



# youth

A GUIDANCE NOTE  
Designing programmes that improve  
young rural people's livelihoods





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### Background

Awareness is growing of the importance of young people to the future of rural communities. In recent years the number of projects targeting young rural people has grown, but more needs to be done. These initiatives can be expanded by developing more systematic approaches to integrating youth issues into rural development projects and programmes.<sup>2</sup>

Youth can be more effectively targeted in rural development initiatives by bringing together knowledge generated from: youth involvement in projects supported by IFAD and its partners; youth-centred events (such as IFAD's 2011 Governing Council and the 2012 Farmers' Forum); consultations with young rural people (such as workshops with aspiring young rural entrepreneurs in Cartagena, Colombia and Cotonou, Benin); research on rural youth livelihoods (such as the IFAD/ILO study *Promoting decent and productive employment of young people in rural areas: A review of strategies and programmes*); and lessons learned from work by partner organizations (such as the evaluation of youth employment programmes by the World Bank and International Finance Corporation).

This note outlines steps that may be taken at the pre-design and design stages to develop programmes and projects that benefit young rural women and men (sections 1 and 2), as well as specific programme/project activities to benefit young rural people (section 3). The programmes/projects are outlined according to theme, with suitable resources and examples of best practice provided for each. A list of rural youth resources is provided in section 4, while section 5 gives some recent examples of good practice from IFAD projects. See the annexes for more details on good practice.

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<sup>2</sup> National statistics offices define youth in different ways; the age range of 15-24, used by the United Nations, is generally considered the most appropriate for international comparisons.

## A. Pre-design

1. Assess the extent to which young people are represented among those living in poverty.
2. In the analysis of socio-economic context:
  - Include sex-disaggregated information on the situation of young women and men and outline age-related constraining factors.
  - Consider what opportunities are open to young women and men with respect to their abilities to:
    - Access land
    - Obtain finance
    - Access productive inputs
    - Enter markets
    - Acquire relevant information about income-generating and training opportunities in their communities.
  - Consider the knowledge and skills that young women and men have to engage in productive activities and contribute generally to the socio-economic development of their communities:
    - Assess the educational levels (skills and vocational training) of young women and men (including gender gaps therein)
    - Recognize specific skills that young people possess or may be interested in acquiring that may be used in the programme/project – such as openness to new ideas, working with information and communication technologies (ICTs), adapting new technologies and innovations, and entrepreneurship
    - Analyse the extent of child labour<sup>3</sup> and its potential impact on the development prospects of the area covered by the project.
3. In the pre-design consultation process, include young women and men:
  - Meet separately with young women and young men
  - Engage with youth organizations
  - Involve young people in project design missions
  - Consult with the ministry of youth and, where feasible, facilitate dialogue with ministries of labour, education and community development.
4. Give sufficient attention to gender analysis, to understand the different constraints and opportunities faced by young women and men in accessing rural livelihoods and decent employment. Particular attention should be given to how gender and age barriers interact to exacerbate the disadvantages faced by young women, taking consideration of:
  - Household division of labour
  - Limitations in access to resources and services
  - Restrictions on mobility, customary rules and threats to safety.

<sup>3</sup> Child labour is defined by the International Labour Organization as work that harms children's well-being and hinders their education, development and future livelihoods. Child labour is work that, by its nature and/or the way it is carried out, harms, abuses and exploits the child or deprives the child of an education.

5. As part of the institutional context analysis:
  - Determine whether youth are organized into groups and, if so, how to expand their influence in local decision-making and planning
  - Identify the extent of involvement by young women and men in rural organizations (as members and leaders) and how this may be increased
  - Research which service providers (training, financial, advisory, etc.) are available locally and to what extent they provide services tailored to the needs of young people.

## **B. Design**

1. Mainstream youth issues into project design and implementation strategies, in particular in the terms of reference for design missions.
2. Explicitly include young women and men in the targeting strategy and view them as protagonists in design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
3. Endeavour to include all four decent-work pillars (creating jobs; guaranteeing rights at work; extending social protection; and promoting social dialogue) in design, establishing specific objectives, budgets and indicators – and monitor their implementation.
4. Devise empowering measures to encourage young women to participate in programme/project activities and share in the benefits, taking into account the need to overcome barriers identified in the gender analysis.
5. Encourage young women and men to participate in the project's implementation and institutional arrangements.
6. Allocate resources specifically to finance youth-related activities in the project's budget.
7. Integrate youth-centred quantitative and qualitative indicators in the monitoring and evaluation systems:
  - Disaggregate logframe indicators by age as well as sex
  - Provide information on youth in the form of outcome and impact indicators rather than input and output indicators wherever possible.

## **C. Activities**

Measures to improve youth livelihoods should, to the degree feasible, take a comprehensive approach. They should encompass demand-side and supply-side factors, adapting complementary mechanisms that integrate training, job search, involvement of the private sector and measures to improve youth access to land, credit, productive inputs, advisory services and information. The following activities, arranged according to theme, may be adapted to programmes and projects to enhance impact on young women and men.

### **Enabling transition to employment through skills and vocational training**

- Offer incentives to include young people in employment-related training, for example, by providing vouchers that allow businesses to send young employees/apprentices to training providers at discounted rates or for free

- Develop the capacity of local service providers to offer services tailored to the particular needs of young women and men
- Create opportunities for women to train in traditionally male-dominated trades and vice versa
- Target young women and men in training initiatives by setting quotas for youth participation by sex; offering incentives/subsidies for training young people; and involving young people's organizations in training programmes
- Use ICTs to extend access to modern training to rural areas
- Develop and upgrade formal and informal apprenticeship systems by designing common standards, including assessment and certification, and upgrading the skills of master craftspeople
- Work with private companies operating in rural areas to promote corporate social responsibility, including eliminating child labour, improving working conditions and work-life balance, and encouraging social dialogue with workers' groups.

#### **Resources and examples of good practice**

##### *Developing apprenticeship systems:*

ILO policy brief, Upgrading informal apprenticeship systems  
 IFAD-sponsored PROSPERER project (Support programme for the rural microenterprise poles and regional economies) in Madagascar (video)

##### *Using ICTs to extend outreach of training to young rural people:*

Savannah Young Farmers Network, a youth-led NGO in Ghana using ICTs to deliver agricultural and rural advisory services

##### *Targeting young women and men in training:*

IFAD-sponsored Project for the promotion of rural entrepreneurs in Senegal (in French)

##### *Developing capacity of local training institutions and promoting corporate social responsibility:*

ILO-Japan multilateral programme, Promotion of decent work for plantation and rural youth in Sri Lanka

#### **Developing a youth-friendly institutional set-up**

- Encourage young women and men, including self-employed youth and emerging entrepreneurs, to see the value and mutual benefit of workers' and employers' associations and cooperatives
- Foster the formation of youth groups and identify channels to enable them to participate in decision-making processes
- Facilitate youth inclusion in cooperatives and producer groups, workers' associations, savings groups, women's groups, etc. and promote participation of young women and men in them, including representation on decision-making bodies and in leadership positions
- Support farmer organizations to empower their youth members
- Facilitate partnerships between farmers and youth groups.

#### **Resources and examples of good practice**

##### *Youth representation and participation in decision-making bodies:*

Recommendations from regional consultation meetings with rural youth in FAO-IFAD-MIJARC project Facilitating access of rural youth to agricultural activities

### Addressing youth constraints in accessing land

- Provide capacity-building courses for young landowners, adapted to their needs
- Work with youth groups to develop innovative mechanisms to allow young people to access land
- Promote training, technical support and innovative approaches to expand income-generating activities that require little or no farmland
- Introduce social security measures to motivate older generations to transfer land to younger ones.

### Resources and examples of good practice

*Integrated mechanisms to promote the inter-generational transfer of land:*

World Bank, Access to land for young farmers project, Mexico

*Introducing social security for rural workers:*

National Registry of Rural Workers and Employers, Argentina

### Expanding youth access to finance

- Provide courses on financial literacy for young rural people
- Link the provision of microcredit with training programmes wherever possible
- Support the creation of locally owned and operated financial institutions, with young people in leadership positions
- Establish partnerships with financial institutions
- Develop financial products tailored to the needs of young rural women and men.

### Resources and examples of good practice

*Financial literacy training for young rural people:*

Freedom from hunger, Advancing integrated microfinance for youth (AIM Youth) initiative

*Development of youth-sensitive rural financial institutions:*

IFAD, Rural finance and community improvement programme, Sierra Leone

### Providing multifaceted support to young entrepreneurs

- Facilitate mentorship programmes to link prospective youth entrepreneurs with successful adult entrepreneurs
- Strengthen the capacities of business development service providers to support young entrepreneurs
- Create links between business development service providers and youth groups
- Sensitize rural stakeholders to the entrepreneurial potential of young women and open dialogue on gender-related barriers to starting a business (for example, restrictions on mobility; access to productive inputs, land and finance; and distribution of household work)
- Develop communication channels to help young entrepreneurs receive and transmit information and facilitate youth-to-youth exchanges
- Empower young people to provide high-tech solutions to market information deficiencies.

### Resources and examples of good practice

*Using young people's ICT skills to develop marketing information systems:*  
ICT solutions for smallholder access to markets in Ghana

*Information sharing among young rural entrepreneurs:*  
Global Youth Innovation Network platform for young entrepreneurs

*Youth entrepreneurship mentorship programmes:*  
Youth Business International integrated approach to promoting youth entrepreneurship

### D. Resources

FAO: *Rural youth employment in developing countries: a global view* (Rome, 2010).

IFAD: Summary of the findings of the project implemented by MIJARC in collaboration with FAO and IFAD: *Facilitating access of rural youth to agricultural activities* (Rome, 2012).

IFAD and ILO: Workshop report: *Promoting decent and productive employment of young people in rural areas: A review of strategies and programmes* (Rome, 2012).

IFAD: *Rural Poverty Report 2011: New realities, new challenges: new opportunities for tomorrow's generation* (Rome, 2011).

IFAD: *Investing in the future: Creating opportunities for young rural people* (Rome, 2010).

IFAD: Proceedings of IFAD's Governing Council High-Level Panel and Side Events, 2011: *Feeding future generations: Young rural people today – prosperous, productive farmers tomorrow* (Rome, 2011).

IFAD: West and Central Africa Newsletter, Issue 20, February 2011: *FIDAction in West and Central Africa – youth and agriculture* (Rome, 2011).

IFAD: Asia and the Pacific Region Newsletter, Issue 35, January-February 2011: *Making a difference in Asia and the Pacific: Creating opportunities for rural youth* (Rome, 2011).

IFAD: Asia and the Pacific Region Newsletter, Issue 29, November-December 2009: *Making a difference in Asia and the Pacific: Working with youth* (Rome, 2009).

ILO: Rural Policy Brief: *Investing in youth for rural transformation* (Geneva, 2012).

International Institute for Environment and Development and Hivos: *Small-scale farming and youth in an era of rapid rural change*, V. Lucchesi and F. Proctor (London, 2012).

UNCDF: *Listening to youth: Findings and recommendations from nine countries in sub-Saharan Africa on market research to design financial and non-financial services for youth* (New York, 2011).

UNESCO: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2012: *Youth and skills: Putting education to work*, chapter 7: *Skills for rural youth – an escape route from poverty* (Paris, 2012).

World Bank Independent Evaluation Group: *Youth employment programs: an evaluation of World Bank and IFC support* (Washington D.C., 2012).

## **E. IFAD project experience** (see annexes for more information)

**Colombia:** Rural microenterprise assets programme: Asset enhancement, technical assistance and investment support (2007-2013); project website (in Spanish) and Report and Recommendation of the President

- Includes programme for youth savings, aiming at motivating, training and providing incentives to rural young people to generate savings and better use them for investment opportunities and income generation
- Under social capital component, public areas for young people to meet have been developed.

**Dominican Republic:** Development project for rural poor economic organizations of the Border Area (2010-2016); President's Report

- Prioritizes youth in granting funds for microbusiness proposals; matching grant capitalization fund has specific window for poor young people
- Under market access component, project targets sons and daughters of producers in training on market orientation and business management
- International students join networks with local youth to facilitate youth-to-youth exchanges.

**Madagascar:** PROSPERER (2008-2015), President's Report and project video

- Facilitates training and apprenticeships with local micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) for rural youth and development of a network of organizations to provide microfinance to small-scale entrepreneurs, with the aim of enabling youth to start their own MSMEs.

**Senegal:** PROMER and PROMER II (First phase, 1997-2004; second phase, 2006-2013); President's Report (in French)

- Prioritizes youth in training to support enterprises to increase profitability and employment as well as provide services to local farmers
- Has shown considerable success in job creation or improvement for young people; of 1,100 MSMEs and 3,000 jobs created/improved, 63 per cent have benefited young people.

**Sierra Leone:** Rural finance and community improvement programme (2008-2014); President's Memorandum

- Involves the establishment of youth-friendly financial services associations (FSAs), predominantly owned and operated by local young people
- 46 FSAs have been created under the project, which are managed and operated by young people.



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## ANNEX 1.

### Selected IFAD-sponsored projects with youth components

#### Asia and the Pacific

- **Skills enhancement for employment project (Nepal, 2008-2010)**
  - Aimed to increase employment for youth through enterprise development training using ILO's Training for Rural Economic Empowerment methodology; implemented by ILO
  - Training involved participatory community planning and needs assessment; delivering training, including entrepreneurship component; providing tools and equipment to trainees; implementing business plans developed in training; training the community in community enterprise systems; linking the community with local support mechanisms; making business links with other communities; and linking communities with local development plans and formal sector.
  
- **Mainstreaming of rural development innovations (Pacific Islands, 2005-2011)**
  - Aimed to support sustainable livelihood opportunities in remote rural communities with focus on youth
  - Worked on institutional strengthening of community-based organizations; employment generation; learning and sharing; and linking rural communities to national planning processes.

- ▲ = sponsored by IFAD loan
- = sponsored by IFAD grant

#### Latin America and the Caribbean

- ▲ **Cariri and Seridó sustainable development project (Brazil, 2012-2018)**
  - Supports technical and vocational training, prioritizing young people; a fellowship programme designed to train youth to develop their own rural businesses is expected to benefit 4,000 young women and men

- Improves smallholder productivity by strengthening participatory extension systems, including natural resource management component
  - Strengthens capacities of local institutions to improve local development governance.
- ▲ **Rural microenterprise assets programme: asset enhancement, technical assistance and investment support** (Colombia, 2007-2013)
- Develops rural microenterprises and markets by improving poor communities' access to financial resources, technical assistance, information and institutions; youth are among target beneficiaries
  - Established a special programme for youth savings to motivate, train and provide incentives to rural young people to generate savings and use them for investment opportunities and income generation; monetary incentives for savings provided by Agrarian Bank of Colombia
  - Under social capital component, developed public areas for young people to meet.
- ▲ **Development project for rural poor economic organizations of the Border Area** (Dominican Republic, 2010-2016)
- Works with farm and non-farm organizations to build capacities in planning, management, market access and facilitation of financing opportunities
  - Enables prospective microenterprise owners to submit proposals for funds, emphasizing youth; matching grant capitalization fund was set up and has a specific window for poor young people
  - Under market access component, project targets sons and daughters of producers for training on market orientation and business management; international students join networks with local youth to facilitate exchanges.
- ▲ **Programme for the economic development of the dry region in Nicaragua** (Nicaragua, 2004-2010)
- Trained cooperative members in new production techniques, development of business plans and means for accessing financial and non-financial services
  - More than 300 businesses established; around 21 per cent created jobs for young rural people.

### **Near East, North Africa and Europe**

- **YemenInvest – rural employment programme** (Yemen; implementation not yet started)
  - Facilitates relationships between training providers and rural businesses, offering incentives for training and hiring youth (training voucher systems), rural investment financing and value chain upgrading.
- ▲ **Al-Dhala community resource management project** (Yemen, 2007-2015)
  - Provides certifiable vocational training opportunities for young unemployed males in project area as part of broader community development programme.

## **West and Central Africa**

- ▲ **Promotion of agro-entrepreneurship for rural youth** (Cameroon, currently at pre-design stage)
  - Creates opportunities for young rural people to start and develop agro-enterprises
  - Pre-design consultative process addressing conditions needed for successful youth engagement in agro-entrepreneurship led by rural youth, in cooperation with government and donors.
  
- **National agricultural land and water management development project** (Gambia, 2012-2019)
  - Invests in public and communal assets to raise productive potential of scarce agricultural land, boosting rice and vegetable production
  - Targeted at rural women and youth
  - Supports rural youth for market-oriented vegetable production through contract farming
  - Provides training and mentoring opportunities for rural youth with linkage to credit for business start-up along the rice and vegetable value chains.
  
- ▲ **Community-based natural resource management programme – Niger delta** (Nigeria, 2005-2013)
  - Makes a community development fund available to support local initiatives in sustainable livelihood improvement, natural resource management and provision of small-scale community infrastructure
  - Aims to reduce tensions and conflict by improving employment opportunities for young people and channelling their energies into development of sustainable livelihoods and natural resource management activities.
  
- ▲ **PROMER and PROMER II** (Senegal, first phase, 1997-2004; second phase, 2006-2013)
  - Supports enterprises to increase profitability and employment and provide services to local farmers
  - Youth prioritized in training, which was based on ILO's Start and Improve Your Business methodology
  - Created or improved 1,500 MSMEs and 4,000 jobs, of which 63 per cent were for young people.
  
- ▲ ● **Agricultural value chains support project** (Senegal, 2010-2016)
  - Helps small-scale producers develop profitable economic activities through direct contracting between their organizations and market operators, focusing on highly vulnerable people, especially women and young people
  - Strengthens grass-roots organizations and helps those involved in value chains participate in regional and national dialogue to ease access to markets and make distribution of profits more equitable
  - Underemployed young people are a target group.



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- **Rural finance and community improvement programme** (Sierra Leone, 2008-2014)
  - Improves strategies and operations of finance sector, enhances decentralization of decision-making and promotes pro-poor investment in rural sector
  - Establishes several FSAs, which aim to establish locally accessible financial institutions owned and operated by local people
  - Invests in young people for management of FSAs; age limits for cashier and management roles are 21 to 29 years.

#### **East and Southern Africa**

- ▲ ● **PROSPERER** (Madagascar, 2008-2015)
  - Training and apprenticeships with local MSMEs for rural youth, and developing a network of organizations to provide microfinance to small-scale entrepreneurs, with the aim of enabling youth to start their own MSMEs.
- ▲ **Rural SME promotion project** (Rwanda; phase II, 2004-2013)
  - Improve access to training, technology and finance among prospective rural entrepreneurs and link SMEs with government bodies
  - Focuses on young rural people; over 6,000 young women and men trained to date and many becoming trainers themselves.
- **Value chain development programme** (Burundi, approved 2012)
  - New pilot component dealing with rural youth employment is planned in two provinces
  - New component will target 20,000 young men and women to help them set up or develop microenterprises or small businesses both upstream and downstream of the value chains promoted by the programme
  - Aims to provide youth with off-farm employment opportunities that need little or no farming land.

## ANNEX 2.

### IFAD-sponsored youth initiatives

#### Global

- **Facilitating access of rural youth to agricultural activities** (approved 2010)
  - Implemented with MIJARC and FAO
  - Objectives of the programme: (i) national and regional farmers' organizations in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean have better knowledge of the specific challenges facing poor young women and men in agriculture and of successful policies and programmes to address these challenges; and (ii) this knowledge and understanding are translated into specific proposals and recommendations to governments and development partners
  - Young farmers' organizations mapped and subsequently surveyed to identify challenges facing young farmers
  - Three regional consultation meetings convened, in Africa, Asia and Latin America, to discuss results, share experiences and draw up regional recommendations.

● = sponsored by IFAD grant

#### Latin America and the Caribbean

- **Promoting young people's entrepreneurship in poor rural territories in Latin America and the Caribbean, PROCASUR** (Brazil, Colombia, Guatemala, Peru and the Dominican Republic; approved in 2011)
  - Focuses on improving the capacity of IFAD-funded operations to increase rural youth's access to relevant rural development opportunities
  - Activities include: disseminating information and updated knowledge on the situation of rural youth; facilitating youth involvement in policy dialogue; and co-financing youth enterprises.
- **Nuevas Trenzas - ICEFI** (Central American Institute for Fiscal Studies; region-wide, approved 2010)
  - Studies factors influencing the lives of young rural women as a basis for identifying opportunities (in terms of public policies or private initiatives) to tap their potential for contributing to rural development.

#### West and Central Africa

- **Global Youth Innovation Network** (launched in Benin; network is worldwide; approved 2011)
  - Network facilitates communication, information sharing and partnerships among young rural entrepreneurs
  - Programme includes entrepreneur mentoring and training (including marketing research and start-up assistance); marketing consulting assistance; development of database of youth businesses; and establishment of fund for youth financing.



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- **Rural youth and agricultural business development – Songhai Centre** (approved 2011)
  - Aims to promote access of youth, men and women to appropriate agribusiness entrepreneurial, leadership and management skills required for effective participation in creating commercially viable small-scale agribusiness enterprises
  - Accreditation of the Songhai Centre will be upgraded to provide internationally recognized certification of trainees
  - Rural youth, women and men from a number of countries will be trained to start small agribusinesses with relevant support.
- **Amplifying youth voices – Inter-Press Service** (approved 2011)
  - Seeks to amplify voices of smallholder farmers, especially women and youth, in global debates on rising food prices, climate change and food security
  - Will support sustained communication campaign by building a cadre of skilled young agriculture reporters who can research and disseminate innovative agricultural practices on a range of social media platforms.

Cover photo:

A young farmer works in her fields in Laos.

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