain a highly diverse group of people, with different backgrounds, drivers and experience leading to varying ideas, aspirations and challenges. To effectively capture their viewpoints, their aspirations, and their realities with regards to agriculture, well designed surveys are required to target different youths in rural, peri-urban and urban regions, at different levels of wealth and education.

We must harness all of the talent for innovation and development (as indicated in the guidelines for integrating gender into biophysical research). Youth are a critical component of this talent and are necessary for sustainable drylands systems in the years to come.

# Project description

According to the drylands youth strategy:

Years 1-3 will include an *ex ante* diagnostic analysis including adapting multidisciplinary methods and tools to identify youth issues (by gender, socio-economic class, ethnicity, etc. and by flagship region/ALS, as appropriate), specific knowledge gaps and entry points, and improve targeting (all IDOs).

Years 4–6 – up-scaling phase; sharing and capturing of benefits; improved participation and leadership by youth.

This project will address years 1-3 by providing a diagnostic analysis to identify youth issues, specific knowledge gaps and entry points to improve targeting. YPARD will capitalise on its in-house youth in agriculture expertise and extensive network to target, obtain feedback from and advocate for the needs of youth within the agricultural sector in the drylands systems target sites. Based on the final analysis appropriate interventions can be developed.

### Target Group: Young men and women in the target areas who are active and/or employed in the agricultural sector and those who are unemployed, underemployed or working in the informal sector. The focus will be upon rural youth, but some urban youth will be included for additional viewpoints. Inclusion of elders and others in the community are also important to understanding context, attitudes and opportunities.

**Geographical Coverage:**

This study will cover the three agricultural livelihood systems of the CRP: Pastoral, rain-fed and irrigated land.

**Areas of impact in the CRP**

The work around youth touches on the three *Mission Critical Research Areas* of the CRP:

1. *Anticipating dryland futures*: Research that enables youth to create opportunities and promote innovation in rural areas. Acting now to ensure that there is a viable future for youth in the drylands;
2. *Co-producing knowledge for win-win options*: youth have knowledge that is not often collected in traditional research. Additional input provides a more comprehensive understanding of the current situation and potential future for youth and employment in the drylands.
3. *Facilitating policies, institutions and governance for scaling and enabling innovation*:

A policy brief will enable governments and institutions to better tailor programmes and interventions to the needs and aspirations of young people. Subsequent programmes targeting the needs of young people support the potential for increased innovation.

This work targets specifically: *the cross-cutting theme of: Improved capacity of women and young people to participate in decision-making*. It also builds towards *Intermediate Development Outcome (IDO) 5 of gender and women empowerment where, women and youth have better access to and control over productive assets, inputs, information, and market opportunities and capture a more equitable share of increased income, food, and other benefits.*

## Objectives

1. Identify knowledge gaps in the literature and where additional knowledge can strengthen the research base specifically within the drylands system;
2. Obtain rigorous and up to date data on country and culturally variable drivers, aspirations and challenges of youth which will inform and enable the development of appropriate youth focused programmes based on expressed youth needs;
3. Informed policymakers developing appropriate policies for youth in agriculture in the drylands project sites;

## Outputs

1. Studies and research reports that fill knowledge gaps and provide a better understanding of the realities and potential futures of youth in the drylands;
2. Studies and research reports that contain youth-expressed needs and suggestions on the development of appropriate and effective programmes targeting youth in the drylands;
3. A policy brief that will inform policymakers on appropriate actions to engage youth in the agricultural sector;

### Research Methods

Focus groups in local areas to obtain feedback on norms, aspirations, and methods for tangibly engaging young people. Focus groups will target youth as well as influencers of youth. Influencers are those who will influence attitudes and future decisions of youth in the community. These may be community leaders, parents, teachers and local role models among other relevant individuals.

Studies to discern trends and potential areas of development

### Activities

1. Undertake a literature analysis to assess the existing information related to youth aspirations, with a focus on drylands areas and where additional information is required;
2. Recruit consultants to coordinate and implement studies in target locations. These will be young professionals where feasible and the regional consultants should be from the area of study;
3. Identify the key questions for the surveys and focus groups. These will be developed in collaboration with YPARD staff and resource persons and modified according to feedback from drylands CRP staff team as well as an additional experts on youth and agriculture issues;
4. Ensure the research is undertaken in a way that can aid in the development of policy, in the form of a policy brief;
5. Connect resource persons conducting the study with YPARD representatives in-country to obtain additional feedback on local study questions and areas of importance for youth engagement ;
6. Coordinate and provide support for activities, ensuring quality of process;
7. Compile different reports for each region and one additional report analyzing results across the project sites;
8. Develop a policy brief on the findings;
9. Disseminate widely through media campaign to youth groups and agricultural development organisations;
10. Suggest youth appropriate programme interventions for the next phase of the drylands CRP.

**Research Topics**

The research team will decide the final topics for specific research focus, which may include some of the topics below

1. What are the aspirations of the youth
2. Impressions on rural life and perceptions of opportunities
3. What would be required for youth to remain in rural areas (if they want to leave). For those who want to stay, what attracts them?
4. Level of interest in agriculture (what do you like/dislike about it)
5. If there were opportunities in agriculture would this increase your interest in the topic? Would youth remain in rural areas for these opportunities?
6. Where can value addition be made in the agricultural sector in your community;
7. Where is there capacity to innovate in agriculture? What would be required for this (funds, land, training, networks, etc)
8. What are the challenges you see in agriculture? What would help you to overcome the current challenges? Are there gender specific challenges? What are these?
9. What skills and competencies are most important for young people in your community to be engaged in/successful in agriculture?
10. Do young people see a changes in the agricultural sector? What are their perceptions of the use of ICTs within the agricultural sector and as a means of modernising it?
11. What are the skill gaps that young people face to engage successfully in agricultural development? What are other skills that youth and employers feel they require?
12. If the youth is engaged in the agricultural sector, why did they enter into their current vocation? Are they happy with their choice? If not, why not?
13. Is agriculture a viable profession with a reasonable financial return? Are they able to support themselves and their family?
14. Are young people able to access finance? How? What are the barriers? Are there supportive policies in place?
15. Are young people able to access land? What are the barriers? Are there supportive policies in place?
16. Are youth agricultural cooperatives a viable means of improving youth engagement in the agricultural sector? Do they work for young people?
17. Do any youth groups exist to support young people in their personal and career development. What services do they provide?
18. Where do youth obtain their information? How are they informed about opportunities in agriculture and government programmes? What is the best way to reach them?
19. How are youth able to network? What processes, networks and groups work best for them?
20. Are there any existing government, institutional or NGO/CSO programmes targeted towards youth? If so, what are they? Are they effective? Do they attract more youth into the agricultural sector?
21. How would ­youth like to see improved livelihoods?
22. Reflect on your life in 10 or 20 years in the drylands. Is agriculture a part of this? What would need to happen to make it so?

**Timeline:**

* June 5th: Finalised concept note, including feedback from DS CRP team and additional experts in the field
* June 12th: Finalise administration and financial procedures
* June 26: Recruit consultant for study coordination and reach out to field teams
* July 17: Revisit concept note and develop in-depth study plan.
* Sep 4: Undertake literature review and fine-tune questions and research methods. (this could take longer due to holidays and slow response time during this period)
* October 30: Collect data
* December 11 : Data Analysis and development of first draft of the research report
* January 8: First draft circulated for feedback (Milestone for reporting)
* January 29: incorporation of feedback and development of final draft with recommendations for programme developments, resulting in a final draft
* February 19: Final draft circulated for feedback and Development of a policy brief
* March 4: Final feedback incorporated and reports and documents finalized for dissemination.
* March 18: Dissemination and promotion of final study

**Budget**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Study costs, in USD** | |  | **number** | **rate** | **days** | **total** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Lead consultant | |  | 1 | 400 | 51 | 20400 |
| Regional project teams | | | 3 | 200 | 24 | 14400 |
| Coordination | |  | 1 | 300 | 20 | 6000 |
| local DSA |  |  | 3 | 50 | 25 | 3750 |
| local transport | |  | 6 | 50 | 3 | 900 |
| International DSA | |  | 1 | 200 | 6 | 1200 |
| Flights |  |  | 2 | 1200 |  | 2400 |
| communications | |  | 1 | 250 | 4 | 1000 |
| contingency | |  |  |  |  | 4495 |
| **Sub-total** |  |  |  |  |  | **54545** |
| ICARDA overheads 10% |  |  |  |  |  | 5455 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  |  | **60000** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

## About YPARD

Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD) is an international movement by young professionals for young professionals. The mission of YPARD is to serve as a global platform through which young professionals can express their ideas and realize their full potential towards a dynamic agricultural development.

YPARD is a well established platform with a proven track record in advocating on behalf of youth and bringing a strong youth voice into agricultural development debates and discussions. YPARD has been working with major institutions in the agricultural development sector since 2006 to mobilise people around youth issues, give youth a voice and look towards a sustainable future where youth are involved.

YPARD’s four primary objectives include 1. Facilitating the exchange of information and knowledge among young professionals across disciplines, professions, age and regions; 2. Broadening opportunities for young professionals to contribute to strategic agricultural development policy debates; 3. Promoting agriculture among young people, and 4. Facilitating access to resource and capacity building opportunities.

The global youth network has over 10,000 registered members worldwide working through regional coordination units which include:

* YPARD Global at the Global Forum for Agricultural Research (GFAR) in Rome, Italy
* YPARD Africa at the Forum for Agricultural Research for Africa (FARA) in Accra, Ghana
* YPARD Asia at the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) in Beijing, China
* YPARD Europe at the Bern University of Applied Sciences (HAFL) in Bern, Switzerland
* YPARD LAC at the International Center for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) in Cali, Colombia