



**Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations**

Empowering youth to engage in responsible investment in agriculture and food systems in Liberia

Why is it important?

Youth represent more than half of the population of Liberia and can play a critical role in the future of agriculture, however they need support to unlock their potential. Empowering Liberian youth to invest in agriculture and food systems is key to achieving sustainable food security, reducing youth unemployment, combating distress migration, and making agriculture more efficient, sustainable and resilient.

First, the country's population is expected to increase from the current estimated five million to close to ten million people by 2050. Small-scale producers, both farmers and post-harvest processors, produce a significant share of the total food consumed in the country. However, these current food systems are put

under significant strain by the agricultural "generation gap" – the ageing on-farm labour force and non-rejuvenation of the entire sector.

Second, youth can be agents of change in the transformation of food systems. Agricultural production systems need to become more productive and resilient to shocks, adapting to climate change and the degradation of natural resources. Simultaneously, the agricultural sector in Liberia is based on subsistence farming characterized by low yields and scarce use of technology. By harnessing innovation, utilizing new technologies and techniques, and taking



advantage of new opportunities in emerging value chains, young agri-entrepreneurs can create thriving businesses and enhance the value add of agricultural production.


Finally, attracting and retaining youth in agriculture is key to reducing unemployment and

distress migration. Informal employment affects nearly nine out of ten young workers in Liberia, and close to half of all workers aged 15 to 24 are poor in spite of being employed. Underemployment fuels rural-urban and international migration, as many rural youths leave their homes in search of a better future.

What we do

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is working with the Government of Liberia to make agriculture an attractive and lucrative sector for youth, and to help young agri-entrepreneurs create successful businesses.

This is done by:

 **Strengthening institutional, policy and incentives frameworks** that facilitate and promote youth investment in production and businesses along agricultural value chains

 Providing **capacity development support** to youth and other stakeholders to engage in inclusive business models, including responsible contract farming

 **Empowering youth organizations to participate in policy dialogue** related to agricultural investment at local, national, regional and global levels

Supported by:

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