

Assessment of youth involvement in agriculture: The case of horticulture postharvest management in Tanzania

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Background

- Africa has the youngest population in the world, with almost 200 million people, accounting for 19 percent of the global youth population between the ages of 15 to 24 years, a number that is expected to double by 2045.
- In Tanzania, the youth provide an opportunity for increased economic development through their involvement in agriculture, which is the main activity in rural areas.

Statement of problem

- The Tanzanian population and housing census (PHC, 2012) shows that about 67 percent of the labor force comprises of the youth aged between 15 and 35 years and mostly unemployed.
- International Labour Organization (ILO) indicated that there were over 1 million unemployed youth between the ages of 15 to 24 years in 2014 in Tanzania.

- Almost a fifth of all female youth (769,800) and over a tenth of male youth (409,200) were not in employment, education or training.

Research

- There is a need to support youths residing in rural areas to identify business opportunities available in agriculture including horticulture along value chain such as production, grading, storage, processing, transportation and marketing which in turn reduces the unemployment rate, rural-urban migration as well as poverty reduction.
- Horticulture is one of sub-sectors in agriculture that can attract youths to agriculture.
- Yet horticulture is has a high degree of Post harvest losses because produce are highly perishable.
- The youth have the potential to make significant contributions to agricultural development at different levels and can provide a tremendous opportunity for developing an agricultural-based rural economy if properly harnessed.



Challenges

According to the study, the challenges surrounding youth involvement in agriculture in Tanzania, include;

- Economic factors such as no access to land, no credit facility, low-profit margin and accessibility of market;
- Social factors such as low level of education, less contact with extension officers, negative attitude towards agriculture and parental influence;
- Environmental factors such as increased temperature, pests and diseases and poor roads.
- However, these challenges can be adequately addressed through evidence-based policy measures to produce positive results.

Recommendations

- Tanzania is among countries in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) faced with high Post harvest losses in horticulture that impact negatively not only food and nutrition security, but also monetary loss and waste of human efforts. About 50 to 70 percent of horticultural products are lost during harvesting, handling, packaging, transporting, and marketing.
- Horticulture is one of sub-sectors in agriculture that could attract youth to participate in agricultural agribusinesses because it provides quick yield and return on investment and requires limited land.

- Reducing PHLs for fresh produce has been demonstrated to be an important part of sustainable agricultural development efforts meant to increase food and nutritional security, income stability, efficient use of resource and employment creation.
- The Tanzanian government should create a conducive environment for private investors - improved rural roads, power supply, and lowering tax in improved horticultural PHM facilities, to have contract farming arrangements with male and female youth in Njombe Region.
- Youth would benefit from investments made infrastructure development especially in the construction of pack-houses. Currently, there is one pack-house in Njombe Region centered in Njombe Town Council, which was developed through a public-private partnership.
- There is a need for the development of processing plants; this is important for reducing horticultural PHLs to enhance youth participation.
- The Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children, and Tanzania Horticulture Association should link with development partners to develop a project for raising awareness on the available opportunities in the horticulture sub-sector, which could attract female youth to be more involved in the horticulture sub-sector.

