



IYFF+10
DECADE OF
FAMILY FARMING

YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILY FARMING



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This study has been prepared by the WCC (World Coordinating Committee of the IYFF+10) and coordinated by the WRF.

The WCC is composed by representatives of the organizations ROPPA, PAFO, INADES INTERNACIONAL, COPRO-FAM, RELACC, PDRR, AFA, ASIADHRRRA, SEWA, UPA, AFDI, NZYF, OXFAM, IFOAM Organics International, ACTION AID, WRF, as well as the National Committees for Family Farming of Madagascar, Costa Rica and Nepal (on behalf of the NCCF that work in different continents)

Graphic Design by:

Kika Cristancho
www.kareacho.wixsite.com/kikacristanchodg
KikaCristanchoDg@Gmail.com

Photographs:

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADISCO	Appui au développement intégral et la solidarité sur les collines (<i>Support for integrated development and solidarity in the hills</i>)
AFA	Asian Farmers' Association
AMARC	World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters
CEPAL	Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean
DOST	Development Organization for Social Transformation
ENPARD	European Neighbourhood Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development
FAO	United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFOAM	International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements
ILO	International Labour Organization
IYFF	International Year of Family Farming
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MST	Landless Workers' Movement
PAKISAMA	National Federation of Peasant Organizations (Philippines)
PDRR	Rural Dialogue Program Central America
REAF	Specialized Meeting on Family Farming of MERCOSUR
REJEPPAT	Network of Young Producers and Agricultural Professionals of Togo
ROPPA	Network of Farmers' and Producers' Organisations of West Africa
SPG	Sistema Participativo de Garantía (<i>Participatory Guarantee System</i>)
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WFP	World Food Programme
WRF	World Rural Forum
YPARD	Young Professionals for Agricultural Development



1. INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this study is to describe the current situation and contribute to setting out a common position on youth development in family farming. The conclusions reached will therefore be taken into account in the policy lobbying on behalf of young people in the IYFF+10 campaign¹.

The study was carried out within the framework of the action lines of IYFF+10 which aims to promote and stimulate family farming. We therefore took as our starting point and overall guideline the debates that took place at World Rural Forum (WRF) meetings, the International Young Farmers' Manifesto agreed at the International Young Farmers' summit held in Bordeaux, France, on 4 September 2014², and Demand 6 in the Manifest of Brasilia agreed by the IYFF 2014 World Coordination Committee³.

Demand 6:

It is necessary to approve different public policies that promote the inclusion, integration, incorporation, social, legal and economic recognition of young people within the agricultural sector.

Family farming organizations began to give priority to the question of youth during IYFF 2014 and stepped up their activity under IYFF+10. They stress the importance of approving differentiated public policies to promote the inclusion, integration and social, legal and economic recognition of young people in the agricultural sector and in rural development. They have also decided to address the issue as a priority themselves by supporting increasing participation by young people in family farming organizations.

Facilitating the entry of young people into the sector will increase the motivation for change and help make the sector more willing to develop or adopt new practices, new technologies or more sustainable production methods, partly because older farmers have lower levels of education.

The purpose of this document is to delve into individual and collective practical experiences and realities in greater detail that allow us to create an imaginary and collective feeling about family farming. We have therefore selected some of the main issues facing young people in relation to family farming and have examined a variety of experiences, initiatives and lessons learned selected from across the world.

1. Further information on the campaign at [IYFF+10](#).
2. [International Young Farmers' Manifesto](#), Bordeaux, France, September 2014.
3. [Manifest of Brasilia](#) (15 November 2014): Organizations of women and men family farmers, traditional fishers, shepherds and indigenous communities from the five continents came together in Brasilia on 14 and 15 November 2014, alongside rural associations, research centres, members of the World Coordination Committee, national committees and other actors. They assessed the results and achievements of IYFF 2014 and agreed on six demands designed to enable work to progress further.

The document begins with a description of the context at global level and the key aspects of the participation of young people in family farming. Five areas were identified in which young people face major challenges in farming jointly with genuine examples and experiences for each one. We then describe some practical experiences on the basis of the responses received by the WRF network and the YPARD network to the questionnaires (Annex 2). The last section is devoted to final discussions and, by way of conclusion, we present a series of proposals for continuing progress and for influencing the design of public policies on each of the aspects described.

2. YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILY FARMING CHALLENGES

The world population is currently in excess of 7.3 billion people. And according to United Nations projections, it is expected to increase by more than 2 billion by 2050, a lower rate of increase than in previous decades (UN, 2015). More than half of that growth is expected to occur in Africa, because of the high (though decreasing) fertility rates and the large number of young people now living on the continent. Much of the population growth will be in the poorest countries, their population being expected to increase from the current figure of 954 million to 1.9 billion in 2050. That presents a challenge at many levels, particularly in terms of providing education, decent living conditions, and the necessary food and employment for all. Of the current world population, more than 3.1 billion are under the age of 25, representing over 40% of the total. More specifically, there are currently nearly 1.2 billion young people between the ages of 15 and 24, representing 16.5% of the total population. The vast majority of the children and young people are concentrated in three areas: Africa (where 41% of the inhabitants are children and 19% are aged between 15 and 25), Latin America and the Caribbean (26% and 17%, respectively) and Asia (24% and 16%) (UN, 2015).





The WRF regards young men and women as strategic actors for sustainable rural development and for the future of family farming, a farming model focusing on the family unit as the motor for the economic, social, cultural, environmental and territorial that performs agricultural, forestry, fishing, livestock and aquaculture production.⁴ This model is much more than a rural economic model since it posits sustainable food production at family level as the basis for moving towards food security and food sovereignty. In 2014 the International Steering Committee for the International Year of Family Farming (IYFF)⁵ – comprising 12 FAO Member States (Afghanistan, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, France, Kuwait, the Philippines, Slovakia and South Africa) alongside IFAD, the WFP, Bioversity International, FAO, WRF, the European Union and WCO proposed this definition:

Family farming is a means of organizing agricultural, forestry, fisheries, pastoral and aquaculture production which is managed and operated by a family and predominantly reliant on family capital and labour, including both women's and men's. The family and the farm are linked, co-evolve and combine economic, environmental, social and cultural functions. (United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization – FAO – 2014)

The movements and organizations promoting family farming are aware of the need to make the involvement of young people the prime driver of this form of agriculture as an alternative route towards sustainable farming. For that reason, the focus on young people is one of the cross-cutting priorities of the IYFF+10 campaign. The WRF thus takes the view that if those efforts are to be successful and viable it is necessary to direct them towards the establishment of public policies designed to develop and facilitate the integration of young people into family farming. Likewise, it is important to provide support for research/action designed to establish what the current situation is and to identify the aspirations of young people in relation to family farming, through an exchange of experiences and initiatives.



4. FAO. (2014). [What is family farming?](#)
5. To find out more go to "[IYFF 2014 Global Report. A year of progress for Family Farming](#)" prepared by the IYFF 2014 World Consultative Committee for Civil Society in April 2015.

Any discussion of the role of young people in the farming sector must take account of the current situation in farming and the prospects for improving it. If young people really are to be included, they must be at the centre of the discussions and they must be part of the strategies for change. At the moment, some of the salient factors in the diagnosis of the situation of young people in family farming are as follows:

- 1** Family farming continues to be the main **source of food** and economic support. Small and medium-sized holdings in developing countries continue to be the world's main food producers. There are 1.5 billion family farmers (women and men), who grow at least 80% of the world's food (FAO, 2014). These figures confirm the vital importance of family farming for world food security and food sovereignty, both now and for future generations. In addition to its basic function of producing food, the agri-food sector plays a strategic economic, social, cultural and environmental role.
- 2** The International Labour Organization (ILO) says that **youth unemployment** affected 71 million young people between the ages of 15 and 24 in 2016 and expects that figure to be maintained in 2017 (ILO 2016). It is clear that young people, particularly young women, continue to face a host of difficulties in finding a job and one that is stable. There are also considerable disparities between men and women that accentuate and increase inequalities during the transition to adulthood. These disparities reveal inequalities of opportunity and reflect deeply ingrained socioeconomic and cultural problems that tend to affect women disproportionately (ILO 2016).
- 3** In many parts of the world the farming sector is facing **ageing and scarce generational renewal**. New customs and new lifestyles are creating a growing trend towards urbanization and more and more young people move away from rural areas in search of new opportunities, particularly economic and social opportunities (Leavy et al, 2014). The average age of farmers in Western countries is between 50 and 60. For example, only 7.5% of Europe's farmers are under the age of 35 and three out of ten are over 65 (Eurostat 2017). Yet the phenomenon is not confined to the most developed countries: across sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and Asia, more than 27% of the farmers are over 55. According to Heide-Ottosen (2014), the situation is at its most extreme in the Caribbean where nearly 45% of the farmers are over the age of 55. The fastest progression of the ageing factor is in farming Southeast Asia and the Southern Africa.⁶

6. Heide-Ottosen's work (2014) already cited (published by Help Age International) contains figures on rates of ageing – extracted from various censuses – for all low- and middle-income countries, both for the rural population as a whole and for farmers in particular.



One aspect to highlight is the need to focus on the aging of family farmers from the intergenerational integration. In other words identifying and highlighting the contribution that those who give up farming but do not leave the rural area can make to the youth and vice versa through knowledge and skills transfer; and how the youth can continue to rely on the support of the previous generation in their farming. That aspect is particularly important in those countries – the majority of countries across the world – which do not have any retirement pension schemes.

4 Another salient feature is that the agri-food market is now globalized and those involved in family farming face the **uncertainties** engendered by political and economic cycles. Historically, the political and economic power centres came into being in the cities, with the result that attention moved away from rural areas which therefore received lower levels of access to education, health, infrastructures, and services, and lower incomes than the cities⁷.

All the factors listed above point to a complex and to some degree paradoxical situation. On the one hand, theoretically the sector is one with socio-economic potential that requires a labour force with a capacity for innovation. On the other hand, it is a constantly ageing sector with a low level of handover to the next generation. And the fact remains that it is undoubtedly a strategic sector guaranteeing food and the sustainability of families. Yet it is not always looked upon as offering attractive opportunities.

All of this leads us to ask why so many young people are fleeing the countryside. One explanation is that the activity is so unprofitable and so lacking in social attractiveness that it is not a lifestyle for the young. That means that the young people who do opt to become family farmers often have to face additional challenges and obstacles which limit the potential of farming as a means of livelihood.

The sections below describe some of the main challenges facing young people wishing to make family farming their occupation and give examples of the strategies and approaches adopted by young farmers across all five continents.

7. Seminar on young people and employment in the rural areas, 5th Global Conference of The World Rural Forum, 2015.

YOUTH AND MIGRATION



In any demographic analysis of rural communities one of the main features is the major role played by migration. According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), the number of international migrants exceeded 240 million in 2015 and there were 740 million internal migrants (UNDESA 2015). The two phenomena are inter-related and both international and internal migration is expected to rise over the next few years.

The majority of internal migrants come from rural areas, particularly from the most isolated communities with the worst living conditions, and they go to towns or to other less disadvantaged rural areas. Over a decade ago, it was estimated that more than half of all rural households in sub-Saharan Africa had at least one migrant member (International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), cited by the Department for International Development (DFID), 2004). Many young people, both men and women, seek job opportunities in urban areas. It should be noted that it is the poorest people from rural areas who practise temporary rather than permanent migration, because the costs are lower.

Internal migration is often part of a strategy of diversifying household income and some of it may be seasonal.⁸ Migrants frequently see it as the only viable option for dealing with the scant economic openings available to them in their immediate area: demographic pressure, environmental degradation and poor harvests all make it difficult to earn a living in rural communities. Jobs in rural areas are very often irregular, precarious and temporary; wages are low and there is little or no social protection.

In addition to dislocating and dividing families and society, the phenomenon of rural-urban migration also has other consequences that deserve a mention. Negative consequences for rural areas include the loss of the most productive workers, that is to say the strongest and generally the best-educated. Their departure forces other members of the family, including the children, to take on the productive work at home, or else overloads the women if it is the men

8. here are also other reasons for migration: they may be political or may relate to conflict or to violations of human rights.



who leave. There are, of course, also some positive results, such as the remittances that alleviate conditions for those who remain, or an increase in local wages because of the smaller labour force available (Lucas, 2015).

However, it is important to take into account others considerations like⁹:

- Influence on the migration of cheap labor in rural areas..
- The profitability of the production systems in family farming could encourage migration.
- “Back to the land” phenomenon when it is not effective.
- The competition for access to paid work between men and women, exposing female youth to disconnect from agricultural production.

ACCESS TO LAND AND OTHER PRODUCTIVE RESOURCES

The limitations young people face with regard to access to the resources necessary for their activity constitute major barriers to taking up farming. Structural features relating directly to access to basic resources are the primary barriers preventing them from devoting themselves to farming. They include lack of instruments, channels or regulations enabling them to access resources and financing mechanisms, to reach markets and to influence the value chain.

Access to productive land is one of the main requirements for young people in rural areas who wish to earn a living from agriculture. In addition to enabling them to take up farming, land may sometimes improve their access to credit because it can be used as collateral. Land tenure also raises young people’s social status since, in many places, it is a precondition for attending community assemblies or joining producer associations.

Several factors are reported over and over again as obstacles preventing young people from having access to land. The main access route is inheritance and it is being delayed by increases in life expectancy. The status conferred by land tenure makes the older generation reluctant to hand over their land in their lifetime. That means that, while they wait, the younger members frequently go on working on the family farm for little or no remuneration.

Other factors hampering access to farmland under proper conditions include situations in which the poorest families are temporarily short of money and have to sell their assets (including land) in order to survive the crisis.¹⁰ That reduces the amount of land the young members of the family can inherit. Another problem is successive fragmentation from bequest to bequest, which reduces the parcels of land passed on beyond the point

9. Contribution of the Youth of the National Peasant Table of the PDRR, Costa Rica.

10. For a discussion of the poverty trap, the most useful recent reference is the excellent work by Banerjee and Duflo, *Poor Economics*, 2011.

at which they are economically viable or even capable of ensuring subsistence. Finally, another factor that we must not forget is the constantly increasing degradation of the soil (salination, loss of topsoil, erosion, etc.) in many parts of the world which diminishes the amount of arable land available.

If access to land by inheritance is delayed or becomes difficult, the alternative is to buy land and, for that, young people need savings or access to credit. It is difficult to save when wages and profit levels are low so access to financial services is the best alternative if there is land available.

ACCESS TO FINANCIAL SERVICES

Financial entities take various forms: they may be formal or informal, they may be microfinancing bodies or large-scale institutions. However, the difficulty of financing agricultural activity due to the biological nature of production and the concentration of risks by zones pose a challenge due to the greater risk associated with financing this activity compared with other productive activities. In addition, if the farmers are isolated in remote areas or are scattered across the country, financial bodies will face higher operational costs.

For that reason, in most cases credit for the acquisition of durable assets (such as land) requires collateral and guarantees (such as a steady income, property, etc.) which young people find more difficult to provide. In addition, seasonal credit for inputs usually involves high interest rates, which young people only beginning their activity find very difficult to meet.

SOCIAL FACTORS

There are also social reasons related to social protection, the social image of agriculture and the conditions of rural areas. The last two factors may at times severely limit the number of young people coming into the sector. In many societies the prevailing view is that work on the land is hard and brings a poor return and there is a general feeling that rural areas are less developed than urban areas. This negative image has generated psychological barriers and made invisible the possibility of betting on family farming as a way of employment and decent life among the youngest. It is clear that all these constraints need to be tackled both at individual level and at the level of society as a whole in order to achieve a favourable outcome.



LACK OF INFRASTRUCTURE

Limited access to Internet, transport and other basic services (schools, hospitals, etc.) is a major challenge in rural areas. Yet although strengthening and improving opportunities for young people in rural areas is an essential condition for the development of family farming, it is not in itself sufficient. Efforts need to be complemented by public policies focusing on rural areas that will contribute to expanding and speeding up the dissemination of know-how, supporting local innovation and initiatives by youth, and creating alternative opportunities for young people living in rural areas.

YOUNG WOMEN

Turning to gender issues, we would point out that young women in rural areas start at a disadvantage in comparison with their male counterparts, suffering higher levels of unemployment, discrimination in access to land and other assets, and other sociocultural limitations. The consequence is that in recent years we have seen a high proportion of women become internal migrants, sometimes even higher than for men (FAO, 2016).



The general situation is that in agriculture women suffer discrimination and have a very undervalued image. For example, women's farm work is often on an informal basis and it is regarded as part of their family obligations to be available to work on the farm while having no control of resources (Rebouché, 2006). Very often, when the men have emigrated or are off working as day labourers on other farms or in other sectors, the women take care of day-to-day work on the family farm in addition to their traditional role of looking after the children and the house. Women's work both on the land and in the home has such an undervalued image that it is predominantly informal and unpaid (where a wage is paid it is significantly lower than for men). Nevertheless, it is generally considered that women do 60% - 80% of the farm work in developing countries (World Bank, FAO and IFAD, 2009). Moreover, these deficiencies in the treatment of women result in limited access to social welfare benefits such as maternity leave, sick leave, pensions and social security (ENPARD, 2016).

The patriarchal nature of many traditional rural societies prevents women from holding or using land or makes it difficult for them to do so. Young women thus continue to face obstacles to access land on equal terms; those obstacles are both legal and sociocultural. Data across the world show that fewer women have land tenure and the parcels of land they have are smaller (FAO, 2011). Those problems are compounded by similar difficulties with access to credit and to business promotion activities. All of this means that women's new farming initiatives and innovations are limited to not much more than subsistence level and give them little hope of being able to earn a decent living.

In the education sector there is persistent gender disparity in schooling. Many girls and young women are excluded because of early marriage or because preference is given to the boys, where a choice has to be made.

For that reason, the fifth MDG¹¹ on "gender equality" explicitly refers to such exclusion. It is mainly women who maintain families' food security and they are also the most heavily involved in family farming. Although there is evidence that this disparity between men and women has reduced somewhat in overall terms, there are persistent regional exceptions, such as the lower level of support for secondary education for young women in Central Africa and West Africa.

11. The new agenda requires countries to make efforts to achieve 17 [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) over the next 15 years.



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FAMILY FARMING AND YOUNG: POTENTIAL

The main international bodies such as the ILO (through the Global Initiative on Decent Jobs for Youth), the FAO and IFAD, among others, have given priority in their fields of action to young people in rural economies. They recognize that it is necessary to invest in rural youth in order to guarantee food production, promote rural economies and reduce rural-urban migration.

Facilitating the entrance of youth in the sector will incentivize the motivation of the change and contribute to develop or adopt new practices, technologies or methods of production more sustainable.



Project of life – sustainable agriculture

The young people who dedicate themselves to agriculture do it as a life project, developing economic, social, territorial, cultural and environmental functions. All these dimensions have to be considered when addressing the necessary actions to promote youth in family farming.

Towards a more Sustainable agriculture

The planet faces a worldwide context in which resources are scarce, in which there is food insecurity and in which climate risks are on the increase. Family Farming is an instrument which makes it possible to face the challenges of climate change and tackle food insecurity at global level.

According to a study carried out by AFA (AFA 2015), young people are beginning to become more involved in developing sustainable agro-ecological holdings. This farming model gives meaning to their work and increases opportunities to innovate and to learn from old and new forms of agriculture. There are many examples across the planet and there are more and more movements promoting sustainable agriculture.

This document makes no claim to narrow down the definitions; quite the contrary, we aim to highlight all the opportunities and benefits that the various models and forms of sustainable agriculture can offer young people to enable them to make a living¹².

1. Back to the land: Since 2010, as a consequence of the economic crisis and the high levels of youth unemployment in various European countries, there has been a tendency for young people to return to rural areas in order to survive and to start socio-economic initiatives in the farming sector. Those returning usually have limited economic resources (own savings, inheritance, family loans or trust networks) and their motivations mostly spring from political, social and environmental concerns. The initiatives vary and are constantly improving but there is one fairly common feature: a desire to find a lifestyle in line with the need to transform the rural environment and to relate to the natural environment in a more sustainable way. They include a great variety of selling methods via short channels, local markets, agroecology, etc.

To find out more, go to [La revuelta al campo](#) (back-to-the-land movement in Spain).

12. At the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), defined sustainable agriculture as “the management and conservation of the natural resource base, and the orientation of technological change in such a manner as to ensure the attainment of continued satisfaction of human needs for present and future generations”.



2. Milan Urban Food Policy Pact: This is an agreement reached by over 100 cities from all over the world, the main objective being to seek coherence between the city and nearby rural food production, processing and distribution, focusing on smallholders and family farmers and paying particular attention to empowering women and young people. The pact comprises a framework of strategic options for cities aiming to achieve more sustainable food systems.

To find out more, go to [Milan Urban Food Policy Pact](#).

3. The Organic Academy of IFOAM: Established in 2012, the IFOAM Academy provides training specific to working in organic farming. Its Organic Leadership Course (OLC) is tailored to the needs of those aspiring to a career in the organic world. Both present and future leaders come together to learn, share experiences, develop innovative strategies, and build like-minded networks.

To find out more, go to [The Organic Academy](#).

Moreover, in the light of increasing urbanization, cities are playing a more and more important role in developing sustainable food-production systems. Despite the great differences between them, all cities are called upon to consider the opportunities offered by sustainable urban or periurban agriculture and to pay special attention to the need to involve their young residents in order to ensure sustainable lifestyles.

Education, training and innovation

Education may well be the most important factor in improving development and living conditions; it ranges from primary education enabling people to develop their critical faculties to vocational training in agriculture enabling them to improve their productive capabilities and including other skills such as management, social skills and leadership.

In recent decades, the rate of enrolment in primary schools has increased significantly, quite possibly as a result of the stimulus provided by the second Millennium Development Goal (MDG).¹³ Nevertheless, children in rural areas face a range of obstacles to access primary education under suitable conditions. They often have to travel long distances to school and/or do not have the tools and materials they need for a full content-rich education. They are also quite often absent from school at certain times when they are needed on the family farm for activities requiring extra labour, such as harvesting.

13. The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight proposals for human development set in 2000 which the 189 member countries of the United Nations agreed to fulfil by the year 2015. The second goal was to "Achieve universal primary education".

The move from primary to secondary education is also problematic, given that many young people leave school at that point to go to work. UNICEF data indicate that overall average attendance at secondary schools in the least developed countries is 37%, falling to 31% in rural areas and standing at 54% in urban areas. By way of comparison, average attendance at primary schools in the same countries is 75%, standing at 72% in rural areas and 87% in urban areas (UNICEF, 2016).

While attendance figures at both primary and secondary schools have increased in recent years, another concern is the quality of the education received in rural areas. Moves which could help boost the flow of young people into agriculture in the future would be to improve teacher motivation and update curricula which are either out of date or far removed from local realities or in which small-scale family farming is belittled or regarded as being of no interest. The curriculum normally does not recognise the existing dynamics and innovation within family farms.

Young people tend to be more likely to make changes, to develop or adapt innovations and to make long-term plans, but for that they need sufficient skills and a good level of specific training and encouragement.

If young people are to become involved in agriculture and make it their occupation, they need to acquire and/or improve their farming skills. Meeting that need is one of the many challenges creating bottlenecks in this area. Much of the know-how is passed on informally to the youth by experienced farmers. While that is both necessary and desirable, it is also crucial to set up specific training, extension and skill development services in order to facilitate adjustment to changing realities (relating, for instance, to environmental or market-related issues) and to stimulate local innovation and initiative by the youth.





If agricultural training services are to be effective, they need not only funds but also motivated personnel capable of passing on practical know-how and encouraging innovation. The courses offered must also correspond to the current and future needs of the young people to whom they are addressed. They must not be confined to training in agronomy, crop cultivation and animal rearing but must also include organization and management skills. Here too, there is evidence that in some regions agricultural training rarely reaches rural youth (Hartl, 2009).

One final aspect to be highlighted in relation to access to education and training is the role of higher education in agriculture as a catalyst for the development of the sector. To fulfil that role, such education, in addition to being rigorous and of high quality, needs to be very closely connected with real labour needs and local communities' demands. A number of reports from multilateral institutions (World Bank, 2011; AFDB/OECD/UNDP/UNECA, 2012) reveal that in a large number of developing countries the number of students attending higher education courses in agriculture is very low in comparison with the total number of students, and women's access to such courses is particularly low.

1. Artzain Eskola (School for Shepherds): This school in the Basque Country is designed to train new shepherds and provide courses for professional shepherds, who are trained in using of natural pastures and commons, respect for animals, compliance with environmental requirements, integral professional training, professional practices and closed-circuit professional installations (production, transformation and marketing), fusion of tradition and modernity: traditional shepherding is updated, the region's cultural heritage in shepherding is enhanced.

To find out more, go to [Artzain Eskola](#)

2. New Farmer Program, Tainan City, Taiwan: The government's extension unit provides technical and financial support for young farmers. Technical support is provided through the use of experts, apprenticeships, agricultural courses and a monitoring system. Agricultural experts and masters teaching agriculture to young farmers are deployed through district farmers' associations.

To find out more, go to [New Farmer Program](#)

3. Bringing down the cost of seed in Indonesia: AFA (2015) cites the example of the Indonesian Peasants' Alliance (API), which is promoting the development of varieties of seeds that are competitive to produce and cheaper than commercial seed. The report describes the work of a young farmer who has been breeding hybrids of local varieties of maize with Mexican and Brazilian varieties exchanged at an international seminar. The maize plants he breeds are more disease-resistant than commercial varieties and cost much less.

Information and communication as instruments for enhancing family farming and increasing the participation of young people

In our day, most family farmers live in disadvantaged rural areas and are facing major economic, social and environmental challenges. That means that family farming depends more and more on timely access to relevant information. Yet it is obvious that in the vast majority of cases access to information and communication services in rural areas is deficient, to say the least.

Access to communication services is a key asset for family farmers and it needs to be mainstreamed in family farming policies.

It is important that rural communication services and policies focus on farmers' right to communication, giving them fair access to information and communication technologies (ICT) and services in rural areas and ensuring the active participation of small-scale family farmers. ICTs generally facilitate access to the timely precise information required in order to improve agricultural production. Access to information is crucial for family farming, given that it is a heterogeneous and holistic activity having highly diversified produce and often limited access to productive resources (Addom *et al* 2014). ICTs are basic tools for decision-making and risk prevention¹⁴ (Yared, 2014). They also have a potential role in the penetration of financial services, since they can keep down the financial institutions' operational costs and can extend opportunities for access to such services to the most remote regions. Finally, ICTs can also provide climate information, making it possible to forestall detrimental effects.

Another point to be highlighted is that young people on every continent are in the habit of using ICTs. That habit needs to be taken into account in the strategies for attracting young people to family farming and it should be considered as an asset to be made use of for access to financial services, climate information, local markets, etc., thus facilitating the decisions on cropping and animal husbandry that family farmers are faced with every day.

1. World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC): The objective of AMARC is to make the voices of the excluded and the marginalized heard through community media and new ICTs, to support people's access to communications and to defend and promote the development of community radio throughout the world, to promote and defend political, legal and regulatory conditions which enable community media to operate, to promote exchange of knowledge and the creation of the capacity to keep community media in operation, and to enhance the social, developmental and humanitarian impact of community media.

To find out more, go to [AMARC](#)

14. When preparing this document, we became aware of the extent to which poor access to ICTs had affected people's ability to respond to the online questionnaire designed to record their experiences (Annex 1).



Political and social participation

There is a long road ahead if we are to have young people take part in policy decision-making bodies and the political arena. Generally, governments do not regard young farmers, whether men or women, as a representative group. Political processes designed to involve young people are most often confined to urban areas, so that there are few possibilities for rural youth to take part. The result is that their problems and needs are neither identified nor taken into consideration and thus receive no priority in the formulation of public policies. And young women from rural areas have even less visibility in the political arena than do young men.

The first step towards increasing the participation of young farmers and rural youth in political decision-making bodies is to raise their profile. The only way to achieve that is by taking action to improve young people's skills and strengthen mutual trust, as well as to give recognition to the initiatives of individual and groups of youth.

There are various initiatives and interventions at different levels – ranging from global to local – designed to provide a platform enabling young people to express their concerns, their opinions and their criticisms and have them passed on to the decision-makers. These forums become collective empowerment spaces in which young people can set out and refine their proposals to influence the drafting and implementation of policies and regulations.

The creation and growth of a new farming project powered by the young demands determination and effort at local level (training, apprenticeships, finance, access to resources, etc.) but is also heavily influenced by other players and by policies and regulations that may help it to grow or may hinder the process.

1. Collège des Jeunes (Youth College): ROPPA, for example, has included the "Collège des Jeunes" (Colegio de los Jóvenes) on its national platforms for the purpose of improving the position of young people on the family holdings and in agricultural organizations. It has two lines of action: defending the interests of young producers in farming organizations and in public policies and enhancing young people's skills and making them professionals in the various branches (Babacar Samb, 2015).

To find out more, go to [CNCR](#)

2. REAF Youth Theme Group: This group develops initiatives designed to construct public policy proposals and organizes training for young people. The objective of these training courses is to exchange ideas on issues of great importance and relevance such as public policy, regional integration, diversity of family farming and, of course, exchanges of experience and examples between young people from different rural areas in South America.

To find out more, go to [REAF](#)

3. Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD): This is an international movement with a membership of some 8000 young professionals whose main mission is to boost the involvement of young people in agriculture. To achieve that, it plays an active part in empowering young people and raising their profile. The YPARD platform is designed to facilitate exchanges of know-how between young professionals, to broaden opportunities for them to contribute to the debates on development-oriented agricultural research, to promote agriculture among young people and to facilitate access to resources and capacity-building.

To find out more go to [YPARD](#)

4. Procasur-Regional Rural Youth Entrepreneurship programme: This is an organization that promotes sustainable development and is currently focusing on Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and Africa. One of its priority strategies is to include rural youth and, as a way to achieve that, it cooperated with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to set up the Rural Youth Entrepreneurship programme. The programme provides a meeting place and platform for exchanging experiences designed and managed by the very young people from rural areas who take part in it. It thus helps to identify and train leaders.

To find out more go to [PROCASUR](#)

5. Establishing organizations for young farmers in Asia: Various social movements, sometimes with the support of United Nations agencies, have backed the establishment of young farmers' organizations in various Asian countries. For example in Mongolia, a committee of young shepherds came into operation in 2013, as did a young cooperative members' club in 2010. In Cambodia, the Network for Farmers and Nature set up a committee of young people that is represented on the organization's executive. Likewise, PAKISAMA, the Filipino National Federation of Peasant Organisations, has set up a young people's assembly, which is formally represented in the organization and has become a vital channel for the training provided by the federation.

6. Network of young producers and agricultural professionals of Togo (REJEPPAT): The network was set up in 2010 following the first National Peasant Forum in 2009, at which the need to increase the representation of rural youth at national level became apparent. At the second Forum in 2010, young people took the opportunity to present their plan to set up a national network of young peasants. The President of Togo backed the idea and mandated the Ministry for Agriculture and the Ministry for Youth to cooperate with the young people in setting up the network.



Another key factor in the empowerment of young people in the social and political sphere is the openness and receptiveness of the community or territory in which they live. Integration and acceptance in the local economy are essential for success. That is why good relations in the immediate surroundings are a factor in most of the local initiatives having political impact.

Not only must young people be represented in the farmers' organizations or federations at local, national and international level, they must also be active members of those bodies and take part in the decision-making processes if those processes are to operate correctly and really represent the opinions of the young.



4.

REFLEXION FROM PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES

In order to be able to consider the matter on the basis of practical experiences and initiatives reflecting the reality of the lives of young people on family farms throughout the world, we prepared a questionnaire covering the issues raised in this document (Annex 2). It was circulated on line in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish through the YPARD blog and the WRF's networks and it remained open from July to October 2016. A total of 125 responses came in from 30 countries, providing a very extensive panorama of different experiences from across the world.

Despite the variety of contexts and personal circumstances described, an analysis of the responses to the questionnaire revealed many similarities between experiences from various parts of the world where young people are becoming family farmers. The main similarity is the importance attached to training. And training is the first obstacle to be overcome by young people wishing to engage in family farming. The principal results obtained for each aspect of the questionnaire are described below.

Aspect of project of life

It emerged that there is general agreement that the decision to work on a family farm is a life project (not just a job choice) and is inspired by a vision for change with new values and more sustainable ways of relating to the environment. That, of course, is not to downplay the need for a dignified lifestyle and economic viability if young people are to be able to follow their life plan. There is a preference for production methods more closely related to the natural pace of ecosystems and for new forms of distribution and commercialization.

The concept of "sustainability" is a key issue in the majority of the responses to the questionnaire, particularly in connection with the need to boost the sustainability of farming practices in order to ensure the sustainability of the farm itself.

Education, training and innovation

Responses to the questionnaires constantly stress how important and how necessary education and agricultural training are if young people are to have access to agriculture. The following key aspects of training needs emerged:



- **Networking:** The need to enhance communication processes and to develop unity and cohesion between those involved in the productive projects was emphasized as a key element if young people are to find their place in family farming. The identification and development of synergies will make a positive contribution to facing challenges, taking decisions and resolving conflicts as well as to sharing successful experiences and working methods.
- **The importance of practical training:** Training that involves practical experience contributes to empowerment and increases the chances of maintaining the viability of a farming project in the long term. There is therefore a need to adjust the balance between technical and practical training in the courses on offer.
- **Mentoring of experience:** A mentoring process is a key requirement in the early years of a farming initiative if there is to be a transfer of know-how and new practices and encouragement of young people's experimentation and innovation throughout the planning and development of the project.

The following are the aspects most often highlighted as ways of redefining and enhancing training schemes:

- **Canvassing the administration:** Many stressed the need to have the backing of the administration in order to adjust regulations, legislation, support programmes and aid programmes to the realities faced by young people in family farming.
- **Inclusion of women:** A new operational dynamic is a fundamental requirement if young women are to be included and empowered (just having women sitting in the decision-making bodies is not a solution). The fact is that there will be no advances in the construction of sustainable family farming models as long as patriarchal roles and behaviour remain.
- Incorporating other training modules in order to **improve young people's own perception** of and pride in the significance of farming and of what it involves. Work also needs to be done to improve society's commonly held view and to get the word out that it is possible to make a decent living from farming and that it is worth the effort. Including topics such as creativity, leadership, empowerment, new technologies, local experimentation and innovation can serve as the springboard for new forms of relationship and new ways of developing family farming.

Finally, to summarize the aspects of training processes for young farmers that need to be improved or maintained, we have selected four responses which can be regarded as representative with respect to the geographical spread.

Table 1. Questionnaire responses on training for young farmers

Country	BRAZIL	BURUNDI	COLOMBIA	PAKISTAN
Body	Landless Workers' Movement (MST) (Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra)	Support for integrated development and solidarity in the hills (ADISCO) Appui au développement intégral et la solidarité sur les collines	Nariño Agricultural Solidarity Federation Agrosolidaria Federación de Nariño	Development Organization for Social Transformation (DOST)
Which aspects of training for young farmers work well? Why?	What works well is directly involving the young in decision-making in the family and the community. That encourages them to take part in the various decision-making processes on topics of common interest and to be active partners in deciding on change in the political and economic sphere.	The key to training young people and passing on know-how is their level of basic education. The majority of young people from rural areas have received primary education and, even if they have dropped out of school, they do have some intellectual baggage that helps them to assimilate skills during their agricultural training.	What works is to have the young people take part in preparing and coordinating the training. Training activities must meet their requirements and it is vital that the young people feel represented. Moreover, where young people work alongside adults, it is easier to ensure the transition to decision-making bodies and to stimulate backing for young peoples' initiatives. Exchanges of experience, meetings, and internships between young people and/or organized communities enhance farm work and make it more attractive.	Enhancing young people's awareness of their basic fundamental rights, particularly the right to information and the right to education, given that information and education have a major impact in our societies.
Which aspects of training for young farmers do not work so well? Why?	Training needs to include socio-economic aspects that boost profitability and showcase produce.	Mobility for young people is one of the prerequisites for the success of agricultural training. It is a decisive factor for ensuring good results. A very common occurrence is that young people interrupt their training when they change jobs or move to another locality (it is much more complicated for young women when they marry).	Courses that consist solely of lectures indoors provide no incentive for young farmers nor do they improve their work on the land. Likewise, those NGOs, academics and institutions that do not adjust their programmes to local needs but impose their own training syllabus on the young prevent the courses from having a positive impact or achieving the desired results.	Training leaders is key. We have to be capable of involving young people in decision-making so that they take up farming.

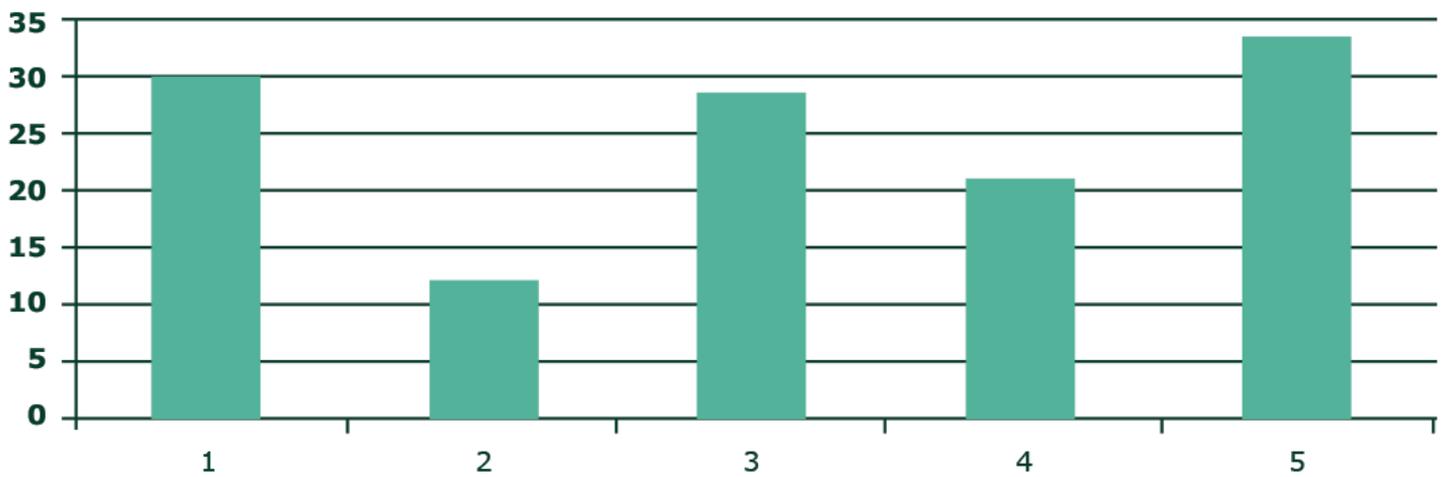


Political and social participation

The questionnaire also offered an opportunity to discover perceptions about the extent to which young people are able to take part in decision-making at worldwide level. The question reads as follows: “Do you think that young people have sufficient opportunities to take part in political decision-making at worldwide level?” Respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed that opportunities are sufficient.

Graph 1: Responses to the question on political and social participation

Do you think that young people have sufficient opportunities to take part in political decision-making at worldwide level?



1. Totally agree
2. Totally disagree

What was most obvious when we analysed the results was how polarized the responses were. A total of 33 respondents felt that young people do not have sufficient opportunities to take part in decision-making (26% of respondents completely disagreed with the statement), while 24% of respondents considered that there are sufficient opportunities (totally in agreement with the statement). These results indicate that there are indeed organizations with the capacity to access political decision-making forums and to overcome the screen of invisibility hiding young farmers.¹⁵



15. It is important to emphasize that when drafting this document we became aware of the extent to which obstacles to accessing to ICTs had affected recipients' opportunities to reply to the questionnaire online (Annex 1).

5. PROPOSAL FOR LINES OF ACTION

What this study is intended to contribute to, i.e. the move to integrate young people into family farming is in line with the discussions which have taken place and the demands made at meetings with young people throughout IYFF 2014 and IYFF+10. This document is designed to continue to feed into the discussion and the construction of the necessary strategies for involving young people in family farming, especially in the framework of the United Nations Decade of Family Farming (2019-2028).

The objective consists to contribute to define lines of political advocacy in favour of public policies to remedy the difficulties and obstacles in each of the areas described.

What is needed is to take the key aspects that emerged from the various IYFF+10 meetings further, through additional work based on practical experiences and on further adjustment to individual and collective realities.

At institutional level there is a need to develop a stronger **integrated specific approach to the needs and demands of rural youth** in order to ensure that youth is more of a priority on the political agenda. Influence must therefore be brought to bear to direct public policies towards ensuring that young people remain in rural areas; that means guaranteeing their rights

and providing services such as health, social policies, education, communication networks (internet and infrastructures), tax incentives and other incentives, and facilitating access to markets and productive resources.



The following are interesting areas of activity that emerged from experience and from the conduct of this study:

1. Measures to improve economic viability

Economic viability is a necessity if productive activities are to proceed. Possible strategies would be to add value to produce through processing, marketing and labelling and through sale through new trading channels. It is important to favour nearby markets. It is considered important acting to improve the traceability (in accessing to market better remunerated) and innovation.

It is important to improve and expand the profitability of family farming, to train young people on issues of quality, innovation, food safety and good farming practices. Achieving opportunities in order that youth could assume real and remunerated responsibilities in this sector is vital; facilitating rural entrepreneurship of young farmers and livestock would help to expand and strengthen the agricultural sector, which is threatened at this time.

2. Promoting participation by young people in family farming associations and federations and then in training courses and political advocacy activities

Only if young people acquire experience and take part in decision-making processes both within those organizations and in other political lobbying forums will more attention be paid to their priorities.

It is also important to create forums in which rural young people can express their views.

3. Favouring gender equity in family farming

It is necessary to strengthen legislation to **guarantee equality of opportunity between men and women** (in terms of contracts and salaries, ownership rights and access to resources and training) and to foster opportunities for the emancipation and socio-economic development of women.

4. Giving priority to young farmers

Action needs to be taken to promote public policy measures introducing positive discrimination or differential treatment for young farmers.

It is necessary to recognize the importance of youth in the agri-food sector, all field experience, the transfer of knowledge and supporting the integration of youth ensures food security and resilience against external factors as fluctuation on prices and diseases.

5. Access to capital

Action must be taken to provide young people taking up family farming with access to capital and financial services that are adapted to and designed for them: favourable terms for access to credit, tax benefits and farm insurance. This action must be accompanied by protection and support policies for the young entrepreneurs so that this access to capital will be sustainable.

6. The right to have access to land and to use it must be guaranteed

As pointed out in the report, access to land is one of main barriers preventing young people from engaging in sustainable farming. In view of speculative rises in the price of land, introducing measures to ensure access to farmland is a matter of urgency.

In some cases specific measures need to be taken to counter land concentration and land grabbing: setting up public bodies to control the land market, land banks, agrarian reform, favouring land leasing or communal use, etc. Overall, it is necessary to promote democratization of land and territory, ensuring a form of rural succession that takes account of the contributions of each generation and of gender equity.

The process of transferring holdings within farming families and communities also needs to be improved in order to ensure a handover from generation to generation.

7. Boosting the formation of associations and collaboration in matters of social economy, for example through cooperatives¹⁶

Becoming involved in associations can be a useful option for young farmers. For that reason, priority should be given to all forms of association in which there is high youth membership. A collaboration network helps to deal with the challenges more effectively and provides a stronger basis for facing the difficulties (climate change, economic changes, unstable prices, etc.).

Cooperatives can take different forms in order to bring added value and provide facilities. For example:

- Agricultural Machine Cooperatives (known in Spanish as CUMAs), which optimize the cost of mechanization for farms, particularly for those tasks for which no individual farmer could afford the machinery.

16. 5th Global Conference on Family Farming: Let's Build the Future, Seminar on "Youth and employment in rural areas" 2015



- Management Centres which are organizations that provide services in farming for both the public and the private sector: technical and economic expertise, accounting, tax matters, management, etc. for a group of agricultural holdings. When it comes to integrating young farmers, the contribution of such centres to monitoring and tutoring is vital, even to the extent of making the difference between the success or failure of the new farm in many cases.
- Production, Transformation and Distribution Cooperative: the establishment of marketing and processing networks also helps reduce costs and infrastructures.

8. Facilitating transmission of holdings

The transmission of holdings needs to be facilitated, particularly where farmers retire early from farming, in order to eliminate restrictions that prevent or complicate the transfer of title.

9. Access to high-quality rural education

One of the fundamentals for achieving sustainable agriculture capable of feeding the world population is to train young farmers. Steps must therefore be taken to encourage them and facilitate their access to training programmes whose content matches their demands and their requirements.

There is a whole range of training channels: knowledge is not confined to official centres but is also to be drawn from every individual's experience, practice and local innovation. The training process needs to cover many different skills: farming skills, experimentation skills, financial skills, marketing skills, environmental skills, local development skills, social skills and political advocacy. Family farming involves processing and integration with the environment.



Rural youth have a right to public provision of free high-quality education that values the identity and diversity of rural and indigenous communities and their know-how and experience in matters of social organization, forms of production and the relations between them; these are fundamental principles which must be respected to ensure the effectiveness of learning processes that recognize their involvement and their participation in the educational dynamic at all levels.

It is therefore necessary to demand plural training in schools, universities, vocational training programmes and mentoring programmes. Adjustments must be made to the curriculum in rural schools to include agricultural topics designed to improve understanding of the role of agriculture and its valorisation. Also it is indicated to promote the inclusion in the academic curricula the importance of family farming.

More specialist training must take account of the diversity of rural youth, particularly ethnicity, gender, social stratum, level of education and the requirements of those most excluded.

There is also a need to organize exchanges of experience between older and younger farmers and between young farmers from different regions, with programmes taking place in the field. Young people's experiences in training courses, both formal and informal, in meetings with the local administration and other bodies and in community activities and in their own local innovation and initiatives must be shared.

10. Improving technical assistance and rural extension services

Technical assistance and rural extension must be free of charge, of good quality and based on local realities and traditional know-how made available to the rural youth of today.

The REAF¹⁷ recognizes that "rural populations remain in the countryside is directly related to what public policies offer and to ease of access to it, a major feature being the existence of Technical Assistance and Rural Extension schemes".

11. Climate change

It is important to enhance the role of young family farmers in strategies of **climate change resilience and action to fight climate change**. Climate change is a reality that family farmers have to face and for them it is most visible in the form of recurrent droughts and floods. Training young people to use climate change resilience tools is a key factor. Moreover, family farming also has a role to play in mitigating climate change and that role needs to be recognized and harnessed. New dynamics towards a more sustainable practice are

17. Resolution 005-2017 on Technical Assistance and Rural Extension for Family Farming, approved by the REAF at Asunción (Argentina, 2017)



being developed and this could be generalized if a change could be generated in terms of the responsibilities that are given to young people. Young people have to empower themselves as leaders of this change because this generation was born and lives within this process of change with facilities in terms of technology, adaptation and less resistance to the transfer of knowledge among producers¹⁸.

12. Improving living conditions in rural areas

The rural environment in which the young people live needs to be improved through better social infrastructure and better provision of educational and cultural amenities in order to encourage them to remain. Policies to that end need to take account of the new profile of rural youth and their requirements.

All the training systems and technologies available need to be adjusted so that they can be used and applied in the most sustainable way. It is also important to make use of the advantages and opportunities offered by our globalized interconnected society as a way of exchanging best practices. ICTs must be flexible and must be adapted to the requirements of family farming.

In recent years, there has been increasing demand from young people in rural areas for access to new technologies as new alternatives become available both for communication and general information and for technological advances relating to production. Quality access to such new technologies is one of the rights of young people and the rural population in general.



18. Contribution of the Youth of the National Peasant Table of the PDRR, Costa Rica.

13. Boosting social recognition of family farming

It is essential that society recognize young people as right-holders and as actors in family farming and value farming activity in its own right. Experiences show that, in addition to economic viability, connectedness with local communities and direct interaction with political actors are essential requirements.

Family farming enables young people to develop creative life projects in which their decisions are their own. Steps can be taken to raise the profile of agriculture in the eyes of society and to highlight the strategic dimension of farming in the production of food and the conservation of the environment. It is also vital to take account of rural young people's current demands and incorporate them into the image of the farming sector, presenting it as a dynamic up-to-date sector.

Identifying young people who have migrated to the urban area to study and develop but do not find opportunities, to take advantage of and use that knowledge learned in the development of the rural area¹⁹.

14. Fostering more sustainable farming practices

Action must be taken to foster farming practices which are more compatible and more in balance with the socio-economic and environmental situation, reducing dependence on inputs, generating positive externalities and working to ensure that the capacity to take decisions on farming plans remains in the hands of rural youth. Young people can be helped to become rural entrepreneurs focusing on agriculture and sustainable processes, and measures and policies must be generated to enhance such practices.

In conclusion, young people represent the vector for change that is needed in order to continue generating debate forums in which questions can be raised and doubts expressed that have the capacity to transform current situations. Not just young farmers and farming organizations but also local and regional administrations have an important part to play in putting these lines of action into practice. Only if such proposals for change are included in public policies will they be firmly rooted, satisfying the needs of young family farmers and, above all, boosting activity that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable. If that is to be achieved, young farmers must take priority in the implementation of those public policies (they must be high on the list for the various kinds of support and the purchase of inputs and productive resources, seasonal credit, lower tax rates, preferential supplier status in public food procurement programmes, etc.).

There is no single recipe but a whole variety of experiences and innovative approaches to be extracted from lessons learned and a diversity of tools for transmitting knowledge and know-how.

19. Contribution of the Youth of the National Peasant Table of the PDRR, Costa Rica.



ANNEX 1

QUESTIONNAIRES ON YOUTH AND FAMILY FARMING

The questionnaires were set up on the Google Forms online platform in English, French, Portuguese and Spanish and were accessible from July to October 2016. 125 responses in all were received from respondents of 30 different nationalities.

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wrfsecretary@ruralforum.org



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