

CONCEPT NOTE

UTAFITI SERA III HOUSE ON YOUTH EMPLOYMENT CREATION IN AGRICULTURE AND AGRO-PROCESSING

1. Background

Every generation has an assignment and that assignment often presents itself as a challenge. For the present generation of Kenyan youth-and Africa by extension, their most pressing challenge is unemployment¹. This challenge exists amidst the best-educated and globally connected generation the Continent has ever had²; a generation presently positioned as the only growing youth population (420 million³) in the world, is expected to double to 830 million by 2050⁴ and by the end of the century will account for 41% of the world's youth population.⁵

It is in this environment that the youth in Kenya are blossoming. A Continent that is much endowed not to mention that is home to 60 per cent of the world's arable land. More so, with the advent of the just signed African Continental Free Trade Area-AfCFTA, the youth in Kenya are free to explore the African market of 1.2 billion people (a projected 2.5 billion people by 2050), with a joint Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 2.5 trillion dollars. It is important to note that one of the key objectives of the Agreement is to focus on employment creation for the continent's bulging youth population.⁶

Indeed Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has one of the highest unemployment rates in the world at 40 per cent. More so, over the last two decades, despite employing 80 percent of the labour force, agriculture, manufacturing and service industries have grown by less than 2.5 percent annually.⁷ In 2012, 70 percent of African youth resided in rural areas and accounted for 65 percent of labour in agriculture.⁸

In Kenya, the agricultural industry remains the most prominent, important and dominant industry. It accounts for 30 percent of the annual GDP and another 27% indirectly.⁹ Agriculture therefore remains a key employer and could be significantly enhanced by strengthening linkages with industry through agro-processing and agro-innovation to make it more attractive to the youth and connect them to a wider range of economic opportunities.

¹ Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2019, Africa's Youth: Jobs or Migration? Ibrahim Forum Report

² World Economic Forum, 2017, The future of Jobs and Skills in Africa, preparing the Region for the Fourth Industrial Revolution

³ African Development Bank, Jobs for Youth in Africa

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Mo Ibrahim Foundation, 2012, Facts and Figures

⁶ Africa Union, Africa Trade Policy Center, Economic Commission for Africa, Africa Union Commission, 2019, African Continental Free Trade Area

⁷ Alemayehu Konde Koira, 2014, Agribusiness in Sub-Saharan Africa: Pathways for developing innovative programs for youth and the rural poor Mastercard Foundation

⁸ ILO (2012c) Global employment outlook September 2012: Bleak Labor Market Prospects for Youth. Rome: ILO

⁹ Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2016, Economic Survey

2. Utafiti Sera House on Youth Employment in Agriculture and Agro- Processing

It is for this reason, the Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) through *Utafiti Sera* (research-policy) has institutionalized an evidence-to-policy research platform that transforms research evidence-based on knowledge for policy uptake.

Recognizing that employment opportunities in the agriculture and agro-processing sectors remain underexplored and under-utilised by both the youth and policy-actors alike, PASGR in partnership with the Center for African Bio-Entrepreneurship (CABE) facilitated the *Utafiti Sera* house on Youth Employment Creation in Agriculture and Agro-processing. This House was inaugurated in December 2017 seeks to use research evidence to enhance policy processes and outcomes on youth employment in the agricultural and agro-processing sectors. The first and second phases have successfully been executed and the third phase is presently underway.

Overview of Utafiti Sera I and II

Utafiti Sera Phase I mainly focused on the sugar and horticultural industry where key policy issues on the two were identified. Phase II was a major milestone on youth employment creation in agriculture and agro-processing. It chartered an integrated (formal & informal) apprenticeship framework anchored in working with both the national and county governments.

Nevertheless, amidst the achievements of these two phases, some critical issues emerged and gaps were identified that can be prioritized in the third phase. These include:

- A policy and implementation dilemma whereby youth development is not a devolved function while agriculture and agricultural services are devolved;
- The House focused on influencing policy, which often takes a longer duration. This makes it difficult to achieve the project within the limited period of the project and;
- Most stakeholders in the multi-level and multi-stage policy dialogues were middle-level bureaucrats and not senior bureaucrats and policy makers. Thus, the actual 'practitioner' in youth employment creation was missing.

3. Proposed Utafiti Sera III

Building on the foundation of the last two phases, this house endeavours to unearth and redesign the state of play on youth employment creation and agro-enterprise development.

The House proposes a more practical approach that focuses on various value chains in food security and manufacturing, which are priority to the Big Four Agenda. It will incorporate the adoption of an inclusive approach that brings together policy and practice to identify and explore untapped potential and opportunities while addressing the inhibitive challenges in this anchor sectors.

The third phase of Utafiti Sera envisages to engage more with the private sector as the prime-movers of enterprise development and employment creation in any given economy and thus its contribution is indispensable in the agricultural policy process.

In addition, the House will promote inter-generational apprenticeship and inclusive business models to expand sustainable youth employment creation opportunities and further expose the inhibitive policies and regulatory frameworks-some that date back to the colonial era.

Through interactive processes the House will actively engage, synthesize and make available the relevant evidence to the youth and other actors in selected agricultural value chains to inform policy and practice through engagement and communication for impact on job creation.

4. Aims and Objectives of Reference Group Meeting

CABE, PASGR and Alternatives have organized this 2-day meeting of critical friends (or reference group (RG) members to deliberate on the programme design for Utafiti sera Phase III on youth employment creation. The meeting to be held on 16th-18th October 2019 in Kisumu at a venue to be confirmed comprised of a maximum of 15 people (See list in the annex).

4.1 Specific Objectives of the Reference Group Meeting include:

- To develop draft objectives of Phase III house in line with to the BIG 4 Agenda – and with a focus on food security and manufacturing pillars;
- Formulate a draft theory of change, focus issues (including particular value chains), strategic partners, and an approach on engagement and communication for impact and;
- Prepare a draft work plan of activities, timelines and responsible partners.

5. Expected Outcomes and Outputs

5.1 Outcomes

- Reference group (RG) will be constituted to become critical friends of the programme;
- Programme design will be refined in consultation with the RG members to a full programme and;
- Programme outcomes will include: objectives, activities, theory of change, focus issues/partners, approach, and work plan.

5.2 Outputs

- Notes and proceedings of a programme design meeting
- List of RG members
- Date of next meeting to refine a full program