

# Interests and Perceptions of Agriculture among RURAL YOUTH in Mozambique: A summary brief

## Introduction

This brief summarizes findings from an assessment of young people's perceptions of and participation in agriculture in Mozambique. In order to understand young people's interest and perspectives as they relate to the agricultural sector, we examined young women and men's perceptions of the following themes: (i) sustainability of farming as a livelihood; (ii) existing opportunities for young people in the agricultural sector; (iii) access to land, other farm inputs and output

markets for their farm produce; (iv) access to knowledge, skills and information; (v) youth engagement in forums for youth dialogue; and (vi) access to green jobs that contribute to environmental conservation and other economic activities outside agriculture. The study was conducted in six villages of Macate and Angonia districts, in central Mozambique. A total of seven focus group discussions were held with a total of 85 participants (39 males and 46 females).



Transporting maize harvest, Tete province, Mozambique. Photo: CIMMYT/Tsedeke Abate.

## Overall findings

- Regardless of the village of residency, both young men and young women showed positive attitudes towards farming. Farming is a source of food and income for rural households.
- Youth receive land from their parents, when they marry. In patrilineal communities of Macate,

the new couple receives land to farm from the husband's parents at the time when the young wife moves to her husband's home. In matrilineal communities in Angonia, when a woman marries she receives land from her parents for her to farm with her husband.

- Youth in rural Mozambique see themselves as farmers for the rest of their lives. There is lack of alternative employment and economic opportunities outside agriculture in rural areas; therefore, youth find agriculture to be their only option.



- Youth face many challenges in farming that hinder them from moving from subsistence to more profitable agriculture. However, as noted by Ripoll et al. (2017), a number of these challenges are not specific to youth, but rather of general structural character. Some of the challenges that were noted by young women and men in this study include: (i) Lack of access to financial services necessary to invest in improved inputs, labor, and machinery; ii) Problems in obtaining good returns from trading crops due to price fluctuations and lack of reliable markets; (iii) Lack of access to knowledge, skills, and information about farming; and (iv) Young women face several gender-related barriers, e.g. in relation to voicing their concerns and participation in meetings.

- Although youth are aware of employment opportunities in urban areas, of the 85 study participants only one male youth from Macate district revealed plans to move to urban areas in search of employment and stop farming.
- Youth are involved in small business. More female youth are involved in trading crops and fruits, while male youth sell food stuff (oil, sugar, salt). For youth, small business is temporary, not stable, and not profitable. Thus, the youth tend to put farming activities as a first priority at most times and small businesses are considered a secondary priority.

## Recommendations

- Including young women and men farmers in the targeting of interventions** related to information about and access to good quality seeds, as well as to financing or price discounts for fertilizer, seeds and herbicide purchase.
- Strengthening young women's and men's membership in producers' groups**, to help them learn from, and address input- as well as output market challenges together with other farmers (FAO, 2012). This could also facilitate young farmers' exposure to extension information and improved agricultural technologies.

- Evaluate experiences with emerging youth-focused financing products** to build evidence. A relevant example can be found in Uganda, where youth-dedicated products have started to be offered, through a partnership between the Development Finance Company of Uganda (DFCU) Bank, Stanbic Bank and Centenary Bank with the Government of Uganda and its Youth Venture Capital Fund (FAO, CTA and IFAD, 2014).
- Take advantage of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) i.e., mobile phones, internet services, radio, among others, to **reach out specifically to rural youth** and provide them with information that will enhance their agricultural knowledge, business skills and production capability.

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