



Dialogue on financing sustainable agrifood systems for youth: gaps and opportunities

FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy
17 October 2023, 10.15-11.15 CET

Summary

Current funding to transform agrifood systems is grossly inadequate, and concrete actions are needed to correct this and make them more sustainable, resilient and productive, while protecting the environment. Following the guiding principles of the FAST Initiative, which aim to ensure that the food security dimension and the diversity of the agrifood systems are reflected in the activities, and that women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and people in vulnerable situations are engaged and empowered, it is critical to dialogue on the current gaps and opportunities to improve access to finance for Youth. This side event provided the platform for discussion and engage relevant stakeholders in a constructive dialogue towards concrete solutions on agrifood system transformation tools that are truly accessible for all.

The event was organized by FAO and YPARD, and welcomed around 70 attendees, 35 in person and 36 online.

Key messages

- Climate finance going to the agrifood sector is not proportionate to GHG emissions from the sector, and it represents a huge opportunity for mitigation and adaptation. There are current gaps in access to climate finance in agriculture for youth, which can be addressed by systemic changes in finance, networks, education, and enabling environment.
- The climate crisis disproportionately affects family farmers, especially young family farmers who face challenges related to urban migration, land access, and generational renewal on farms.
- Young family farmers lack access to policy and decision-making spaces, even though they are key in driving climate-resilient production processes. Civil society organizations, including the World Rural Forum, advocate for greater inclusion of young family farmers in policy processes.
- Investing in young people is seen as risky from the investors point of view, which often leads to low approval rate of youth-led projects, or to the approval of smaller amounts.
- One of the key actions implemented by GEF to engage Youth is through outreach and engagement, that saw Youth organizations fully involved during the GEF-8 Replenishment process, as part of the discussion about the design of programmes and programmatic approaches.
- At country level, it is essential to establish specific targets and measurable indicators to monitor youth engagement during implementation, with a view to move from youth engagement to youth empowerment.
- The GEF also has a Learning Initiatives and Fellowship to allow Youth to have access to research and learning opportunities, as well as providing direct support to initiative led by youth under the Small Grant programme.
- Youth involvement should become an intrinsic component of policy formulation and the practical execution of projects at the grassroots level. The FAST Partnership can accelerate this process,

provide a space to advocate for youth representation, and offer data-driven insights to drive informed decision-making.

Event outline

Time	Segment
5 min	Welcoming and key messages of the climate finance analysis and overview of the FAST Initiative and Partnership. <i>Giulia Maria Galbiati</i> , Climate change specialist, Office of Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environment, FAO
5 min	Ice-breaker: turn to your neighbor to briefly discuss why it is important to speak about improving climate finance access for agrifood systems for Youth. <i>Genna Tesdall</i> , Director of the Young Professionals Network for Agricultural Development
30 min	Panel discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ <i>Lucia Cordero</i>, Coordinator of the youth dialogue framework of COPROFAM (Mercosur Confederation of Family Farming Organisations), member of the World Rural Forum.➤ <i>Peter Mbanda Umunay</i>, Senior Environmental Specialist, leading the food systems area of work at the Global Environmental Facility (GEF)➤ <i>Juliette Grace Luwedde</i>, Climate activist and Youth Caucus Focal Point of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
15 min	Q&A
5 min	Closing

Useful links

FAST Partnership: <https://www.fao.org/climate-change/action-areas/access-to-climate-finance/fast/en>

World Rural Forum: <https://www.ruralforum.org/en/>

YPARD: <https://www.ypard.net/>

GEF opportunities:

UNCCD Youth Caucus: <https://www.unccd.int/land-and-life/youth/overview>