

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Research Report #2

Expanding Employment and Entrepreneurship Opportunities for Young Women and Men in Nigeria's Agrifood Sector: Prospects and Challenges

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Acronyms

FGD	Focus group discussion
ICT	Information and communication technologies
ILO	International Labour Organization
ITF	Industrial Training Fund
NAFDAC	National Food and Drug Development Agency
NDE	National Department of Employment
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
OFFER	Oluponna Fish Farming Education and Resource
SME	Small- and medium-sized enterprise
SMEDAN	Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa



Executive Summary

Over half of Nigeria's 80 million young men and women aged 15 to 24 are un- or underemployed. With the decline of its oil-dependent economy, Nigeria's agrifood sector is expanding to meet the increasing demand for domestic agricultural products that can substitute for imported foods, presenting important new opportunities for youth employment. This report examines the major constraints affecting the expansion of youth agrifood employment and improvement of youth training programs, and makes recommendations in both areas.

The report is based on data collected through a series of focus group discussions (FGDs) with youth and private sector representatives held in Lagos, Oyo, Osun and Ogun States in southwest Nigeria. The discussions focused on opportunities and constraints for economically disadvantaged youth in five fast-growing value chains which are strategic priorities for the government: cassava, oilseeds, horticulture, poultry, and aquaculture. The information from the FGDs is supported by an extensive literature review and in-depth interviews with selected key informants.

The authors found three main types of barriers to youth employment and enterprise development.

(1) *Structural barriers*: the lack of a formal market structure for youth employment results in a mismatch between what employers or supply chain partners want from youth, and what youth have to offer in terms of characteristics, skills and training background;

(2) *Policy barriers*: including policy inconsistencies, excessive bureaucracy and corruption, which discourage employers from hiring and expanding their businesses; difficulty by youth in accessing essential startup resources such as land and credit, and the poor quality and small amount of funding available for public sector training programs relative to the need; and

(3) *Gender-related barriers*: including gender disparities in literacy and numeracy due to higher female school dropout rates; lack of study time due to household responsibilities; the reluctance of families to allow unmarried girls to travel to attend training programs; discrimination in hiring, as employers consider young women to be unreliable due to perceptions that they will marry soon and leave their employment, or have too many competing domestic responsibilities; and differences in access to resources due to the prevalence of customary laws and norms which favor men's access to land, credit, productive inputs, education, and healthcare.

Key findings on existing youth training programs. There are a number of youth training programs operating in southwestern Nigeria. However, the research found that the majority of these programs focus on technical skills acquisition (not always directly relevant to existing opportunities in the industry) with much less emphasis on supporting trainees to actually secure jobs. Training programs focus on hard/technical skills, but employers also want youth to have soft/personal skills, including the ability to learn and think, have passion and commitment, persistence, interpersonal communications, initiative and drive, literacy and numeracy. Although employers want both sets of skills, the lack of soft/personal skills was a more pressing concern.

The authors found few scholarly articles or systematic documentation regarding program effectiveness in providing training that meets market needs, and reduces un- and under-employment.

Finally, existing youth training programs do not appear to consider gender disparities in designing their programs.

Recommendations. Collectively the findings highlight a highly fragmented approach to expanding youth employment and entrepreneurship. Various efforts to address pieces of the problem are ongoing, but the pieces need to be brought together into a system if progress is to ensue. A systems approach can only emerge with the vital engagement and integration of efforts by diverse actors—private sector, youth themselves, government and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

Two missing markets exist and need to be created. The societal task for government, NGOs, business and youth working together is designing and implementing two formal markets:

- One to serve the missing market between able youth who want employment and able employers who want to hire them; and
- Another to serve the missing market between able youth entrepreneurs and promising venture opportunities.

The missing markets can be conceived of as a system needing three interconnected components:

- Component 1: A gender-equitable capacity to identify and recruit able youth and/or youth with potential to gain hard/technical and soft/personal skills as the supply side of the missing market. Currently, this identification and recruitment happens by chance, with neither employers nor potential supply chain partners knowing how to improve their connections with the youth. Developing this capacity will involve work with the private sector to identify, for specific jobs or entrepreneurial opportunities, the set of traits, skills, experiences, and level of literacy/numeracy needed. It will also involve developing baseline and ongoing tests to assess youths' aptitudes and match them to potential course and job/enterprise opportunities, and to measure progress in different areas throughout the training course.
- Component 2: A capacity to create experiential learning opportunities for the identified and recruited young men and women to address the gaps/skills needs and prepare youth for employment and/or entrepreneurship. This step is needed to assure that willing employers and value chain partnerships (the demand side) will be able to find and engage youth with desirable traits. The emphasis is on providing gender-equitable access to experiential learning, internships, mentoring, case teaching, and learning objectives tied directly to job and entrepreneurial opportunities. Hard/technical and soft/personal skills need to be incorporated into all training. Currently, skills development is at best a spotty, incomplete, and unconnected part of the process. This component will include an ongoing assessment and feedback process to verify trainee progress in skills acquisition and identify areas where the training program needs to be strengthened.
- Component 3: A capacity to develop and implement gender-equitable strategies to place identified and trained youth into jobs and entrepreneurial ventures and provide ongoing mentorship. Chief among these strategies will be building a network of willing employers and/or venture suppliers and buyers (the demand side) who will hire the youth or accept their ventures into the value chain. Currently the youth placement process is haphazard and incomplete for both the youth and potential employers/value chain partners.

A managed public-private partnership platform will be required to engage stakeholders, and to create and connect these components into an organic, interactive and sustainable system to expand gender-equitable youth engagement in Nigeria's agrifood system. The partnership platform can be largely virtual, and will provide the architecture for information sharing and for public-private

consultation on programs and policies critical for expanding youth employment. The platform will also provide a venue for collaboration around the development and implementation of the specific components described above; allow for the ongoing review of emerging evidence on training and placement programs as they are implemented; and facilitate ongoing revision and/or scaling of efforts to respond to the findings.

1. Background and study objectives

About half of Nigeria's population of over 160 million are youth, defined as individuals between the ages of 15 and 34 (Akande, 2014; NPoC, 2013). For the first quarter of 2016, the unemployment rate for youth aged 15 to 24 in Nigeria was reported to be 21.5%, while the underemployment rate was 34.2% (National Bureau of Statistics, 2016). The estimates for Nigeria are similar to estimates for youth unemployment for neighboring countries in the region (International Labour Organisation (ILO), 2015).

Youth unemployment in Nigeria is diverse in depth and scope. It varies across geographical space; youth unemployment is higher in rural versus urban areas, and is higher in northern compared to southern Nigeria. Youth unemployment also varies with education level and by gender. Over half of unemployed youth have a primary school education, or less, and over 50% are females (Akande, 2014). Unemployment in Nigeria appears to be growing over time, with important implications for public welfare and national security. High unemployment rates place severe financial burdens on the average employed Nigerian, who must support a greater number of family members. High unemployment rates also reflect a gross underutilization of the human resources that are needed for national economic growth. Furthermore, as Adelaja and George (2017) argue, unemployed youth are vulnerable to radicalization, making them prime targets for recruitment by terrorist groups. Hence, high rates of youth unemployment may adversely affect other development indicators.

As in the rest of Africa, the high rate of youth unemployment in Nigeria can be attributed to several factors, including: (a) the growing youth population (youth bulge); (b) low skill levels; (c) low quality and levels of education;¹ (d) the significant mismatch between skills acquired in schools and those required in the labor market; (e) lack of entrepreneurial and life skills education in schools; (f) lack of access to capital to start businesses; and (g) an inadequate policy environment. Work to better understand and improve the policy environment at federal, state and local levels is particularly important because of the potential to affect many of the factors contributing to high youth unemployment.

Alongside the high rates of youth unemployment and underemployment, new and remunerative opportunities are emerging for youth in the dynamic agrifood systems of Nigeria. Like the rest of Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), the past two decades have seen food systems in Nigeria transform rapidly. Across SSA, this transformation has been driven by increased incomes and high urbanization rates which have changed consumption patterns significantly (Tschirley et al. 2017).

Two important features of this transformation on the African continent are the general increase in food purchases (particularly by rural households) and the rise in the consumption of processed foods. According to nationally representative data for Nigeria, in 2015 nearly 75% of foods consumed by Nigerians were purchased, and almost 65% of the purchased food was processed (Liverpool-Tasie et al., 2016b). The data reveal significant food market activity in both urban and rural areas in Nigeria. Such activity should increase the demand for agricultural commodities, while also creating opportunities for value addition and related activities along value chains associated with agricultural commodities that are in high demand.

¹ According to ILO, three in five young workers (61.4%) in Nigeria do not have the expected levels of education to make them productive on the job (ILO, 2015).

With the recent collapse in global oil prices, which has increased the cost of imported food items, there has been rising interest from the Nigerian food service and retail sectors in domestically sourced agricultural products, as well as processed and packaged food items. This growing interest from the private sector and positive trends in the demand for value-added food products clearly indicate the need for more strategic attention to domestic agriculture and the numerous investment and employment opportunities within the sector. The energy and versatility of youth make them attractive to private sector companies which are trying to help fill the projected growth in demand and opportunities created by the structural transformations occurring in Nigeria. But low levels of technical and life skills, lack of entrepreneurship education, and lack of access to capital are some of the potential constraints holding back youth from seizing these opportunities.

This research brief presents a summary of research findings on major policy and program constraints to youth engagement in Nigeria's emerging agrifood sector opportunities. The analysis focuses on constraints for a particularly underserved and at-risk population: youth between the ages of 18 and 24 who are out of school and economically disadvantaged. Specific constraints affecting the ability of young women to take advantage of emerging economic opportunities are given particular consideration. The study focuses attention on opportunities in four value chains (poultry, aquaculture, horticulture, and cassava) in Oyo, Osun and Ogun States in the southwestern part of Nigeria. These states play a prominent role in serving Nigeria's major urban food market, and the rapidly rising demand for commodities in the selected value chains holds considerable potential for youth employment, given the economic and agricultural transformation underway in the country (Allen et al., 2016)

We first describe the study methodology and provide background information on the focus value chains. This is followed by a summary of key findings from the data analysis, and implications and recommendations for the design of programs and policies aimed at expanding economic opportunities for young men and women in the agrifood sector.

2. Study methodology

The methodology of this study is largely qualitative, based on data collected through a series of full-day focus group discussions (FGDs) in four selected southwestern Nigerian cities between May 16 and 19, 2017. The information from the FGDs is supported by an extensive literature review and in-depth interviews with selected key informants. The FGDs involved key stakeholders from the private sector (e.g., input dealers, farmers, processors, food retailers, food service operators and traders), federal and state government, financial institutions, non-governmental organizations, and others. The FGD participants represented a diverse pool of representatives with in-depth knowledge of the target value chains in each state. In each of the four different locations, participants were grouped along the following industry classifications, with government represented in each grouping:

- Input suppliers, farms, near-farm handler/processors for fish and poultry;
- Input suppliers, farms, near-farm handler/processors for cassava, oilseeds, horticulture;
- Food manufacturers, processors and wholesale/distribution; and
- Grocery, restaurant, food service.

In addition to the private sector groups, sex-disaggregated youth focus groups were included in Oyo, Osun and Ogun States. One female-only youth group, and one male-only youth group, were convened in each of the three states.

Following an introductory session to inform participants about the goal of the focus group activity and why they had been invited, the structure of the FGD was explained and the consent of each participant sought. Discussions in each group were led by a facilitator supported by two note takers and a flip chart manager. Each FGD was structured around a common set of questions/issues related to current and expected employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, and constraints to youth employment along the key value chains (from production to retail). The morning session in each city focused on employment issues, while the afternoon discussion focused on entrepreneurship. The key questions covered are summarized in Table A1 in the annex. The complete questionnaire and focus group protocol is available from the authors upon request.

3. An overview of the target value chains

The target value chains for this study are cassava, horticultural products, poultry and aquaculture. These were selected because of their importance in Nigeria's current and projected food systems as well as the national and/or state government agricultural growth strategies.

Nigeria is the largest producer of cassava in the world, and cassava is a key food staple in the country. Cassava production has steadily increased from 33 million tons two decades ago to approximately 57 million tons in 2016 (FAOSTAT). In Nigeria, cassava production is well developed, with widespread use of improved varieties, and well-established multiplication and processing techniques for producing human food and animal feed. As a human food product, cassava is consumed in different forms, such as *gari*² and cassava flour (Balagopalan, 2002). Cassava is also an important industrial crop for the production of starch, cassava chips and ethanol. It is one of the focus crops of the current government's National Agricultural Policy and Strategy (Oxford Business Group, 2016). Opportunities within the cassava value chain go beyond meeting domestic consumption and industrial needs, as cassava is a potential export crop of high priority to the Federal Government of Nigeria.

Horticultural products (encompassing fruits, vegetables, herbs, ornamentals, etc.), poultry and aquaculture are also increasingly important in Nigeria's expanding agrifood system. As the diet of the average Nigerian diversifies beyond staples, there is increased consumption of horticultural products, and plant- and animal-based proteins (e.g. oilseeds, fish, meat, eggs, and dairy). According to nationally representative data on consumption patterns in Nigeria in 2012, animal-based protein, nuts and oils, and fruits and vegetables, on average account for about 20%, 15% and 10% of food expenditures respectively (Liverpool-Tasie et al., 2016a). Fish is widely consumed by the average Nigerian, both in rural and urban areas, and in 2012, expenditures on fish made up about one-half of the average Nigerian's spending on animal proteins. Fish costs constituted about 10% of the average Nigerian's total food expenditure in 2012, as much as the average consumer spends on rice, or tubers, or pulses/legumes.

The positive trend in Nigerian household incomes also suggests that demand will continue to grow for fish and poultry products. Liverpool-Tasie et al. (2017) estimated demand elasticities for

² A popular cassava dish made by roasting or frying processed cassava flakes

different food groups and types of fish across Nigeria. They find that the expenditure elasticities of demand for poultry products, fish and other seafood in Nigeria are consistently greater than 1 (across different regions and income levels), indicating that their demand will increase significantly as incomes increase. Liverpool-Tasie et al. (2016a) also showed that the maize-based feed industry grew by over 600% in the last 10 years as derived demand from poultry and aquaculture has grown. Currently, however, the expanding demand for fish is being met through imports, not domestic production.

By contrast, the local chicken value chain is thriving and helping to meet the rapidly expanding demand for chicken meat, although imported frozen chickens still make up an estimated 15% of all chickens consumed in Nigeria, despite a longstanding import ban (Ogunleye et al., 2016). These trends suggest there are significant investment opportunities in the domestic aquaculture and poultry subsectors to meet the current and projected demand for fish and poultry products. As discussed below, the nature of activities necessary for production, processing and distribution of these products are well suited to youth who are physically strong, dynamic, energetic, and skilled in the use of information and communication technologies (ICT).

4. Summary of key findings

This section summarizes the major barriers to youth employment and enterprise development as identified during the FGDs, literature review and selected in-depth interviews with key stakeholders in the focus value chains. Three types of barriers are discussed: (1) structural barriers inherent to the characteristics of youth and their skills development, (2) policy barriers to hiring youth and securing resources needed for youth entrepreneurship, and (3) gender-related barriers to youth employment and entrepreneurship.

4.1. Structural barriers to youth employment and entrepreneurship

No distinct or formal market structure exists for youth employment and entrepreneurship in southwestern Nigeria. This structural gap results in a mismatch between what employers or supply chain partners want from youth and what youth have to offer in terms of characteristics, skills and training background. The various dimensions of the mismatch are what we call “structural barriers” in this section.

According to FGD participants, the key characteristics that hinder employers from hiring youth are (a) the poor attitude of youth to work generally, and particularly to work in agriculture, and (b) lack of required skills and illiteracy. According to employers, youth have a negative perception of agriculture which results in a lack of interest in the sector. Other attitudinal factors perceived by potential employers that make youth unattractive to hire include a lack of initiative and indecision, unreliability, immaturity, poor integrity, and low morals. Employers also described some youth as overly ambitious and suffering from “quick money syndrome,” lacking the patience and commitment needed to succeed as employees.

Youth participants in FGDs offered a contrasting view. Many youth believe they have desired employment and entrepreneurial traits, but they do not know how to find employers who want the skills and potential they offer or how to build potential customer and value chain relationships for a youth enterprise. Their skills and attitudes may have more potential than realized ability, but with little chance to connect to employment and entrepreneurial opportunities they find themselves in

a very difficult position of not knowing where to go or how to signal the skills and potential they do have.

Employers want youth to have hard/technical skills and soft/personal skills. Hard/technical skills include knowledge and experience in all aspects of a specific business or value chain function. Soft/personal skills include the ability to learn and think, have passion and commitment, persistence, interpersonal communications, initiative and drive, literacy and numeracy. Although employers want both sets of skills, they expressed a possible tradeoff between them: if the soft/personal skills are present in a potential hire, then employers can more easily train the hard/technical skills. The lack of soft/personal skills may thus be the more pressing concern.

Structurally, the kinds of opportunities open to youth are limited which is a barrier in its own right. FGD participants reported that significant numbers of on-farm “attendant” jobs likely exist. These jobs are a step below farm assistant and two steps below farm manager, and are potentially a good fit to the limited skill set of un-/underemployed youth. All sorts of individual farm functions—land preparation, planting, cultivating, harvesting—can be attendant jobs. As to entrepreneurial opportunities on-farm, the probability of a youth becoming a farmer (entrepreneur) is highly unlikely given business and technical skill levels as well as land and resource constraints. FGD participants suggest that some of the farm attendant functions might generate youth entrepreneurial ventures. For example, youth could organize themselves into a team (informal business) to provide a function to multiple farms. Pesticide application, timely cultivation services and similar individual on-farm activities fall into this example. The potential of these youth ventures needs closer study to determine if they are feasible for disadvantaged youth to pursue, and what additional training and resources may be required.

Off-farm in the value chain, FGD participants suggested that significant jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities often arise from similar categories of activity. Functions that can be filled by a hired employee or provided by an entrepreneur include:

- Agent in the value chain (supply and marketing)
- Near-farm first/simple processing
- Transport driver and related distribution and storage functions
- Equipment operator/repair
- Retail functions (jobs in retail businesses or informal enterprises directly serving consumers)

Larger, more formal value chain businesses carry out these functions through jobs for hire, particularly when significant capital (equipment, vehicles) or quality control are needed to do the function well. In more remote or informal value chains, youth (perhaps as teams) may be able to organize themselves into small informal businesses to provide a specific function. As with on-farm services, FGD participants suggested that these ventures could offer their services to multiple businesses across or within value chains. For example, the function of a buying/selling agent could be completed by a youth enterprise. The role of an agent can be fulfilled by an individual or group, and it requires relatively little capital. However, the role of an agent demands development of sharp trading skills and knowledge of markets. Further study is required to determine the specific training and resources needed by disadvantaged youth to undertake these activities.

FGD participants made it clear that youth will require advanced levels of literacy and numeracy to succeed in higher functioning and better paying jobs, and to problem-solve as independent entrepreneurs. Primary education in general leads to more menial jobs on or off the farm, while secondary education opens the door to higher functioning jobs or enterprise opportunities.

Limited skills training programs as a barrier

Low skill levels (both hard and soft) are a critical structural barrier to youth employment and entrepreneurship. A classic strategy to overcome such a barrier is to introduce skills training programs, often outside the normal primary and secondary education system. The availability and quality of skills training is thus critically important to mitigate skill deficiencies. Unfortunately, FGD participants expressed concerns about lack of access and low quality training, making skills training programs themselves a barrier in southwestern Nigeria. In this section, we supplement information from the FGDs on the pros and cons of existing programs with findings from key informant interviews and a literature review. We then review FGD participants' comments and findings from the literature on the effectiveness of current programs in addressing the youth skills barrier.

In the three states where FGDs were carried out (i.e., Oyo, Osun and Ogun), a number of programs are currently working to assist underemployed youth to develop skills and find jobs. Table A2 in the annex presents a list of programs identified by FGD participants and classified as funded and managed by federal, state-level, private sector or NGO programs.

Federal programs: Most of the national and federal government programs listed in Table A2 have skills acquisition as a primary component of their efforts. For example, the National Department of Employment (NDE) is mandated to design and implement job creation programs to combat unemployment, formulate policies to promote labor-intensive employment programs, and promote attitudinal change, employment generation, poverty reduction and wealth creation (Law Nigeria, 2017). NDE's Vocational Skills Development Program utilizes various skills acquisition training centers across the country to train school leavers using trainers from the informal sector (such as master craftsmen and women). The NDE also attaches youth as apprentices to skilled informal sector operators for periods long enough to acquire the necessary skills. In addition, NDE deploys well-equipped mobile workshops to train unemployed youth in rural areas not served by established training centers. NDE provides training for about 80 different vocational occupations (NDE, 2017).

Another federal government program is the Industrial Training Fund (ITF), which is charged with leading industrial skills training development in Nigeria. It sets and regulates training standards, and offers programs for industrial and commercial skills training and development (Oyedele, 2012; ITF, 2017). The ITF's programs include direct training targeted at employees in the public and private sectors, a reimbursement and grant scheme that provides refunds to organizations for certain costs associated with staff training, and a student industrial work experience scheme (Aroge, 2012).

The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) is the arm of the Federal Government of Nigeria that is specifically mandated to promote the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Nigeria's economy. SMEDAN delivers a variety of programs, including those designed to identify, train, place and finance entrepreneurs (Oduyoye, et. al, 2013). FGD participants identified SMEDAN as an agency that is relevant to the creation of both entrepreneurial and employment opportunities. To supplement the work of SMEDAN and

other federal and state entrepreneurial development programs, the federal government recently initiated the N-Power program to provide skills training across many sectors (N-Power, 2016).

State, private sector and NGO programs: At the state level, formal tertiary training institutions such as the Oyo State College of Agriculture and Technology produce graduates with a range of theoretical and practical skills relevant to agrifood system employment and entrepreneurship. In addition, many NGO and private sector programs also provide skills training for rural youth. For example, the Oluponna Fish Farming Education and Resource (OFFER) Center, an NGO based in Osun State, provides specialized agricultural technical training, producing skilled technicians to meet the needs of agrifood industries. The OFFER Center also trains participants in how to establish and effectively manage their own agribusinesses. Three types of certificates are available: a Certificate in Agriculture, an Ordinary National Diploma in Agriculture or a National Vocational Certificate in Agriculture. See Adelaja (2017) for additional details on these programs.

Beyond the southwestern study states, Kwara State has instituted an innovative hands-on agribusiness enterprise development program (Olokundun et al., 2014). Through its Malete youth farm-training center, the Kwara State government is empowering youths with modern agricultural technology and business skills (Olokundun et al., 2014). Olokundun et al. (2014) reported that at the initial stage of establishment, this program facilitated the employment of 4,000 individuals. According to Adelaja (2017), this has generated a multiplier effect in the creation of employment opportunities in the state because of the subsequent establishment of agro-based small-scale enterprises. Policymakers and state governments in other states can draw lessons from this platform created by the Kwara State government (Olokundun et al., 2014).

Evaluating existing programs: The examples provided in Table A2 show that there are a number of youth training programs in southwestern Nigeria. However, the majority of these programs focus on skills acquisition (not always directly relevant to existing opportunities in the industry) with much less emphasis on supporting trainees to actually secure jobs. Another fundamental question is how effective the programs have been in reducing youth un- and underemployment. There are few scholarly articles or systematic documentation regarding program effectiveness. The limited evidence available suggests that the programs have made some positive contributions. For example, Adebisi and Oni (2012) reviewed NDE's training programs in southwestern Nigeria and observed that in many cases the programs successfully imparted in-demand skills to trainees who consequently were able to start their own businesses. The authors also commended the NDE for offering prospective beneficiaries a wide range of schemes and job categories from which to choose and acquire skills that will guarantee employment.

Among the focus group participants themselves, however, there was very low awareness of national and federal government programs targeted at addressing youth unemployment. Most FGD participants knew generally about the existence of state-level programs, but had few details about the programs themselves and therefore were unable to offer opinions about their effectiveness. There were some exceptions. For example, focus group participants cited the OFFER Centre in Osun State for its perceived relevance and responsiveness to private sector needs, strong commitment to youth, and on the ground impact. However, the general conclusion from information gathered during the FGDs, from key informant interviews and a literature search, is that there is a lack of awareness about the programs, and a significant evidence and knowledge gap regarding the effectiveness of youth training programs across the board—national, state-level and NGO/private sector programs.

FGD participants noted a number of major challenges faced by youth training programs, which in their view limited the programs' effectiveness in addressing youth unemployment in southwest Nigeria. These include:

- Lack of access to proper information;
- Insufficient public funding and investment from industries;
- Poor mentoring and training methods;
- Limited or no connectivity of training to industries;
- Lack of capacity within the government to sustain programs;
- Corruption in the system resulting in delay of program implementation; embezzlement, misappropriation of funds preventing programs from actually being implemented as designed;
- Poor performance of trainees when employed, resulting in the loss of confidence in programs;
- The tax rebate for hiring youths, especially girls, though it is very limited in scope—available for potential employers of graduates from a very few programs; and
- Inconsistent policies that do not match with objectives and mandates of these programs.

Of the challenges listed above, three were raised most often by FGD participants. The first centers on the quality of the skills training offered by programs and their relevance to the job market or for enterprise development. Participants expressed concern that training programs lacked sufficient experiential hands on training. There were concerns that trainings offered by most programs are unable to meet the needs of the industries that are the likely employers of trained youth. In addition, participants said that most programs did not include ongoing mentoring, an aspect that was considered very important in assisting trainees to develop into successful employees and entrepreneurs.

The second recurring concern was inadequate funding. Adelaja (2017) notes that skill acquisition programs, like many employment-focused programs at both national and state levels, suffer greatly from the challenge of insufficient public funding. Limited funds can affect the quality, effectiveness, and sustainability of the training program. For example, Popoola and Ajayi (2016) observed that because the prime source of financial support for NDE is the federal government, most of NDE's programs have suffered from lack of funds to execute them.

The third frequently raised concern by FGDs concerned the availability of soft skills training. Although attitude and soft skills (i.e., the combination of personal attributes and skills needed to interact effectively with people, including attitudes toward work and emotional maturity) were consistently identified as a key hindrance to youth success in agrifood employment and entrepreneurship, soft skills training is not included in most programs. We found no evidence that government, private sector or NGO programs currently target youth attitude and soft skills enhancement in their programming efforts.

4.2 Policy barriers to employment and entrepreneurship

Focus group discussions with youth and private sector representatives in focus value chains explored policy barriers that constrain employers from employing youth, and keep youth from accessing resources to start and sustain new enterprises. FGD participants highlighted policy somersaults or inconsistencies, and government-induced cost increases, as major issues affecting employer hiring and youth enterprise start-ups. 'Policy somersault' refers to frequent changes in

policies which increase the risk and transaction costs of doing business, and in general affect employer confidence and willingness to expand hiring.

In Nigeria, agricultural policies and programs have undergone numerous changes, especially in the postcolonial era. These changes often merely reflect a change of government or administration as most policies and programs vary only in nomenclature and organizational network (Adelaja 2017). Arogundade et al. (2012) noted that governments in power often seek to introduce their own policies. In the process of establishing a new authority, any other policy inherited from successors is gradually either abandoned or rendered impotent. In addition to reduced incentives to hire, the risk and transaction costs associated with policy inconsistencies also have negative implications for youth investment in new agribusiness enterprises. Even where youth participate in training and/or empowerment programs, their ability to complete such training and/or benefit from program support is often highly dependent on the administration in power and the stability of policies.

Corruption was a key concern among FGD participants. Corrupt practices, embezzlement and misappropriation of funding limit the potential for any specific policy to achieve an expected outcome. Youth participating in the FGDs noted that the prevalence of corruption intensifies the challenges in the business environment. Action Aid Nigeria (2015) enumerates the major manifestations of corruption in Nigeria, some of which have the potential to discourage business start-up (e.g., tax negotiations, bribery and extortions). The overall impact of policy inconsistencies and corruption is a business environment that is harsh, highly unpredictable, and risky, especially for youth.

Another observation made by FGD participants was that because the social-economic and agronomic research infrastructure to support policy development is weak, many existing policies and programs fail to address underlying social or agricultural concerns. Sumberg et al. (2012) argued that policy framing and responses to the problems of young people in agriculture in Africa are hampered by a lack of adequate research and evidence that is theoretically and historically informed, conceptually sound and context sensitive.

FGD participants also listed government induced costs (e.g., requirement for individuals to obtain a tax clearance, the stringent product registration process imposed by the National Food and Drug Development Agency (NAFDAC), and the high cost of registering a new company) as hindering employers' ability to hire youth. They also cited the presence of numerous regulatory bodies with overlapping responsibilities. For example, some of the regulatory functions of NAFDAC are also provided by the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria and by arms of state government. Policy induced costs have implications for the profitability of enterprises, for their demand for labor, and for the ability of youth to establish and successfully operate agribusiness enterprises.

Access to resources (capital, land and labor) was cited as another important barrier. FGD participants suggested that limited access to land and credit to address capital requirements for small business start-ups is a major hindrance to youth operating their own agribusiness enterprises. This finding corroborates existing literature on youth entrepreneurship in Africa (MIJARC/IFAD/FAO, 2012; FAO, 2014). Adelaja et al (2017) identified improving access to capital and land as key prime movers of the future transformation of smallholder agricultural enterprises in Africa. As observed by Funsho et al. (2015), governments are often seen making frantic efforts to expand SMEs as a tool for achieving economic growth and development. For example, the federal government organizes numerous stakeholder meetings to which

entrepreneurial youth are invited. However, these sporadic bursts of activity do not help to resolve the deeper constraints that plague SME development in the country, including access to land and capital.

Limited access to capital markets is a major constraint to entrepreneurship in Nigeria (Ilori, 2015). The result is the reliance of small businesses on internally generated funds. The FGDs revealed that entrepreneurs rely on personal savings, friends, and relatives as primary sources of capital at the start-up stage because of the limited ability of SMEs to acquire debt during the early stages. According to Ilori (2015), major challenges faced by beginning entrepreneurs in establishing a business include:

- Lack of training to construct good, bankable business proposals and include sufficient information to accelerate processing of the request;
- Difficulty in meeting stringent conditions set by financial institutions who consider SMEs high risk; and
- Difficulty in accessing basic information such as market prospects, and prices of equipment and other inputs.

4.3 Barriers to employment and entrepreneurship: Gender dimensions

There are general factors that affect youth access to employment in agribusiness enterprises, but young men and young women may experience these constraints—perceptions of youth attitude, skill levels, and policy issues—differently. For example, literacy and numeracy skills are needed in every human endeavor, for males as well as females. However, there are gender disparities in illiteracy levels in Nigeria that are the result of a confluence of cultural factors. The disparities in turn have a cascading effect on the future opportunity sets of young girls.

Implications of gender disparities in literacy and numeracy. Okojie (2003) observes that many young women drop out of school because of teenage pregnancy, marriage or because, due to financial constraints, parents choose to educate male over female children. In addition, girls are expected to spend more time doing domestic work than boys, leaving them with less time to study and potentially leading to poorer academic performance and sometimes withdrawal from school. Sex-disaggregated FGDs with young women in the southwestern states confirmed the widely-held perception that investing in girls' education is a waste of resources, especially in rural areas, due to cultural norms that prescribe early marriage for girls, after which they will leave their parents and join the husband's family.

While early marriage was less common in urban areas, focus group participants noted that the availability of female labor in urban households (usually from young girls) was valued as an important determinant of the economic status of a household. Young girls from very poor homes are more likely to be withdrawn from school by parents who cannot afford school fees or supplies, and to be consigned to work as street vendors, hawkers, sales girls, or shop attendants. These disparities have implications for young women's employment in agrifood systems. According to Okojie (2003), girls in Nigeria are more likely to end up with less education and fewer skills than boys, and as a result are likely to find it more difficult to access jobs, especially those requiring a higher level of literacy and numeracy proficiency.

Gender disparities in ability to travel for training. Another key factor that contributes to gender disparity in participation and benefits from training programs concerns program location. The young women participating in FGD noted that it is unlikely that a young, unmarried woman

residing with her parents would be permitted to travel far from home (e.g., Lagos) to attend a training program. The perceived risk of allowing an unmarried daughter to leave home for distant training) was higher than for a son.

Gender role expectations and impact on employment opportunities. The sex-disaggregated FGDs with youth in southwest Nigeria revealed that young women are more likely than young men to suffer from low self-esteem that could hinder their access to jobs in agribusiness enterprises. The perceived reliability of young women also appears to be a critical issue. Findings from the youth FGDs suggest that, across southwest Nigeria, most young girls within the 18- to 24-year-old age range are either married, living with partners or living with their parents/guardians. In addition, many young girls are already teenage mothers. According to the young women in the FGDs, employers perceive young women who are married and/or have children as highly unreliable employees. Such women are generally expected to face time constraints due to their multiple and competing family and household responsibilities. This makes it difficult for young women to be considered reliable enough for agribusiness employment opportunities. Young women in Oyo and Osun States observed that they often have to conceal their marital or motherhood status in order to secure a job. This finding corroborates Okojie (2003), who states that young women face even greater discrimination in the labor market than adult women, because it is believed that they will soon get married and leave their employment or become less productive.

Existing youth training programs do not appear to consider these gender disparities in designing their programs. Okojie (2003) finds that most employment promoting programs in Nigeria are general or mainstream programs for all youth (both sexes), while those targeted at women have been for all women, with few targeted at young women. Women are less likely to benefit from mainstream programs as men often take the available spaces, crowding out women's participation (Okojie 2003). In a youth entrepreneurship program in Kenya, the retention rates of females in entrepreneurship training were significantly lower than males, partly due to female-specific challenges that were not taken into consideration in the design of the program. However, of those who concluded the training, the success rate (in terms of eventually launching an enterprise) was much higher among females than males (Leschewski et al., 2018).

Gender disparities in access to land and capital. Women face various structural constraints to their effective participation in economic activities, including the following (Katepa-Kalala, 1999; Okojie, 2003; African Centre for Gender and Development, 2002):

- Customary laws and norms impede women to a greater extent than men from obtaining land, credit, productive inputs, education, information and healthcare;
- The coexistence of multiple laws creates ambivalence, e.g., conflicting customary and statutory laws relating to marriage and inheritance;
- Gender bias in access to basic human resource development services such as education, training and health; and
- Time poverty, resulting from women's multiple and competing reproductive and productive responsibilities, which are usually performed without the assistance of labor-saving technology, adequate transportation, etc.

Youth in the sex-disaggregated FGDs reiterated that both young men and women need access to business capital to take advantage of business opportunities in the agrifood space. However, there are some gender-specific factors limiting access to these resources when they are available. Discussions with youth suggest that it is easier for young men to satisfy the requirements for loans,

compared to young women. According to the young men, they (the young men) are more likely to have a business plan, a requirement for a loan, because they are more exposed to opportunities to learn how to develop a business plan than young women are. Both young women and men observed that young men are more likely to have collateral, especially where land was required as a collateral.

Cultural norms rooted in patriarchy and patrilineal inheritance patterns in most parts of Nigeria make it easier for men to have access to family land. There is the belief that resources handed down to men will stay in the family because, unlike women who will get married into another family, men will always be part of the family. Access to land is critical not only for use as collateral, but also as a major input for agribusiness activities. Young women observed further that, unlike young men, they were often required to provide a surety or guarantor before they could be considered for a loan. According to young men in the focus group meetings, men have a larger network, which, coupled with the belief that men have greater financial responsibilities than women have (men are responsible for their parents, wife and children), make it easier for men to provide a guarantor/surety or collateral. According to young men, it was easier for young women to start up business ventures that do not require large capital investments.

In addition to the above challenges that young women face in satisfying loan requirements, young women alleged that they were more likely to be victims of sexual harassment in the process of applying for a loan. Discussions with young women also revealed that in spite of their shortcomings in meeting loan requirements, micro-finance programs found them “more attractive as borrowers” because of their perceived creditworthiness—they had higher reimbursement rate than young men.

The observations made by youth during the FGDs are corroborated by the literature. Compelling evidence exists on the challenges that women face in accessing financial resources, especially from the formal sector. Women entrepreneurs often suffer from inadequate financial resources and working capital, finding it difficult to secure external finance without tangible collateral. Poor access to finance due to gender discrimination has contributed to women’s larger involvement in the informal sector where little capital is required. Another consequence of women’s disadvantage in access to and control over productive resources is that their economic activities suffer from low productivity and are often poorly remunerated (Okojie, 2003).

4.4 Summary of findings concerning barriers to youth employment and entrepreneurship

This section has provided persuasive evidence about major barriers to youth employment and enterprise development in southwest Nigeria, as identified during FGDs with key stakeholders in the focus value chains. These barriers include: (1) structural barriers inherent to the characteristics of youth and their skills development, (2) policy barriers to hiring youth and securing resources needed for youth entrepreneurship, and (3) gender-related barriers to youth employment and entrepreneurship.

Collectively the findings highlight a highly fragmented approach to expanding youth employment and entrepreneurship. Various efforts to address pieces of the problem are ongoing. However, youth employment and entrepreneurship in southwest Nigeria suffers from the lack of a distinct or formal youth employment/entrepreneurial market structure, little coordination and effectiveness of youth skills training programs, little youth-specific employment/entrepreneurial policy, and few strategies to address youth gender equity. The pieces need to be brought together into a system if

progress is to be made. A systems approach can only emerge with the vital engagement of and integration of efforts by diverse actors—private sector, youth themselves, government and the NGO community. The next section of the report takes a first step in exploring a possible systems approach.

5. Conclusions and recommendations: Taking a systems approach to improving market structure, programs and policies for youth engagement in Nigeria’s agrifood sector

Equipping out-of-school, disadvantaged youth with in-demand skills and facilitating their access (both male and female) to employment and entrepreneurship opportunities in targeted agrifood value chains has the potential to improve youth livelihoods. However, our research findings suggest that the current structural and policy environment does not effectively support the expansion of youth employment and entrepreneurship. In addition, most youth employment programs that are in operation in southwestern Nigeria do not use effective approaches in the recruitment process and in the delivery of training, nor do they link participants to potential employers or entrepreneurship opportunities. Policies and youth employment programs do not address gender specific needs and constraints. Although few assessments have been conducted on current programs, the available evidence, including interviews with private sector and youth participants in southwestern Nigeria, indicate that improvement to participant livelihoods as a result of these programs has been limited.

5.1 Envisioning a potential systems approach to youth employment and entrepreneurship

Improving performance in youth livelihoods will require integrated and coordinated efforts to replace the fragmented efforts currently characterizing youth employment and entrepreneurship. A systems approach could pay large dividends. A promising strategic approach could begin with conceiving and then building an integrated and coordinated system for identifying, training and employing youth, either as hired workers or as entrepreneurs. As a start, consider the following working hypothesis supported by this study’s findings:

Two missing markets exist and need to be created. The societal task (government, NGOs, business and youth working together) is designing and implementing two formal markets:

- **One to serve the missing market between able youth who want employment and able employers who want to hire them; and**
- **Another to serve the missing market between able youth entrepreneurs and promising venture opportunities.**

The missing markets can be conceived of as a system needing three interconnected components:

- **Component 1: A gender-equitable capacity to identify and recruit able youth and/or youth with potential to gain hard/technical and soft/personal skills as the supply side of the missing market. Currently, this identification and recruitment happens by chance, with neither employers nor potential supply chain partners knowing how to improve their connections with the youth. Developing this capacity will involve work with the private sector to identify, for specific jobs or entrepreneurial opportunities, the set of traits, skills, experiences, and level of literacy/numeracy needed. It will also involve developing baseline and ongoing tests to assess youths’ aptitudes and match them to potential course**

and job/enterprise opportunities, and to measure progress in different areas throughout the training course.

- Component 2: A capacity to create experiential learning opportunities for the identified and recruited young men and women to address the gaps/skills needs and prepare youth for employment and/or entrepreneurship. This step is needed to assure that willing employers and value chain partnerships (the demand side) will be able to find and engage youth with desirable traits. The emphasis is on providing gender-equitable access to experiential learning, internships, mentoring, case teaching, and learning objectives tied directly to job and entrepreneurial opportunities. Hard/technical and soft/personal skills need to be incorporated into all training. Currently, skills development is at best a spotty, incomplete, and unconnected part of the process. This component will include an ongoing assessment and feedback process to verify trainee progress in skills acquisition and identify areas where the training program needs to be strengthened.
- Component 3: A capacity to develop and implement gender-equitable strategies to place identified and trained youth into jobs and entrepreneurial ventures and provide ongoing mentorship. Chief among these strategies will be building a network of willing employers and/or venture suppliers and buyers (the demand side) who will hire the youth or accept their ventures into the value chain. Currently the youth placement process is haphazard and incomplete for both the youth and potential employers/value chain partners.

A managed public-private partnership platform will be required to engage stakeholders, and to create and connect these components into an organic, interactive and sustainable system to expand gender-equitable youth engagement in Nigeria's agrifood system. Stakeholders will include the youth themselves, federal, state and local government policy makers, NGO representatives, and private sector businesses. The partnership platform can be largely virtual, with some face-to-face gatherings.

The partnership platform will provide the architecture for information sharing and for public-private consultation on programs and policies critical for expanding youth employment. The platform will also provide a venue for collaboration to develop and implement the components described above: identification and assessment tools for specific skills needs, experiential curriculum design and private sector engagement in training and mentoring, and the creation of an ongoing "marketplace" for partners to share youth employment, contracting and finance opportunities. The partnership platform will also facilitate feedback/ongoing review of emerging evidence on training and placement programs as they are implemented, and facilitate the ongoing revision and/or scaling of efforts to respond to the findings. The benefits of such a system should be the desired improvements to youth livelihoods and enhanced contributions by youth to Nigeria's economic vitality.

5.2 Improving training program design in a systemic, gender-equitable context

We recommend the adoption of the broad systems approach outlined in 5.1 to systematically and sustainably improve prospects for expanded youth employment and entrepreneurship in Nigeria's agrifood system. In this section, we describe more detailed guidelines and recommendations for incorporating a systemic lens to improve youth training program design and implementation.

Involve private sector representatives directly in curriculum development and training to ensure that training responds to job market demands. According to focus group participants, training

should cover topics related to technical agriculture, business development and soft skills. Private sector representatives particularly emphasized the need for youth training programs to screen youth for character traits and to devote ample time to strengthening soft skills, including leadership, teamwork, communication, and self-discipline. Private sector representatives, they said, also need to be involved as guest trainers, internship hosts to provide practical skills training for youth, and as ongoing mentors and coaches. Particular attention should be given to identifying women who can serve as positive private sector role models, including hosting interns and providing ongoing mentoring and coaching.

Build as many experiential learning opportunities as possible into training programs. Youth learn most from doing/practicing and least from lecture/recitation. Experiential learning helps assure that willing employers and value chain partnerships will find youth with desirable traits ready to go. Experiential learning includes internships, mentoring, case teaching, and learning objectives tried directly to ongoing skills assessment and validation, and to job and entrepreneurial opportunities. Hard/technical and soft/personal skills need to be incorporated into all elements of training to engage youth and keep them involved through program completion.

Fund rigorous monitoring and evaluation of ongoing programs, and create stakeholder platforms where youth, government, private sector and non-profit groups involved in youth training can share learning across programs and take early steps to scale promising efforts. The challenge of youth employment and entrepreneurship is significant and growing in Nigeria. Current training programs are addressing a fraction of the need. Federal, state and local governments have an important role to play in stimulating the development of larger-scale youth training programs, but there is to date very little evidence on program effectiveness to guide them.

Mainstream the use of ICT in training programs. Youth facility with ICT is increasingly critical for their future success and ICT can help training programs recruit and achieve impact at scale. Focus group participants and key informants confirmed the importance of providing youth with experience in using ICT as an essential component of the training program. ICT can be used to provide supplemental online learning opportunities during and after formal training, and can serve as a key tool for maintaining youth motivation, for networking and for accessing information about job and contracting opportunities. For recruitment, program advertisement and application, ICT has multiple advantages. Cell phones and social media offer a cost-effective means of engaging wide numbers of youth, and are an increasingly accessible and favored means of communication by youth.

Recognize and adjust for gender-driven disparities, from recruitment through training program implementation and placement. Despite clear evidence of gender disparities in the barriers that hinder youth access to employment in agribusinesses, existing programs do not appear to consider these disparities in designing their programs. To achieve a high rate of employment-led inclusive economic growth, programs targeting youth unemployment should deliberately promote gender equitable access to skills acquisition programs, as well as ensure that these programs are sufficiently adapted to gender-specific needs. Abdulsalam-Saghir et al. (2018) provide a comprehensive gender analysis of the cassava, poultry, horticulture and oilseeds value chains in southwestern Nigeria. They provide suggestions on interventions to address barriers to young women's participation in specific jobs, e.g., involving labor-saving technology or machinery, as well as suggestions for promising areas of entrepreneurial activity that young women can undertake alongside household and family responsibilities.

5.3 Improving the recruitment process

Data from the FGDs and the literature review suggest that modifications are needed to address challenges faced by economically disadvantaged, out-of-school youth in access to information technology and, more general, differences in how young men and women access information. For example, data from gender-disaggregated focus groups suggest: (a) gender disparities in ownership of cellphones among youth aged 18-24 years (estimated at 80% for young men against 50% for young women and a wider gap with smartphones); (b) gender disparities in the channels through which young men and women access information and in the likelihood of accessing job information to the disadvantage of young women; and (c) mobility restrictions on young women due to unequal gender division of household labor and cultural/religious norms that restrict them to the domestic sphere. To achieve equal participation by men and women in a youth focused training program, the recruitment strategy thus needs to pay particular attention to these gender- and youth-specific challenges.

Use a multi-pronged approach to recruitment that keeps youth engaged through ICT but also provides a local “face-to-face” source of information and assistance. Gender-differentiated ownership of mobile phones, access to computers and other information implies that it will not be sufficient to rely solely on ICT or a single media outlet to reach eligible young men and women in target locations. It will also be important to partner with local grassroots organizations that are in close proximity (physically and socially) to the target youth population. These local organizations can serve as outreach hubs to disseminate information about the program and encourage eligible young men and women in the target locations to apply to the program.

Recruit on an ongoing basis over a wide geography, but plan for locally-focused and implemented trainings. The FGDs and literature review suggest training retention rates are often low, suggesting, for a multi-year program, the need for an ongoing recruitment process that reaches a large number of youth over a wide geography. Using a combination of ICT and grassroots organizations in the recruitment process can help create awareness and provide support that results in successful program applications. However, to address the mobility issues raised by FGD participants, the training programs themselves will need to be planned and implemented close to the communities where youth live and will work in the future.

Use a multi-step application process that keeps youth engaged, as ICT tools sequentially screen for eligibility and program qualifications. Ongoing ICT outreach and local grassroots efforts can serve as a means to continually build interest in the training program among youth. We recommend a multi-step application process to keep the engagement going, provide youth with the opportunity to link with the program as and when they become aware of it, and improve the cost-effectiveness of the recruitment process overall. As a first step, youth may submit a brief electronic ‘expression of interest’ at any time. Local grassroots organizations can provide on-demand assistance to youth who need extra help completing or filing the submissions electronically. The information collected can help determine whether the youth meets program eligibility criteria, provide a basic profile of applicants, help gauge the distribution of demand for training by location, and identify underrepresented geographic areas and populations that may require additional outreach efforts. As a second step, youth meeting the basic eligibility requirements (e.g., age, residence, education status) can be invited to submit a detailed application for a specific training program to be offered at locations nearby. The information collected in this step would determine whether the youth meets program qualifications, i.e., whether s/he has the appropriate background, personal

characteristics, and aptitude to succeed in the training and facilitation program. Qualified candidates move to the final step, an in-person interview to verify program eligibility and qualification before s/he is enrolled in a specific training program.

This multi-step recruitment process will ensure that high potential candidates go through the rigorous application step, and only qualified individuals are called for a face-to-face interview and offered the training program. The step-wise filtering out of ineligible youths in step 1 and less qualified youths in step 2 will be fair to the youth, save resources for training organizers, and reduce trainee dropout before and during the training program.

Compensate for economic and gender-differentiated constraints to information by building in paper-based redundancies in the recruitment process. Key informants agreed on the merits of starting early in getting potential trainees used to working through ICT—i.e., in the recruitment process. However, they cautioned about the need to build in some paper-based redundancies to avoid disadvantaging youth with constrained internet access, especially young women. A paper-based approach, at least in the first step (expression of interest) will ensure that no one (who has at least basic literacy) is excluded from submitting an expression of interest. FGD participants recommended that programs using electronic submission provide clear information and arrange youth access to facilities where program applications can be submitted, e.g., through selected grassroots organization partners.

5.4 Improving the policy environment

Improve policy consistency and role clarity to reduce uncertainty in the business environment. The success and sustainability of youth training programs is dependent on the policy environment, and one of the key policy issues in Nigeria is policy consistency and clarity. More two-way interaction between government and stakeholders is necessary to ensure that there is agreement on priorities and a clear delineation of specific roles for different actors. Short duration policies dampen business incentives to expand investment and employment. Evidence of the current government's effort to maintain some elements of the previous agricultural policy (Agricultural Transformation Agenda) in the current government program (Agriculture Promotion Policy) is encouraging. Similar efforts are needed for policies and programs targeted at youth employment, including better alignment and coordination of national, state and regional policies. Improving the efficiency of government processes is also key to reducing business uncertainty, including reducing overlapping responsibilities of regulatory bodies, and addressing delays and challenges in obtaining tax clearance and NAFDAC registration. Some important efforts are already underway and are having an impact, including the reduction of bottlenecks in registering a business through the Corporate Affairs Commission.

Address policy-driven gender disparities, including access to land and credit. Findings from the FGDs also suggest the existence of gender disparities in access to credit, which are due to cultural norms and beliefs/perceptions about women. Strategies and policies geared towards achieving inclusive economic growth via the promotion of youth engagement in entrepreneurship must address these gender disparities in access to resources.

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Annex

Table A1: Key focus group questions

Questions on employment opportunities and challenges <i>(with probes for differences by gender and education)</i>	Questions on entrepreneurial opportunities and challenges <i>(with probes for differences by gender and education)</i>
1. What barriers hinder you from finding and hiring youth?	1. What specific obstacles or opportunities would youth have in operating new enterprises? And in getting a sales order from your business?
2. What support or programs (government, NGO, private sector) are <u>available and effective</u> to assist the underemployed or unemployed youth to develop skills or find a job? And to assist/encourage/support you (i.e. potential employers) to hire youth? What gaps in support exist?	2. What support or programs (government, NGO, private sector) are <u>available and effective</u> to assist the development of youth enterprises? What support gaps exist?
3. What are the 5 most important ways that a training program can help in preparing youth for jobs?	3. What are the top 5 ways that a training program can help in developing successful youth enterprises?
YOUTH SPECIFIC GROUPS	
EMPLOYMENT	ENTREPRENEURSHIP
1. Are you aware of job opportunities in this value chain?	1. Are there opportunities for business/enterprise development that are attractive to young girls/young boys along this value chain? Which are these opportunities?
2. How do you access information on available job opportunities in this value chain?	2. What skills do you need to take advantage of these enterprise development opportunities?
3. Who is more likely to have information about employment opportunities? Young girls? Young boys? Why?	3. How easy or difficult is it for young girls/young boys to demonstrate these skills?
4. Where are the opportunities for employment along these value chains that are more (or less) attractive to young girls / young boys?	4. What resources are needed to take advantage of these enterprise opportunities?
5. What major challenges/constraints are specific to young girls (young boys) in accessing these existing employment opportunities? In your opinion what should be done to address these constraints?	6. What other factors based on your gender affect your ability to take advantage of these opportunities? In your opinion, what should be done to address these factors
7. Are there jobs along these value chains that girls/boys CANNOT be recruited for? For each job type, why?	8. Are you aware of any <u>job or entrepreneurial training programs</u> targeted to young men/women in this area?
9. Are there jobs along these value chains that girls are MORE LIKELY to be recruited for? For each job type, why?	9. If yes, describe these programs? (Who, when, where, what)?
	10. How do you access information about these programs?
	11. What are the main pros and cons of these types of training programs?
	12. What suggestions would you have to make these programs more accessible to young men / women in this area?



Table A2: Programs assisting youth to develop skills to find jobs in the focus states and Lagos

National and Federal Programs	State Level Programs	Private Sector/ NGO Programs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Directorate of Employment • Industrial Trust Fund (ITF) • FADAMA • Federal Empowerment program in Agriculture • CBN Anchor Growers Program • N-POWER • SMEDAN • Nigerian Entrepreneurial Forum • NYSC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OYSAI • Lagos State Employment Trust Fund • Osun State Government Training and Empowerment program • O-REAP • Offer center • Youth and Women Empowerment scheme by the Ministry of Agriculture (Ogun State) • State Ministry of Sport Youth Program • Vocational Skill Program • Oyo Global Forum • Osun Rural Enterprise and Agriculture Program (O-YES) • Osun Broiler Out Growers Production Scheme (OBOPS) • Osun Fishery Out Growers Production Scheme (OFOPS) • Osun Rural Assessment Mobility Project (ORAMP) • OYSCATECH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IITA Youth Agripreneurs • Protect Ozone • Agric-Yes Program on fish and poultry (Epe, Lagos) • BAT • Dominican Centre • Hephzibah and Beulah (Ibadan) • Ijebu Development Initiatives for Poverty Reduction • WinYoung Fish House Consult • Dawn Commission • Faith Based Organization (Justice Development and Peace Movement) • ZENABBAB farm • Living Hope Care • GGI • ANVL • MUHAFAT global Investment limited for advocacy and ICT • Gain • SYNERGOS • NOIC • FARM Alert by AGROINFOTECH • Agrihub Nigeria

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