

POST-SUMMIT REPORT 2015

young
africa
works
summit 2015



WATCH AN INTRODUCTION
TO SOME OF THE ISSUES DISCUSSED AT THE
YOUNG AFRICA WORKS SUMMIT



FINANCIAL INCLUSION & YOUTH LIVELIHOODS

Dear friends,

I am pleased to share the 2015 Young Africa Works Summit 2015 report with you. This report will provide fuel for discussion as well as links to full sessions and additional resources.

The inaugural Summit, held in Cape Town on October 29 and 30, 2015, was a resounding success. It brought together experts from more than 17 countries in Africa, Europe and North America to discuss employment challenges and opportunities for young people in the agricultural sector. If you would like to revisit the agenda, session descriptions and speaker bios, you can [download the Summit program](#).

At a Summit focused on youth in agriculture, it is important to hear directly from young people themselves. That's why almost 50 youth delegates joined the discussion and a number of youth speakers shared their perspectives on how to improve opportunities for employment in agriculture in Africa.

We look forward to the next Young Africa Works Summit in early 2017. In the meantime, I encourage you to stay in touch with us by [signing up for our newsletter](#). I also hope we can continue to collaborate on youth employment strategies and learning to inform programs that will better serve the young people of Africa. We are excited about the enthusiasm and interest generated by the Summit and we will remain engaged with you as we prepare for the next Young Africa Works.

Sincerely,



Ann Miles

Director of Programs,
Financial Inclusion & Youth Livelihoods,
The MasterCard Foundation



Dear fellow youth delegates,

I trust this letter finds you well. In fact, I hope that it finds you collecting data on small scale farmers in rural Ghana, harvesting those passion fruits for sale in Uganda or milking your dairy cows in Kenya. I hope that you are defining your version of agriculture in Africa through action.

Attending the 2015 Young Africa Works Summit opened our eyes and hearts about the great potential we possess to transform the image of agriculture in Africa. It is very true that the African continent possesses enormous agricultural potential to feed itself and the rest of the world. If it is not we youth who engage, invest and collaborate in the agricultural sector, then how will the world know that the best tea is produced in Kenya, the best cocoa is from Ghana, the best vanilla is from Madagascar, that Nigeria has the most delicious plantains and that if you have not tasted Ethiopian coffee, you have not lived?

From the youth keynote speeches to the round table debates and discussions, the Young Africa Works Summit proved that young people can earn a sustainable livelihood from agriculture. Sometimes success comes as a result of strategic positioning and we could not have been better positioned than here in the 21st century. It is a century where Africa is rising, with a large, growing youth population and a vast amount of arable land. We have the opportunity to make Africa the largest food producer in the world.

It is my hope that the Summit:

- Enabled us to know each other better, understand one another's ideas and that this understanding will develop a collaborative network.
- Proved to you that agriculture is an economic activity in which young people can earn a sustainable livelihood rather than just a subsistence income.
- Challenged, impressed and motivated you through the success stories of other African youth in agriculture to realize your dream.
- Illustrated to you that it is not the size of the project that matters, but rather the impact created in the community. If tiny animals like rabbits are transforming lives in Kenya, then your idea is valid. Grow that maize like never before, raise poultry, produce biogas, sell mangoes or finance small scale farmers in your community. It does not matter at what pace you do it, just do not stop.

Opportunity dances with those who are already on the dance floor. Let us all get on the agricultural dance floor and shake the ground with crop harvesting, animal production, food processing, water recycling, green energy, urban farming, organic farming, aquaculture, forestry, you name it. I ask each one of you to hit the ground sprinting. With those fresh and educated minds, high energy and enormous passion to create change in our communities, let us innovate ways in which we can create employment, especially in the agricultural sector, a sector that is so vast and critical to the transformation of the continent.

May you raise the agricultural bar in Africa.



Laetitia Victoria Mukungu
Founder, Africa Rabbit Centre



"Young people are
already leading agricultural
transformation."

-Reeta Roy, The MasterCard Foundation

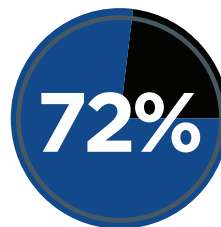
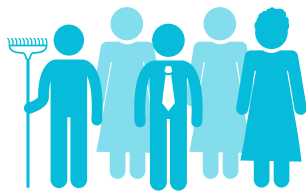
AGRICULTURE IN AFRICA

AFRICA'S YOUTH EMPLOYMENT CHALLENGE

African Youth

Home to the youngest population in the world

600
MILLION
under age
25



of youth in Africa are unemployed or vulnerably employed

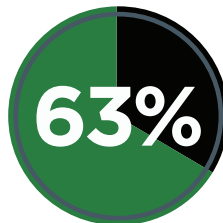


youth expected to enter Africa's labour market every year for the next decade

Opportunities in Agriculture



Africa has the largest amount of arable land



of the total population in Sub-Saharan Africa live in rural areas where agriculture is the largest source of employment and income



Agricultural growth can be 2 to 3 times more effective in reducing poverty as growth in other sectors

Our Commitment to Africa

\$300
MILLION

The MasterCard Foundation's commitment to projects that are improving agricultural productivity, connecting rural youth to employment and increasing access to financial services for smallholder farmers



In 2015, the Young Africa Works Summit brought together [200 key influencers](#) from 17 countries across Africa, Europe and North America to share perspectives and insights on approaches to creating economic opportunities for young people in agriculture.

[As attendees heard](#), from both Deputy Minister of the Presidency Buti Manamela and The MasterCard Foundation President and CEO Reeta Roy, the agricultural sector is expected to create high numbers of entry-level jobs for youth over the next few years. But young people have unique needs and face several barriers in finding secure employment in the sector. For example, young people often lack access to appropriate skills training, information

(such as market and pricing information), inputs (such as seeds, fertilizer and water), technologies (such as irrigation methods, planting methods and mobile technology), land and financial services.

The two-day Summit illustrated that young people can earn a sustainable livelihood from agriculture, rather than merely a subsistence income. Enhancing the productivity of agriculture through improved inputs, livestock vaccinations, the use of improved technology and access to market pricing information is also important for increased income generation.

The Summit encouraged collaboration and thinking across all sectors to inform employment programs and policies that better serve young people in Africa.

AGRICULTURE IN AFRICA IS...

We asked the experts at the Summit to finish this sentence: Agriculture in Africa is...

CLICK BELOW TO WATCH THE VIDEO.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Agriculture is more than a subsistence activity for young people, providing they have access to training, financial services and access to markets.

The Summit illustrated that young people see agriculture as a sector of opportunity for employment and entrepreneurship. In the [Youth Keynote Address](#), Awadh Milasi from [SNV Netherlands Development Organization](#), Rita Kimani from [FarmDrive](#), and Laetitia Mukungu from [Africa Rabbit Centre](#), reasoned that it is the conditions that determine whether young people will be able to establish and maintain sustainable livelihoods in the sector.

Awadh Milasi called on the sector to engage youth in agricultural development policy and programming to bring about more innovation, while Rita Kimani said the impact of access to credit for young farmers can make or break their business.

“Even 10 dollars can make a difference if they can buy quality seeds rather than recycled ones.”

Rita Kimani – FarmDrive

By discussing her cooperative, Africa Rabbit Centre, Laetitia Mukungu also demonstrated that a successful agribusiness can have a social impact on communities – through the proceeds of her business, Laetitia established a primary school for 400 students.

2. The private sector, government and development organizations need to work together to ensure young people are able to access opportunities in agriculture.

The [Agriculture and the Private Sector](#) session moderated by [Pan-Atlantic University](#)’s Peter Bamkole; panel participants Alistair Djimatey from

[Blue Skies Foundation](#); Kinyua M’Mbijewe from [Syngenta](#); [Doreo Partners](#)’ Kola Masha; and Craig Hardie from [Malawi Mangoes](#), emphasized the need for private sector participation in programs for youth, as well as collaboration with the development sector.

This session highlighted the following key points:

- The private sector is an important part of the equation for youth employment in agriculture because organizations remain in the country long term.
- To be successful in agriculture, young people require access to appropriate training, and holistic services including credit and connections to markets.
- Women are underrepresented in agriculture; more opportunities need to be established for women in the sector.

The [youth financial services panel](#), moderated by the Foundation’s Ruth Dueck-Mbeba, looked at the need for a business case for youth financial services. Jessie Tientcheu from [Freedom from Hunger](#); John Magnay from [Opportunity International](#); [TechnoServe](#)’s Cleopatra Ngulube; and [FINCA](#)’s Alejandro Jakubowicz, discussed the barriers and opportunities to providing youth-specific financial products.

Key takeaways were as follows:

- Without a business case, financial services targeted toward young people are unsustainable.
- Youth will be a viable demographic if service providers can broaden their reach to comparatively affluent (often urban) youth. A broader reach allows for the delivery of services at a lower cost.
- The availability of mobile phones and reliable Internet networks could help to reduce cost and expand outreach to new customers. Technology is not, however, a panacea. It is still just a means, rather than a solution.

- Some financial service providers have found that, with the right products and financial education, the portion of their loan portfolio “at risk” is lower among youth customers than among adult customers (for more on this, download [Building the Business Case for Youth Services: Insights from the YouthStart Programme](#)).

3. Agriculture is more than manual labour. Our understanding of agriculture needs to include the entire value chain as well as science, innovation and ICT.

Day two of the Summit opened with a [keynote](#) from author and journalist Dayo Olopade, who called on the development sector to test their assumptions about Africa. She told attendees that “challenges in Africa are real, but they are also opportunities to innovate.”



“What happens when producers are urban? Could Africa’s supply chain look different?”

Dayo Olopade

This address specifically focused on what Olopade calls the “formality bias”, the development sector’s “strong preference for formality” in systems and infrastructure, and the perception of Africa’s informality as “backward”.

Olopade also encouraged attendees to avoid preconceptions about agriculture.

In the plenary that followed [Policy and Partnerships: Systemic Factors Affecting Youth in Agriculture](#), moderator Karen Brooks from the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research echoed Dayo Olopade by emphasizing the ingenuity of youth working within informal systems in Africa.


The panel, consisting of Louise Fox from the University of California, Berkeley; Ghana’s High Commissioner to Canada Sulley Gariba; Thomas Jayne from Michigan State University; and Irene Annor-Frempong from the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa, discussed the constraints to engaging youth in agriculture, and what could be done to overcome them.

Sulley Gariba called for a “mindset shift” from leaders in development and government to broaden their understanding of agriculture. He also called for youth ministries to be more closely associated to ministries of agriculture to address youth employment in the sector.

Louise Fox outlined lack of access to land, credit and technology as the biggest constraints facing young people and indicated the need for both public policy and private sector investment in potential solutions. Thomas Jayne echoed Fox, detailing the growing pressure on access to land due to rural population growth.

The [final keynote](#) of the Summit came from Agnes Kalibata, President of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), who highlighted the promise of agriculture and agribusiness as a catalyst for change in the lives of young people.

“Sixty-five percent of Africans are young people, and 65 percent of Africans are farmers, but somehow we have been unable to talk about them together,” she said.

A woman with dark hair is standing in a field of tall, green grass. She is looking down and slightly to her left. The background is a soft-focus field of similar grass. The entire image has a dark green overlay.

"Sixty-five percent of Africans are youth and 65 percent of Africans are farmers. But somehow we've been unable to talk about them together."

-Agnes Kalibata, AGRA

THE YOUTH LIVELIHOODS DIARIES



The Youth Livelihoods Diaries is a year-long research project tracking the economic activities of 268 young people in mostly rural communities in Ghana and Uganda.

At the Young Africa Works Summit, [researchers reflected](#) on the first six months of research, including the unique methodology and preliminary findings. Workforce and skills development specialist Claudia Pompa led the discussion. The panel consisted of Gabriel Felli, Research Supervisor; Justine Kutaira, Field Researcher; and Anne Marie van Swinderen, Founder of Low-Income Financial Transformation, the research firm conducting the diaries research.

The research project will provide a year-long view of the pressures and opportunities young people face and will address the following questions:

- What livelihood strategies do youth employ? Given these livelihoods, what are the needs of youth around economic opportunities?

- How do these strategies and needs vary by gender, age, country and region?

The project's research team, made up of young people, is conducting bi-weekly interviews with research participants over a 12-month period on topics ranging from how they work, what they earn and their hopes for the future.

At the Summit, the panel discussed the long-term nature of the research. Conducting interviews over a full year has given researchers a more complete picture of the young people's lives, while using youth researchers has engendered a trusting relationship with participants.

The panel also emphasized that data will be returned to participants. All the youth involved in the diaries research will receive a booklet outlining the information the researchers collected.


PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

- The pursuit of mixed livelihoods is an explicit strategy for minimizing risk and maximizing income.
- Most young people are actively pursuing a variety of income streams, focusing on business activities and agriculture (including cultivation of crops, livestock, and gardening for household consumption).
- Despite limited financial flows, many young people are regularly saving some of their income.
- Most participants report their greatest need is for information about jobs, followed by skills training.
- Youth are reporting that they aren't learning the skills they need in school. Instead, they say skills are learned from parents and in the home.
- Most of the young people interviewed did not expect to have agriculture as their main source of income. Nearly all participants planned to always conduct some agricultural activities, at least for their own consumption.

In 2016, The MasterCard Foundation will publish a comprehensive report that explores the data findings. The research will be shared with stakeholders, including implementing partners, policymakers, and other donors, as well as with the research participants themselves.

Sign up to be notified when the report is distributed.





"There is a significant gap
between the kinds of jobs youth
are looking for and the kinds
of jobs that are available."

-Karim Harji, ET Jackson & Associates

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

The Summit featured three key themes that informed all of the Young Africa Works Summit sessions. Breakout sessions were designed as a deep-dive into each theme: mixed livelihoods, demand-driven skills development and financial services for youth.

MIXED LIVELIHOODS

Youth are using a range of mixed approaches to generate income within the informal sector. In this session, panelists explored why and how youth are using these approaches, as well as the role of education and the informal sector.

Moderated by Meredith Lee, Deputy Director of Youth Livelihoods at the Foundation, the panel featured: Sara Elder, Chief Technical Advisor, Youth Employment Programme, International Labour Organization; Karim Harji, Director of Research, ET Jackson & Associates; and Ndungu Kahihu, Executive Director, CAP Youth Empowerment Institute.

The discussion focused on the prevalence of mixed livelihoods across the African continent along the entire spectrum of entrepreneurship – from subsistence activities to high-level entrepreneurship – and the need for development organizations and governments to understand that mixed livelihoods can be highly successful.

The panelists also recognized that mixed livelihoods are diverse and cut across sectors. For example, many young people work in agricultural labour seasonally, and then migrate to urban areas to work in the off-season.

The panelists touched on the difficulty of quantifying mixed livelihoods through project assessments. The suggestion was made that rather than attempting to divide individuals into “employed” and “unemployed”, organizations should take a “portfolio approach” to assessment.

Key points included the following:

- Sara Elder emphasized that quick transitions for youth from school to work should not always be seen as positive. In Sub-Saharan Africa, a quick transition often means a jump into unstable work and a longer transition may mean the individual is investing in further education or testing multiple activities.
- Ndungu Kahihu stressed that education reform needs to recognize young people’s economic reality and the fact that they are often unable to pay school fees or take time off from work to pursue further education or training.
- Communication between the private sector and policymakers is essential to ensure that education provides the skills that young people need to find work.



DEMAND-DRIVEN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Employers report that they are often unable to fill vacancies because young people simply don't have the skills they are looking for. In this session, panelists explored the missing link between the education young people are receiving and the skills needed to find employment.

Moderated by The MasterCard Foundation's Steve Cumming, the panel consisted of Clare Ignatowski from Millennium Change Corporation; Peter Shiras from International Youth Foundation; and Zebadiah Moshi from Vocational Education and Training Authority.

The breakout session focused on what Steve Cumming called, "the paradox of youth unemployment." Young people are looking for jobs, and employers have vacancies to fill, but those seeking employment simply don't have the required skills.

The panel presented three issues contributing to the skills mismatch, including:

- There is no common framework between practitioners to define skills, which means there are no common measures to compare program effectiveness across countries. This lack of common indicators has resulted in a deficit of helpful evidence.
- The mismatch between skills taught in training and skills needed by the private sector is a waste of resources. The government and development sector need to ensure programs are informed by local market demand.
- In order to implement successful training programs, attention must be paid to how curricula are delivered and the different ways that young people learn.

The panel also discussed the rigidity of many education models and the need for data to demonstrate the importance of soft skills, as well as the need to include them in curricula.

YOUTH FINANCIAL SERVICES

Access to financial services is essential for young people to create income-generating activities in agriculture. In this session, panelists focused on building the business case for youth financial services by drawing on insights from the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) [YouthStart project](#).

Moderated by Rani Deshpande from Save the Children, the panel featured Ata Cisse from United Nations Capital Development Fund; Jules Ndahayo from Union of Savings and Credit Cooperatives; and Mekonnen Yelewemwessen from Amhara Credit & Savings Institution.

The discussion for this breakout session highlighted the perspective of the financial service providers and the barriers they reported to providing financial services for youth. Among financial service providers, the biggest barriers to providing youth-specific products were prohibitive financial regulations and a lack of competition in the market.

The session highlighted the potential for digital – namely, reliable Internet service and the prevalence of mobile phones – to reduce the delivery costs of products and expand the outreach to new customers. The panel also issued a warning for the development sector not to treat technology as the answer, stating it was a means to solving problems for the delivery of youth financial services, rather than an end in itself.

Financial service providers participating in the YouthStart project also found that when they have the right products and offer the right financial education to youth, the portion of their loan portfolio that is "at risk" is lower among youth customers than among adults.



"The informal sector, vast and resilient, is overlooked."

-Dayo Olopade, Author and Journalist

THE DEBATE

The debate at the Young Africa Works Summit addressed the opportunities and risks of investing in rural and agricultural programs, proposing that, “Agriculture is the sector of economic opportunity for youth in Africa.” Moderated by Eleni Gabre-Madhin, Co-Founder and CEO of eleni, LLC, the debate featured Nteranya Sanginga, Director General of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture in the “for” corner, and James Sumberg, Research Fellow from the Institute of Development Studies in the “against” corner.

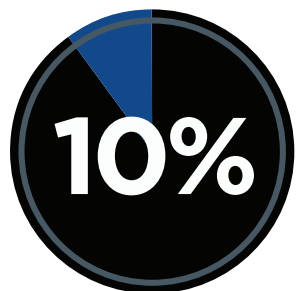
Before the debate, many in the audience were undecided, with 43 percent disagreeing that agriculture is the sector of opportunity for youth, 10 percent agreeing that agriculture is the sector of opportunity, and the remainder undecided.

In his argument that agriculture was the sector of opportunity for youth in Africa, Nteranya Sanginga described young people on the continent as agents of change. He argued that what is needed is a change of mindset – leaders in government need to see young people as active, autonomous and

capable of contributing to policies and programs. Sanginga said this could be achieved by increased mentorship, and by government and development leaders listening to young people and including them in decision making.

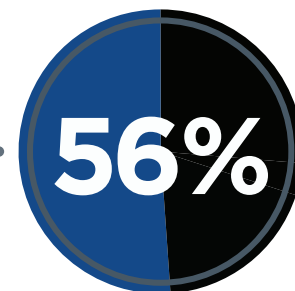
James Sumberg, against the proposition, said while he is confident about the agricultural sector’s ability to create opportunities, he had a warning: do not oversell the idea that agriculture is the sweet spot for employment generation for young people. He said that programming aimed at encouraging youth to go into agriculture doesn’t acknowledge the diversity of the rural areas in which young people live, in terms of the quality of resources and access to markets and land. He also argued that policies and programs are poorly aligned with the futures young people see for themselves – primarily urban, professional, salaried work.

On the final vote, the majority opinion had swayed agreeing that agriculture was, in fact, the sector of opportunity for young people in Africa.




agree before
the debate

.....
**AGRICULTURE
IS THE SECTOR OF
OPPORTUNITY FOR
YOUTH IN AFRICA**
.....



agree after
the debate



"Agriculture is perceived as farming, but that is really only part of the equation."

-Ngoni Mugwisi, Youth Delegate

YOUR FEEDBACK

What did you think of the Young Africa Works Summit?

We asked you to participate in our Young Africa Works attendee survey. Here's what you said:

- A majority of you, across all ages, said the theme of youth involvement in agriculture was central to your decision to attend the Summit.
- 93% thought the presenters and material presented were credible.
- 87% thought there was a diversity of viewpoints presented.
- 60% of you were satisfied with the networking opportunities at the Summit and 45% of you intend to follow up with an individual you met at the Summit.

#YAW2015

The lively Summit discussion continued online, with **#YAW2015** even trending on Twitter.



Follow us on Twitter [@MCFoundation](https://twitter.com/MCFoundation) or revisit the #YAW2015 social media discussion on Storify:

[Day one Storify summary](#)

[Day two Storify summary](#)

LOOKING FORWARD

At the Foundation, our Youth Livelihoods Program area is providing economically disadvantaged young people with a combination of training, life skills and financial literacy. We believe that this will prepare them to transition to meaningful employment and entrepreneurship opportunities in agriculture and other sectors. We look forward to the Young Africa Works Summit 2017, where we will continue to discuss strategies and learning to further inform programs for young people in Africa.

Follow us on Twitter [@MCFoundation](https://twitter.com/MCFoundation)
or contact us at info@youngafricaworks.org
to share your feedback on the Summit.


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"To my fellow young people, if you want change in Africa it is up to you to make that change."

-Laetitia Mukungu, Africa Rabbit Centre