



ROPPA
Afrique Nourricière

« THE FUTURE OF RURAL YOUTH AS SEEN BY THEMSELVES, AND THE OBSTACLES THAT NEED TO BE REMOVED AND THE ASSETS THAT NEED TO BE DEVELOPED IN ORDER TO RECONCILE RURAL YOUTH WITH FAMILY FARMING AND TO UNLEASH THEIR POTENTIAL »

EXCERPTS FROM BOOKLET 2

«THE FUTURE OF RURAL YOUTH AS SEEN BY THEMSELVES, AND THE OBSTACLES THAT NEED TO BE REMOVED AND THE ASSETS THAT NEED TO BE DEVELOPED IN ORDER TO RECONCILE RURAL YOUTH WITH FAMILY FARMING AND TO UNLEASH THEIR POTENTIAL» - EXCERPTS FROM BOOKLET 2

By giving youth and adults the opportunity to express themselves and each other, the focus groups encouraged free expression, which allowed each of them to «get out what was in their hearts» and to often go very far in expressing their frustrations and grievances. The result is a dashboard to target what needs to be done to improve the lot of rural youth and their dynamic integration into family farms.

Identifying constraints or obstacles that prevent rural youth from planning their future in FF

Rural youth's perception of their own future is intimately linked to their perception of the future of the FFs. What is widely shared by young people is that the future of FFs is also uncertain under current conditions (shape, size, knowledge transmitted, access to resources, policies, etc.). See Box 6 in Booklet 2, with accounts that show that **« many feel that the family farm has no future», that «the current conditions are demotivating for them», that «they prefer to leave to take a different direction», and that «some parents encourage them to leave the family farm ».**

But many of the obstacles lie in the lack of dialogue, and the gap that has grown between two generations on family farms :

Refusals that frustrate young people : the refusal to share in the management and profits of the farm, the lack of dialogue, the non-participation in decision-making, are the elements that need to be undone around the core of frustration

Youth who feel abused

«There's no sharing, so we'll look elsewhere» (Young Liberian during a panel at the regional sharing workshop).

They essentially provide the family workforce. Also, it appears that young people do not receive appropriate remuneration when they participate in the family's agricultural or pastoral activities, even though they may receive «gifts» in kind or in cash. However, young people increasingly need resources to cover the imperatives of their households, since at 30 years of age they have obvious family and societal responsibilities. This raises the question of governance within the FFs. (CNCR research, Senegal)

The need for recognition, itself prompted by the lack of consideration and judgment that many adults have about young people.

« We don't want to be seen as childrendes enfants »

«When it comes to work, when it comes to labor, you think you're young, but when it comes to sharing income,

you think you're a child. Thus, young people think they are considered more like children, unable to manage, unable to contribute anything to their parents' activities other than being their labor force. They often have no idea how much income they generate from their efforts and what they actually earn from exploitation» (intervention by a Liberian youth during a panel at the regional sharing workshop).

«If the young person doesn't assert himself, the old person will never consider him a mature person capable of managing things. (focus group North Senegal)

Shortcomings of support : low impact on rural youth of the actions of the State and local authorities, inadequacies of the supports provided to farmers' organizations.

Promises that are not kept

The initiatives taken towards young people do not materialize concretely. They are verbal and on the ground effective and efficient actions are not implemented. The government makes promises that are not kept. The support to agriculture through the implementation of fertilizers is a palpable example (3 bags of NPK for a whole village). The 30% quota is not respected for young girls and women. (CPF research, Burkina Faso)

«Most say that they do not receive support. They think that the interviewers come to the villages to collect information about them, but nothing concrete comes afterwards. (focus group Ségou, Mali) (focus group Ségou, Mali)

Low representation of young people in FOs

Young people are poorly represented in farmers' organizations. As a result, they find very few positions of responsibility. This situation does not reflect their level of mobilization and representativeness in certain sectors, particularly agriculture, livestock breeding and fishing. To improve this situation, young people must work for better representation to defend their expectations in mixed federative

frameworks. Their greatest strength will come from their representativeness in grassroots organizations, in umbrella organizations and consultation frameworks. The aim is to strengthen the capacities of young rural producers so that they can gradually rise to the rank of peasant leaders, capable of assuming union and political functions. This raises the issue of their involvement and responsibility in all development actions. (FNFP research, Niger)

Blocking of access to land remains a major challenge for the future of family farms and young people there, and a factor of conflict within families.

A debate between young people on land in developed areas

Yokh Fall: «The land problem stems from the fact that families are growing and development is not keeping up. As a result, old people do not want to or cannot give the land to one person. And the little land that is available is given to the landlords and not to young people. The solution lies in giving the land back to the youth under accessible conditions. Through advocacy and lobbying.»

Bassirou Diaw: «The State develops the land, so it must ensure that young people can access the land. The 3PRD program is a clear example of poor land redistribution by the State (the inputs required are too high in relation to the needs and capacities of young people). Young people need to review their involvement in the farmers' movement».

Oumar Ba: «Young people too have not been sufficiently involved in land tenure, because there are still resources available but young people do not claim them.»

Understanding blockages and constraints that prevent young people from planning their future on the family farm

The issue of money is not at the heart of the matter: Is money, as often said, the main motivating factor for young people? The reality revealed by the exchanges between young people in these focus groups is more subtle. It is not the search for money as such that is mainly emphasized, but rather the rejection of poverty and its economic and social consequences, or the frustration that can be generated by the lack of participation and visibility around governance and the management of family farm resources. Three insights provided by the research :

- There is a family crisis: Boxes 46 and 47 in Booklet 2 illustrate respectively «families losing their cohesion» and a «rupture between generations».
- However, behind the misunderstandings between generations, there are two different conceptions of family farming: a working group on the theme «Helping young people see their future in FF» set up during the regional sharing workshop sought to better understand how the misunderstandings between parents and children are built around two different conceptions of family farming. He proposed the following analysis :
 - Young people limit the family farm to agricultural production (economic dimension) and ignore all the other dimensions that are of little interest to them and leave it to the parents. The latter think that young people are

not interested enough in agriculture but are rather attracted by technology (Internet, television, etc.). As a result, there is lack of parental confidence in children's involvement in the family farm ;

- Parents do not dissociate fathers' responsibilities from those of the farm manager. For them, the head of the family has to ensure all the family's expenses himself. Thus, just like civil servants who do not tell their wives and children about their salaries, it is difficult for heads of family farms (in order to maintain the stability of the family fabric and avoid the demands of women and children) to declare their assets to other family members. Also, in many circles, out of distrust and to be safe from jealousy, no one likes to disclose their income, their

«wealth». For parents, family farming is primarily a way of life, but they are not convinced that suits young people ;

- Dialogue can make it possible to get out of the current blockages: «In order to encourage this necessary change of mindsets, which has been mentioned several times, it is necessary to get out of the current blockages and to do so, first of all, as this research has begun to do, to free the words of young people and adults so that they can get out what is in their hearts, then to facilitate the re-establishment of mutual listening and dialogue, and finally to enrich this dialogue with contributions that open up perspectives and make it possible to change points of view».

Identifying the assets to be developed to reconcile young people with family farms

Four assets are identified by the research to reconcile youth with the family farm

The first asset is «the existence of a sense of responsibility among young people they do not want to remain passive, they want to overcome old divisions, build new relationships, commit themselves, organize themselves, support each other among rural youth, seek solutions, cooperate with the elders,

Organizing among young people to have more strength Organizing among young people to have more strength

Young people do not want to be followers for life. That is to say, to always be behind the old people in the POs, without them leaving us any room». (B. Fall, North Senegal)

“We young people need to organize ourselves, formalize ourselves to have more strength and access to decision-making bodies. Because as long as we are not part of those who decide, they will always decide for us. We also need to go towards information. The problem of land also comes from the local authorities who allocate hectares to agribusinesses that live on the sweat of our young people, giving them 99-year leases. We need to organize ourselves as a union to fight against this.”

“Young people will take their steps and take the lead to start claiming their rights from the FFs, the FOs, the LCs and the State». (focus group Casamance)

The second asset is the openness of some adults: many are aware of the need to make the family business profitable and secure to make it more attractive; some are deeply questioning their relationship with their children; and they are calling on the State.

Change will come from young people

Unanimously, the young people occupy a very important place on the farm, they are the important force for the implementation of the works. They are the relays for the perpetuation of family farms. The young people help a lot in any task on the farm. In a word, young people are indispensable. (focus group adults of Batié, South-West - Burkina Faso)

Adults keep hope on youth. Today very good initiatives exist for youth and only the right people are needed for a good implementation. Although there are still many difficulties facing youth, they believe that change can come from young people themselves with the support of the right people (CNOP/FENAJER research, Mali).

«Young people also have things to teach us, for example on new communication techniques» (a Malian woman during a panel at the regional sharing workshop).

The third asset is the existence of vocational training and support programs for youth integration: despite much criticism within the focus groups on the inadequacy of government action for rural youth, several young research participants were able to take advantage of existing programs (see Boxes 15, 20, 22, 23, 25, 26, 52 in Booklet 2).

Staying on to ensure succession

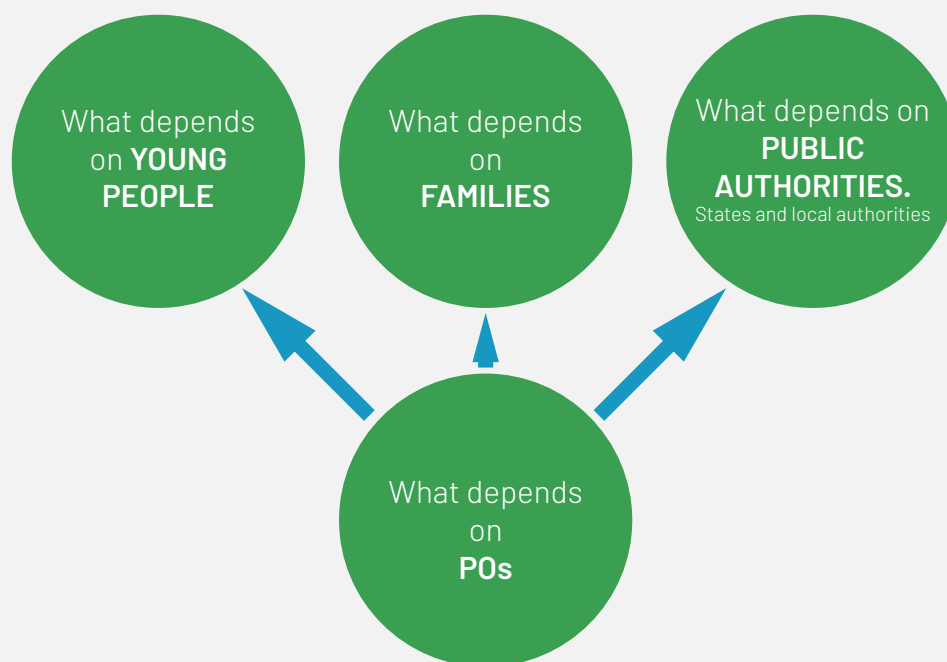
AFANSOUNOUDJI Yao Mawuli, 30 years old, breeder in Vogan, states the following:»I dropped out of school in 4th form and I got trained in breeding. I also do agriculture. Our Dad does not let us go on adventures; the farm belongs to him. My dad has a lot of children (16) and I am the only one who stays on his farm (breeding). I plan to continue and expand my Dad's farm. I also want to create new ones. I am not at all afraid for my future». (focus group Togo)

The fourth asset is the renewed sensitivity of farmers' organizations to the issue of rural youth: for FOs, the rural youth workcamp has become unavoidable and inseparable from that of family farms. This is evidenced by this process which leads to the 3rd OEF report on this theme. Chapter 5 of Booklet 2 presents «the initiatives taken by ROPPA to mobilize around the issue of rural youth».

Acting to reconcile young people with family farming and unleash their potential

In order to untie the knots that prevent many rural youth from fully investing in the life and transformation of family farms, each actor must dare to make certain breaks and take full responsibility.

WHO CAN ACT to have each type of situation change?
It should be determined



A detailed reflection should be carried out by FOs to determine which stakeholders they can interact with depending on the case.

Each category of stakeholders has responsibilities to take :

- Government responsibilities are fundamental: Regardless of the level of poverty of households, social mechanisms to ensure education, food and health care for all are imperative. The responsibility of the States is first and foremost to ensure the foundations to enable young people to complete their education and take the time to invest and build themselves. Then it is to define and implement agricultural, land, commercial and territorial policies that promote family farming and the sustainable development of the rural world ;
- Families are no less important because, even adults are aware of this and say so, it is within them that the first unbearable obstacles for young people and their aspiration for more autonomy are located. It will be necessary to negotiate this autonomy with the elders, and for this we must open a dialogue. It is also at this level that the issue of early marriages of young girls must be addressed, as they most often respond to the ambitions of their parents rather than to their aspirations. Here we find the problem of the necessary change in mentalities. We will return to it at the end of Chapter 33 ;
- Those of the young people themselves, who must not give up in the face of the difficulties they encounter and be open to dialogue ;
- FOs' responsibilities are at the intersection of the previous ones. They can, through peasant exchanges, accompany the families of their members as well as their children in reflection and intergenerational dialogue: ROPPA has begun to do so in the framework of this research. In the future, they will have to strengthen the consideration of the youth dimension in the policy dialogue and involve young people in it, notably by building on the results of the present research and by activating the Youth Colleges.