



International Conference

Jobs, Food & Farming



Jobs, Food & Farming

An international conference about young people and the future of the agrifood sector in Africa

19-21 March, 2012

Accra, Ghana

In Africa, policy interest in the ‘young people – agriculture nexus’ focuses almost exclusively on the challenge of keeping young people in rural areas and engaged in farming. This approach ignores important drivers, trends and developments that are impacting on both young people’s aspirations and the structure of the agrifood sector.

In the coming years the agrifood sector in Africa will undergo significant transformation that will result in both challenges and opportunities for young people, depending on who and where they are. Perhaps most importantly, the agrifood sector will become an increasingly important source of formal employment for young people, with a significant expansion of employment opportunities in food marketing, processing, retail, catering, research, input sales etc. These jobs will generally require higher levels of education and different skills, and many will be located in or near urban areas.

It is this context that the conference will critically examine, from both research and policy perspectives:

- Dominant and alternative framings and narratives, and recent empirical data, relating to how young people engage with the agrifood sector in Africa (as producers, entrepreneurs, employees, consumers and citizens)
- The dynamics of change in different components of the agri-food sector and the implications of these dynamics for young people
- The implications for young people of alternative policy approaches to the development of the agri-food sector

Throughout, the need to consider different categories of young people and importance of different situations and places will be emphasised. Conflict will be one of the ‘situations’ that will be highlighted.

The conference will be co-hosted by the **Future Agricultures Consortium (FAC)** based at the Institute of Development Studies and the **Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER)**, University of Ghana, Accra.

Through this conference we hope to help shift the debate away from questions such as “*How can farming be made more attractive to young people?*” toward a broader

analysis the opportunities and challenges, for different categories of young people in different situations, of on-going and likely future changes within the broader agri-food system. Such an analysis should take account of changes not only in food production, but also in processing and transformation, marketing, retail, governance and so on.

FAC (<http://www.future-agricultures.org/>) is a multidisciplinary and independent learning alliance of academic researchers and practitioners involved in African agriculture. Based at the Institute of Development Studies (www.ids.ac.uk) it aims to encourage dialogue and the sharing of good practice by policy makers and opinion formers in Africa on the role of agriculture in broad based growth. With funding from the UK's Department for International Development the consortium is active in twelve countries across Africa.

ISSER (<http://www.isser.org/>) is a semi-autonomous research institution within the Faculty of Social Studies at the University of Ghana. ISSER is committed to carrying out research and training that is geared towards promoting the socio-economic development of Ghana in particular and Africa in general. The Institute strives to maintain its reputation for solid social science research, paying close attention to exploratory, explanatory and evaluative aspects of the dynamics of development

Contacts: **Dr James Sumberg**
Research Fellow
Institute of Development Studies (IDS)
Brighton, UK
j.sumberg@ids.ac.uk

Dr Nana Akua Anyidoho
Research Fellow
ISSER
University of Ghana, P. O. Box LG 74
Legon, Ghana
a_anyi@yahoo.com