

# Youth in Agriculture: Building Structures, Starting Enterprises, Leading Change

Strategic Insights,  
Experiences, and Actionable  
Recommendations

Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural  
Development (AFA)  
Philippine Family Farmers Agriculture-Fishery-  
Forestry Cooperatives Federation (AgriCOOPH)  
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This guide was developed based on the experiences of AFA's project, Empowering Women and Youth through Inclusive Cooperatives and Agricultural Value Chains toward Peace and Development in Mindanao, and the institutional knowledge of AFA, PAKISAMA, and AGRICOOPh.

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## Introduction

The agriculture, aquaculture, and fisheries sectors in the Philippines—and across much of Asia—are facing a big challenge. Most farmers and fishers today are older, and fewer young people are choosing to take over their family farms or fishing livelihoods. More and more youth are leaving rural areas to find jobs in the cities. If this continues, the future of our food—how we grow, catch, and produce it—could be at risk.

Farming and fishing come with many challenges that remain unresolved, pushing many young people to turn away from these livelihoods. Issues like climate change, rising costs of production, pest and diseases, and unstable markets make these sectors feel risky and exhausting.

However, it doesn't have to stay this way. There are already proven, sustainable, and innovative ways being implemented by farming families and agricultural cooperatives in the Philippines that can make farming and fishing more viable.

Here's are some of the strategies and innovations:

- Integrating perennial crops (e.g., coffee, black pepper, fruits) with short-term crops
- Combining crops, aquaculture, and livestock with resource recycling
- Integrating structures and facilities to address climate change impacts
- Using appropriate and timesaving farm and fishing tools and equipment
- Practicing protected vegetable farming for year-round production
- Using natural fertilizers and integrated pest management to lower input costs
- Processing and packaging agricultural and fishery products
- Forming clusters and forging marketing agreements with direct buyers
- Supplying directly to government and non-government agri and food programs
- Establishing farmers' markets to sell directly to consumers
- Availing social protection such as agriculture and climate insurances
- Developing farm tourism as an additional enterprise

The problem is, many young people in rural areas don't get the support they need to start or grow these efforts. That's why agricultural cooperatives and farmers' groups are important. They can:

- Advocate for supportive policies together with youth-led structures
- Access government programs and support for its youth members
- Offer services such as training, technology, facilities, marketing, and financing
- Broker partnerships
- Include youth in decision-making and leadership

To help with this, the Asian Farmers' Association for Sustainable Rural Development (AFA), the Philippine Family Farmers Agriculture-Fishery-Forestry Cooperatives Federation (AgriCOOPH), and the Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahang Magsasaka (PAKISAMA) and created this guide to support young farmer leaders, agripreneurs, and youth focal persons of cooperatives and farmers' associations.

What this guide aims to do:

1. Explain why youth participation in agriculture and fishery matters, based on the current situation.
2. Share practical steps for building youth-led structures, launching agroecological enterprises, designing capacity-building programs, and enabling youth participation in decision-making processes
3. Share real stories of how cooperatives and youth groups are making a difference—to inspire others to take action.

Several key steps were taken to develop this guide a) documentation - capturing how each group carried out their activities and lessons learned; b) presentation of cases with comprehensive documentation; and review of related literature

This guide shares a vision inspired by the **UN Decade of Family Farming** — one that sees youth as key drivers in building sustainable, fair, and inclusive food systems.

### **Imagine this with us:**

Communities where everyone has access to safe, healthy, diverse, and local food. Farms that care for the planet. People living with dignity and fairness. Farmers — especially the youth — empowered to grow, lead, and shape their future.

Youth empowerment is essential to make this vision into a reality.

To achieve it, we need appropriate policies and programs that support young people and family farmers and inclusive institutions such as cooperatives and farmers' associations that will support them. Their voices, ideas, and diverse ways of farming must be at the center of sustainable development and food systems transformation.

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Kapaling Cooperative with DUKIFFA and Langan Farmers' Association

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# Chapter 1. Understanding Youth in Agriculture



This chapter talks about the situation young people face in rural Philippines. While we share some general ideas, it's important to remember that working with youth depends on the specific place and community.

You will need to make sure the challenges, definitions, and ideas here fit the real situation in the community.

## A. Defining the issue: Critical challenge in agriculture and rural development

In the Philippines, as in many parts of the world, farmers are getting older. The average age of Filipino farmers was 57–59 in 2020, and it rose to 58–60 by 2023. This aging trend threatens the future of agriculture and national food security.

Young people are leaving farming, often called a "youth exodus" because they see it as unattractive and unprofitable. It has been unprofitable for many farmers because of several barriers and challenges as expressed by farmers in various fora, meetings, and consultations. These current realities that must be addressed through comprehensive programs.



### Realities and challenges

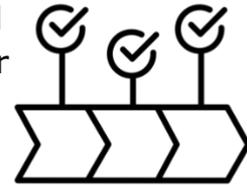
- Unstable income due to market fluctuations and unfair pricing by middlemen, which can be addressed by enabling cooperatives to serve as consolidators and service providers and by linking them to local market
- High input costs for farmers that are highly dependent on synthetic fertilizers, chemical pesticides, and commercial feeds
- Limited access to appropriate technologies (e.g. fishing gears, drying facilities)
- Poor market access and limited infrastructure in many rural communities
- Lack of credit services that are tailored to agricultural cropping cycles
- Inadequate implementation of agricultural policies and programs
- Land ownership problems or land grabbing, either insecure or unclear land tenure
- Delays of support services
- Climate change impacts such as too much water and unpredictable rain, drought, and stronger typhoons

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## Cooperatives and farmers associations can play a big role in addressing many of these challenges.

### ✓ Full value chain services

Cooperatives can offer full value chain services and address market-related issues by consolidating their members products and broker contracts with institutional buyers such as hotels, restaurants, hospitals, government institutions, and school feeding programs.



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### ✓ Policy and advocacy

Cooperative and youth-led structures can actively participate in crafting of local and provincial development plans and programs. It's also important to recognize that the youth sector faces unique challenges that should be carefully considered when designing programs and services.



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Farmers' organizations like PAKISAMA can also lobby at the national-level for policies and programs that address the unique challenges faced by youth in agriculture.

The unique challenges faced by rural youth that must be taken into consideration when developing programs such as:

- **Social barriers:** lack of recognition, low self-esteem, and a declining interest in farming.
- **Financial struggles:** limited access to credit or government funds.
- **Production issues:** limited access to appropriate equipment and machineries and little access to land or support programs.
- **Limited opportunities:** inadequate infrastructure and few chances to learn sustainable or agroecological farming practices.

*Source: Policy Proposal to Enact a "Magna Carta For Young Farmers" prepared by Pambansang Kilusan Ng Mga Samahang Magsasaka in February 2014*



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If young people don't get enough support in farming and agribusiness, the country might struggle to grow enough food. Some policies exist, but they don't always reach the rural areas. That's why it's important for youth to be involved in creating plans and programs to attract youth in agriculture.

## B. Definitions of youth: Who we are working with

To effectively work with any key group—especially young people—we first need to understand the sector we're engaging with.

There are many definitions of "youth," and it's important to recognize that this group is not uniform. For this guide, we follow the **National Youth Commission's definition, which considers youth as those aged 15 to 30 years old.**



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Other organizations define youth differently

- **United Nations (UN):** ages 15–24
- **European Union (EU):** ages 15–29
- the African Union (AU) and ASEAN,: ages 15–35
- **Philippine Law (RA 8044):** ages 15–30, with subcategories:
  - *Child youth (15–17)*
  - *Core youth (18–24)*
  - *Adult youth (25–30)*

Understanding these categories helps ensure youth are recognized in policies, receive appropriate support, and have access to resources.

Youth is often understood as a life stage—transitioning from education to employment, forming identity, gaining independence, and taking on civic or organizational roles—rather than strictly defined by age.

According to United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, “youth is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood’s independence”.



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Youth also come from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Sub-groups include:

- In-school and out-of-school youth
- Working youth
- Indigenous youth
- Young farmers and fishers
- Youth with disabilities
- LGBTQ+ youth
- Youth in governance or conflict-affected areas

In cooperatives, youth membership—especially among those aged 18–35—remains low. This points to a need for more inclusive and targeted engagement. One example is the 4H Club, which no longer recognizes married youth as part of the youth sector, showing how definitions can limit participation.

## Chapter 2. Creating Meaningful Youth Engagement



Chapter 2 examines essential principles related to engaging youth in agriculture. It highlights critical considerations for effectively collaborating with young people. Furthermore, this chapter offers practical tips for facilitating the journey toward youth empowerment.

## A. Principles for working with youth

When working with young people, it's important to keep in mind these key ideas. This is not a complete list, but a helpful starting point.

✔ **Make participation real and inclusive** - Youth-led institutions or groups should take part in real decisions, not just do assigned tasks. They should be involved and respected, with chances to lead or share decision-making.

✔ **Create safe and friendly spaces** - Youth need to feel safe and respected—physically, culturally (their language and traditions), and emotionally (able to speak freely without fear).

✔ **Build positive relationships** - Good support from caring adults and mentors helps youth grow stronger. Adults should trust, understand, and guide young people over

✔ **Fit the approach to the youth and context**  
Work with youth based on their interests and the community they're in. Understand their needs and goals, even if these differ from what the group usually does.

✔ **Get strong support from leaders** - Cooperative leaders should support youth with clear policies, budgets, and staff to help involve youth in decisions and activities. Youth involvement is an investment in the cooperative's future.

✔ **Make youth programs last** - Efforts of youth-led structures should be part of the cooperative's ongoing work, not just one-time projects. Adults should keep supporting youth to make sure programs continue and grow.

✔ **Push for supportive policies** - Advocate for laws, budgets, and programs that help young farmers get resources and a voice in leadership.

## B. Different ways to engage youth meaningfully

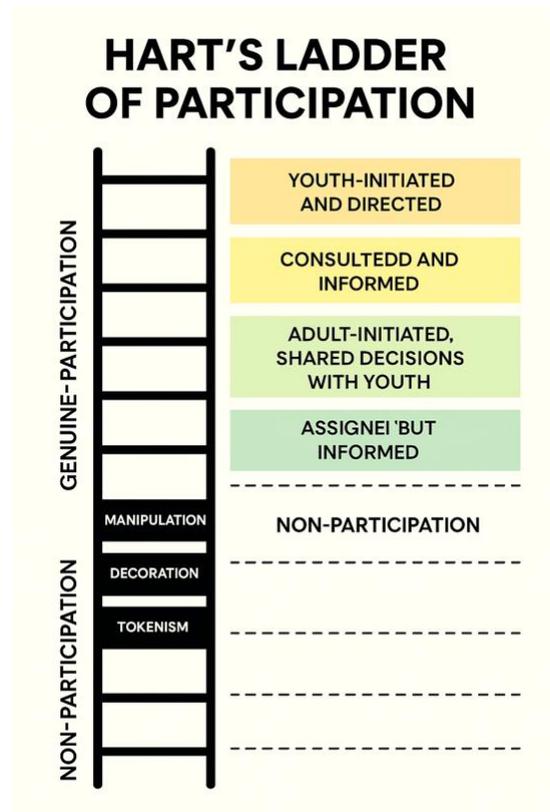
Hart's (1992) Ladder of Participation help organizations, youth leaders, and youth focal persons reflect on how authentically they involve young people — and to move toward more **empowering, youth-driven** forms of participation.

### Non-Participation

- 1. Manipulation**
  - Adults use youth to support causes with no real understanding or input from the youth.
- 2. Decoration**
  - Youth are used to promote a cause but are not involved in the decision-making.
- 3. Tokenism**
  - Youth appear to be given a voice, but have no real influence or choices.

### Degrees of Participation

- 4. Assigned but Informed**
  - Youth are given a role and understand the purpose of it. They are informed and their involvement is genuine, but the initiative is adult-led.
- 5. Consulted and Informed**
  - Youth are consulted and their input is taken seriously. They are informed about how their input will be used, but adults still make decisions.



## 6. **Adult-Initiated, Shared Decisions with Youth**

- Adults initiate the project but share decision-making authority with the youth.

## **True Participation**

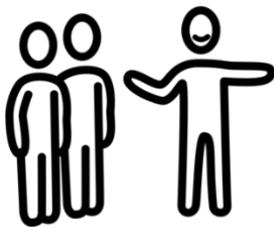
### 7. **Youth-Initiated and Directed**

- Youth conceive and run their own projects independently.

### 8. **Youth-Initiated, Shared Decisions with Adults**

- Youth take the lead, but adults are involved as equal partners in decision-making.

## **C. Facilitation: Key principles and technique**



Youth leaders or youth focal persons of agri cooperatives and associations can act as facilitators. **Facilitators are catalysts and guides who help youth members learn and make decisions together, rather than having a solo decision-maker.** This means facilitators should create youth-driven experiences and encouraging young voices

**Here are some practical tips!**

### **✓ Use youth-friendly approaches during training, meeting, and workshop**

- Keep meetings interactive and visual (not just lectures)
- Include games, sharing of experiences or storytelling, role-plays, or field visits
- Use local language and simple terms, especially in mixed-literacy groups
- Encourage quieter members to contribute
- Break a large group into small discussions or use activities so that all feel comfortable sharing

### **✓ Encourage shared leadership**

- Rotate leadership roles to build skills and confidence.
- Let youth run meetings, lead projects, and make decisions.

- Create space for both formal and informal leadership styles.



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### ✓ **Create safe and respectful spaces**

- Ensure everyone feels included regardless of gender, background, or beliefs.
- Promote respect, open-mindedness, and no judgment zones.
- Set ground rules together.



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## Chapter 3. Organizing and Strengthening Youth-led Institutions and Groups for Inclusive Participation



Having youth-led institutions such as organizations, committees, or groups helps make sure young people are included, supported, and listened to—especially those who are often left out. These youth-led institutions give youth a chance to share their ideas, learn new skills, and take part in the activities and decisions of the organization.

This chapter shares simple steps and ideas to help start youth groups in cooperatives and create a more open and inclusive space for all.

## A. The importance of youth-led institutions or groups and youth spaces



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It is essential to create inclusive spaces and youth-led institutions to encourage greater youth involvement in agriculture and cooperatives.

Safe youth spaces and youth-led institutions or groups bring together youth to share ideas, make decisions, and take action on things that matter to them.

### **Youth-led institutions or groups can be:**

- youth cooperatives / organizations
- youth committees
- informal groups

### **Inclusive spaces may take the form of:**

- dedicated meetings
- youth-focused forums
- youth representation in decision-making bodies, such as a seat on the cooperative board

Many still see youth as “too young” or “not ready,” but youth development is about changing that mindset. It’s about showing that young people are leaders, capable of driving change and shaping the future of agriculture and their communities.

### **Youth groups, committees, institutions, and organizations can:**

- Serve as an avenue to plan activities, develop skills, and build enterprises
- Give youth a voice in cooperative or community
- Be a space to learn from each other and grow their confidence

### **But let’s be real—there are challenges too:**

- Some agri cooperatives don’t have resources to support youth-led institutions or youth programs or don’t let youth join the board



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- There may be no budget for youth activities
- Some rules don't allow youth committees or groups
- Adults may not support youth involvement, or youth might feel ignored
- Some groups focus only on business, forgetting the importance of youth formations and leadership
- Past bad experiences (like mismanaged projects)

In some communities, especially Indigenous ones, elders are the main decision-makers. This means you need to be respectful and understand local customs when organizing.



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There are programs and youth-led formations like PAMANAKA of PAKISAMA, AgriCOOPh's AYA, AFA's Regional Youth Committee, and Lamac Multi-Purposes Cooperative Youth Planet Laboratory, and Youth Savers Clubs across the Philippines that show with the right support, clear goals, and strong values, youth organizing can work.

In the end, forming youth committees isn't just about meetings or titles. It's about creating real opportunities for youth to grow, lead, and build a better future for agriculture—together.

## **B. Processes and activities**

To get started, think about:

- What's the purpose of your group? (Is it for learning, business, leadership?)
- What kind of support do you need?
- How can you make it a safe space where everyone feels respected and heard?



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**Several processes and activities are worth considering to better prepare for implementing this approach to youth empowerment.**

## **1. Check the readiness of the cooperative or farmers' association**

Assess how actively the cooperative or association is already involving young people.

Every co-op is different—some are small and close-knit, others are big with many branches. Some may already support youth involvement, while others may not. That's why it's important to understand the situation first.



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Youth facilitators or focal persons can do this by:

- Talking to co-op leaders and members
- Holding meetings or simple consultations
- Asking questions like: *Are they interested in youth organizing? Do they see the value in involving young people?*

Also, be clear on why you want to organize a youth group. Is it to:

- Start agri-businesses?
- Build youth leadership?
- Get youth involved in decisions?

Keep in mind: Not all co-ops are ready right away. Some may need more time and encouragement. Also, how the Board of Directors sees youth involvement really matters. If they see young people as a good investment for the future—not just extra cost—they'll be more likely to support you with time, resources, and even budget.



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**So part of the work early on is to help them see the value of youth participation and show them that youth can help the co-op grow and succeed.**

## **2. Form a core group – What to consider?**



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**To start organizing, you need a core group—a small team of youth leaders. This group can be formal (like a committee) or informal (just a group working together).**

Here's what to consider:

- Who should be part of the group? Look for young people who are interested and ready to get involved.
- Think about their needs, goals, and available support.
- Make sure they're willing to take on leadership roles.

It's also important that adult supporters (like co-op leaders) help create a youth-friendly environment and set up clear ways for youth to be included and represented.



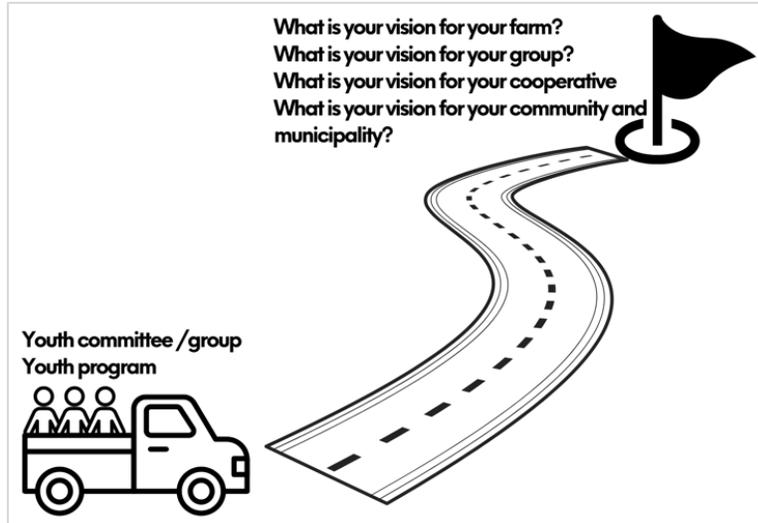
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To form the group, you can:

- Invite interested youth to join
- Choose a Youth Focal Person to help lead and coordinate
- This core group will help guide the next steps in organizing and engaging more youth.

### 3. Plan and set a vision

Once your youth group or committee is formed, it's time to plan and set the purpose.

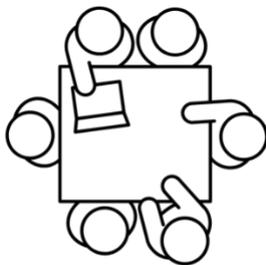


Start with a visioning session—this means talking about:

- Individual dreams – what you want to achieve as a farmer, fisher, or agripreneur
- What you want to achieve as a youth group or committee
- How you see your role in the cooperative
- What kind of future you want for your farms and community

Use this time to build on your strengths and what you already have. This helps prepare the group for bigger things—like starting an enterprise or leading projects. Below are some of the key questions to guide the group in crafting the vision that will set the direction of the group:

After that, you'll move into action planning:



- List what you want to do
- Identify what skills or knowledge you still need
- Figure out what support or resources you'll need to succeed

Created by Zach Hainsworth  
from Noun Project

A big goal here is to create a clear Youth Plan—including the Vision, Mission, and Goals. This plan should also be part of the main cooperative’s development plan so it can get proper support and budget.

**Vision**

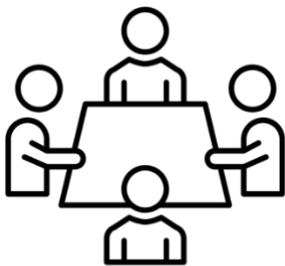
**Mission**

**Goals**

This phase helps your group get organized and ready to make a real impact.

A sample Action Plan Template is presented in Annex 1.

#### **4. Share the youth plan with cooperative or organization leaders**



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Once your youth group has a plan, it’s important to present it to the cooperative’s leaders—including the management and Board of Directors (BOD).

This should be done as a friendly and open conversation, where the group or committee explains:

**What the youth group wants to do**

**How it supports the co-op’s growth and future**

**Why supporting youth is a smart investment future**

It helps if the presentation is supported by the youth and gender focal persons. You’ll also need to ask the Board to officially approve the plan. This ensures:

- Youth activities are included in the co-op’s programs
- The youth committee is formally recognized
- There’s less chance of pushback or resistance later on

Getting formal support is a key step to keep your efforts strong and sustainable.

## 5. Implementation



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When putting plans into action, it's important to give clear jobs to specific people. If things happen too quickly without clear roles and good communication, it can cause confusion and problems. That's why it's important to plan carefully and set simple rules to solve any disagreements.

## 6. Check and improve the plan



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from Noun Project

Organizing youth activities is an ongoing process. You need to regularly check how things are going and make improvements. Always go back to the plan. Set regular meetings to review progress and discuss any problems.

If fewer youth join activities over time, find out why and make changes, like creating safe spaces or adjusting programs to keep them interested. This ongoing checking and learning helps make the plan better for the future.

## C. Cases

### Case 1. PAKISAMA organizing PAMANAKA

PAKISAMA is a network of small farmers, fishers, indigenous people, rural women, and youth organizations that has been around for 38 years. PAKISAMA realized something important: their leaders were getting older. They needed new, young blood to keep their good work going! So, they decided to create a special group just for young farmers. And so the PAMANAKA or Pambansang Samahan ng mga Nagkakaisang Kabataang Magsasaka was formed. It was officially recognized in 2019.

**How was PAMANAKA formed?** A 7-day meeting was held in 2019 where they planned everything out. They talked about:

- What young people are facing today.
- How to get communities involved.
- How the group would be run fairly.
- And how to make farming good for a long, long time (sustainable agriculture).

### What were involved in forming PAMANAKA?

- Creating and organizing young farmers into committees within their respective farmers' organizations.
- Ensuring the inclusion and representation of young farmers in the regional and national governance structure of PAKISAMA. Three young farmers have been elected as representatives, assuming seats on the Executive Committee of PAKISAMA.
- Conducting activities focused on youth leadership transformation through organizing, capacitating, and strengthening youth-led organizations. The PAMANAKA initiative is noted as a result of such youth leadership training.
- Development of PAMANAKA's Vision and Mission.  
*Vision:* Empowered, sustainable and resilient Filipino young farmers generation.  
*Mission:* To capacitate young farmers and act collectively to influence policy and program development for food sufficiency and sovereignty.
- Engagement in advocacy efforts, such as supporting the passage of the bill known as the Magna Carta for Young Farmers.

## **Case 2: Empowering Young Agripreneurs in Cooperatives: The AgriCOOPH Young Agripreneur Initiative (AYA)**

AYA is the youth-led initiative created to empower young people in agriculture and agribusiness.

- Started in 2022 as a youth documentary team
- Evolved into a youth-focused initiative with support from the federation's management
- Aims to strengthen youth engagement in farming and agribusiness

### **Membership**

- 10 members at the federation level (5 female, 6 male)
- 26 members at the primary cooperative level (15 female, 11 male)

### **Key Milestones**

- 2023: Identified youth representatives across cooperatives
- Formed a 15-member working group and held online meetings
- Faced coordination challenges due to members being spread out geographically

### **Main Goals**

- Encourage youth to get involved in farming and agribusiness
- Build knowledge and skills through trainings and workshops (in partnership with AGRITERRA and AFA)
- Support youth leadership and inclusion in cooperative governance

### **Current Focus Areas**

- Strengthening member capacities
- Designing youth programs for implementation
- Advocating for youth seats in cooperative boards

### **Youth Representation in Governance**

- A board resolution has been approved to have a youth representative on the Board
- Push for youth programs and decision-making participation among the membership

### **AYA's Enterprise Plan**

- Proposed youth-led business: Dried Vegetable Chips
- To be developed in partnership with primary cooperatives

### **Case 3. Panaw Sumilao Multi-Purpose Cooperative (PSMPC)**

**PSMPC** in Bukidnon is a closed-type cooperative with 163 members. During the project, the youth committee had 17 youth members.

To strengthen youth involvement, the cooperative reorganized its youth committee, eventually gathering 41 youth and electing new officers.

The youth committee agreed to venture into a group enterprise. Their activities included creating a business plan development, greenhouse visits, establishing a net house, training, land preparation, planting, and marketing.

#### **Challenges faced**

- Youth dropped out due to school and the demanding nature of the enterprise.
- New members lacked clear guidance.
- Non-member youth had less ownership, as only children of members could join.

Despite this, youth appreciated having gone through the process of identifying the project by themselves.

#### **Lessons from this experience**

- Before launching a youth-led enterprise, it's important to have a clear plan, assign responsibilities, and prepare ways to handle conflicts. In this case, the net house ended up being co-managed by parents and their children due to unclear roles.
- Some development projects assume that youth or women's groups are already set up in cooperatives. Because of this, they focus only on business activities, missing the important step of organizing the group's first.
- Some cooperatives receive many projects and support from various groups, which leads them to focus only on enterprise development. But group organizing—building real youth and women committees—is just as important.
- It's important to know if a cooperative is truly interested in forming youth or women's committees—even if there's no enterprise involved yet.

#### **Case 4. Kauyagan Savings Multi-Purpose Cooperative (KSMPC)**

**KSMPC**, based in Impasug-ong, Bukidnon, joined the AFA SPADe project and supported youth organizing. With 3,493 members (including 200 youth), the cooperative helped form two youth groups in two barangays to link out-of-school youth to the coffee value chain.

The experience of KSMPC and the youth groups shows that combining youth organizing, agri-enterprise, and social development can create strong partnerships between cooperatives and communities.

After workshops, the youth agreed to handle consolidation, fermentation, and drying of ripe coffee cherries. The cooperative committed to:

- Providing startup capital
- Buying the processed beans
- Giving training on coffee farming and processing
- Using youth organizing as a path to co-op membership

Each group developed its own vision, mission, and policies, and elected officers.

#### **Foreseen outcomes:**

- Youth earn income and gain farming/business skills
- New livelihood options created
- Business expansion through partnerships
- A model for more youth-led cooperative initiatives

## **Case 5. FARDECO Agricultural Multipurpose Cooperative (FARDECO)**

**FARDECO is a cooperative in** P3 Cadalian, Baguio District, Davao City, Davao del Sur. It was registered on March 19, 2000.

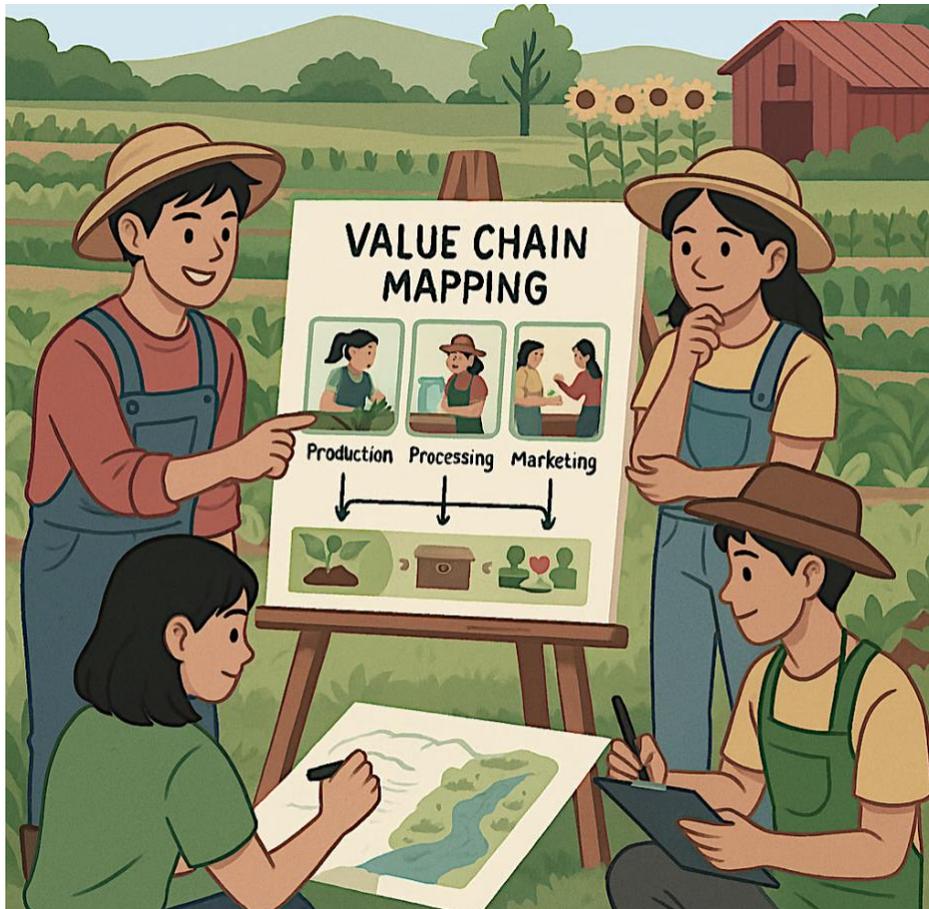
**FARDECO** used the existing 4H Club as an entry point for youth organizing and capacity building. When forming a committee wasn't feasible, they embedded youth training into ongoing projects.

Activities included:

- Workshops to identify youth challenges, roles, and solutions in governance and enterprise
- Leadership and values training, including reflection and vision-setting at personal, committee, and community levels

The experience showed that flexible, project-based engagement can still build youth leadership and participation. Even when funds are available, youth may not be interested in using them for business startups so their involvement in existing enterprise is necessary to show them the opportunities. If youth are too busy for long-term activities, agri cooperatives can explore activity-based engagement or exposure activities like tree planting or occasional events.

# Chapter 4. Establishing Youth-led Agroecological and Business Enterprises for Economic Inclusion

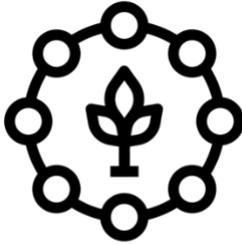


Young farmers, fishers, and agripreneurs can lead the way in transforming how we farm and fish to make sure it lasts for future generations. Agroecology offers a better path forward.

This chapter shares why it's important to use agroecology principles when planning farm enterprises and value chains.

## A. Business and agroecological enterprises

There are young people who may want to work in agriculture, but because the income is unstable and low, they often leave. Agri-enterprise development is about improving income from agriculture.



Created by Nisa Varma  
from Noun Project

Agri-enterprises offer a way for farmers and rural youth to:

- Earn income
- Stay in their communities
- Add value to local resources
- Practice sustainable and resilient agriculture (e.g., agroecological enterprises)

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) defines **an agri-enterprise is any business activity related to the production, processing, marketing, and distribution of agricultural products and services**. This means any business activity related to farming, fisheries, livestock, or agroforestry that aims to generate income. It can involve:

- Producing crops like coffee, fruits, vegetables or animals like goat and chicken
- Processing agricultural goods (e.g., turning sweet potato into chips)
- Selling or distributing products (e.g., fresh vegetables, dairy, or organic fertilizer)

Agri-enterprises can be managed by the cooperative, a group, or individually. Examples include:

- A cooperative that produces and sells pineapple-based products such as pineapple juice and pineapple jam.
- A youth group that processes and sells fermented and dried coffee beans
- A family raising and marketing chickens
- A women's group or youth group selling fruit tree seedlings

**Agroecological enterprises are farms and or agri-based businesses that take care of nature instead of harming it.**

They help bring life back to the soil, water, animals, plants, climate—and even our health (Biovision, 2024).

Healthy soils, healthy environment, and adequate water are some of the pillars of agriculture.

Doing farming and fishing the wrong way can harm nature. For example

- Planting only one kind of crop (monoculture) makes the land weaker.
- Using too many chemicals (fertilizers and pesticides) can poison soil and water.
- Catching too many fish means they can't grow back.
- Taking too much water from the ground makes rivers and wells dry up.

All of this causes animals, insects, and plants to disappear — and that's called biodiversity loss. It also damages the environment that we all depend



**Agroecology is a way of farming that cares for nature and people.** It combines ideas from science and local knowledge to grow food in a way that is healthy for the environment and fair for communities (HLPE, 2019).

**Agroecology is about designing farms that work like nature.** It means mixing crops, animals, trees, and healthy soil in harmonious ways (FAO, 2018).

Agroecological enterprises make life better for people by supporting:

**Local jobs and incomes** – helping families earn money and boosting the local economy

**Healthy food** – making sure there’s enough safe, nutritious, and local food for everyone

**Local markets** – where farmers sell directly to nearby communities in a fair and sustainable way

**Stronger communities** – helping people and places bounce back from problems and keep thriving

## Remember!



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Enterprises must result to increase the income of women and young people.

Purse enterprises that can be managed and led by young farmers. This means access and control to productive resources and raw materials are essential.



Created by Aneka Rosariana  
from Noun Project

Value chain activities must promote sustainable agriculture and resilience building and contribute to mitigating climate change in the agriculture sector and/or adapting to the impacts of climate change

## B. Processes and activities

These are helpful steps and activities that can prepare youth groups, farmers, and agripreneurs to succeed and make a good impact.

### 1. Mapping, assessment and prioritization of products or services

#### a. Value chain analysis

Some cooperatives may already have agri-enterprises and might wish to engage their youth group.

**Value chain mapping** is a helpful tool that shows the full journey of a product—from production to sale—while identifying all key players at each stage, including where youth or women are already involved.



Map out the activities being undertaken by the farmers and by the cooperative, from production to sale. Certain value chain activities can be performed by the youth group.

An example comes from the Kauyagan Savers Multi-purpose Cooperative, where youth groups in two barangays handle the consolidation, fermentation, and drying of tree-ripe coffee. The processed beans are then sold to the cooperative, which takes care of further processing, packaging, and marketing.

It is also crucial to determine what services are necessary at each step — such as transportation, packaging, or marketing. The agri-enterprise can be service provision. One example is a group of young people in Brgy. Gupitan who perform land preparation and clearing for other farmers.



Created by Andi wiyanto from Noun Project

### **b. Assessment of enterprises using the agroecology principle**

You can check if a farm or agri-enterprise is helping people and the planet by using the 13 agroecology principles from HLPE.

These principles help you see if the enterprise is good for the environment, helps the community, and supports fair income and work. It will also help you identify the areas that can be further improved.

*The guide questions are presented in Annex 1.*

### c. Resource mapping



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New agri-enterprise or start-ups can start by mapping out or listing the crops, livestock, and fishery products that the youth members and their families are currently producing or harvesting.

It can also be a shared resource in the case of Agrarian Reform Cooperatives. For every item, assess the yield, identify existing markets or buyers, the value added products, and market opportunities.

Here are mapping templates:

<b>Crops/ Livestock/ Products</b>	<b>Yield estimates per hectare</b>	<b>Existing market or buyers and buying price</b>	<b>Value added products</b>	<b>Market opportunities for value added products</b>
Example: Robusta coffee	1000 kg	Nestle agents Roasters	Fermented dried  Roasted tree- ripe cherries	Roasters Coffee shops Coffee drinkers

<b>Services</b>	<b>How often it is needed by farmers</b>	<b>Existing users</b>	<b>Opportunities for expansion</b>
Example: Coffee dehulling	Twice a year	Coffee farmers	

## d. Prioritization



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Using the questions provided below, you can further discuss the potential of the agri and food products. You can select the aspects that hold the utmost significance for you. This will function as your criteria for prioritization.

These aspects were adapted from various sources such as FAO's Youth and Agriculture (2014) and Rural Invest Toolkit, IFAD's How to do Youth access to rural finance, and ESCAP Toolkit for Businesses.

### **Market demand**

- Is there a clear and stable market for the product or service?
- Who are the buyers (local, institutional)?
- What are the trends in pricing and consumption?

### **Available resources**

- Do you have access to water, tools, or facilities?
- Are inputs and other raw materials affordable and accessible?
- Is there existing knowledge or skills within the group?

### **Youth and community interest**

- Are young people genuinely interested and willing to engage?
- Does the enterprise align with their goals and values?
- Can the enterprise build on existing practices or traditions?

### **Skills and capacity**

- Do members have the technical and business skills needed?
- Can training be easily accessed for areas where skills are lacking?

### **Environmental sustainability**

- Is the enterprise aligned with agroecological or climate-smart practices?
- Will it conserve soil, water, and biodiversity?

### **Financial feasibility**

- What is the expected cost vs. potential income?
- Can startup capital be accessed (grants, loans, cooperative support)?
- How long until the enterprise becomes profitable?

### **Support systems and partnerships**

- Are there available partners (e.g., cooperatives, government, NGOs, private sector) who can support?
- Can you access technical assistance, inputs, or markets through them?

### **Infrastructure and logistics**

- Are roads, storage, transportation, and other infrastructure available?
- How easy is it to process and deliver the product?

### **Value addition opportunities**

- Can the product be processed or packaged to increase its value?
- Are there services along the value chain the group can provide (like composting, packaging, marketing)?

### **Long-term potential**

- Will this enterprise grow or expand over time?
- Can it provide ongoing employment or livelihood?

The goal is for group to decide which agricultural or food product or fishery product have the most potential.

### **c. Describe the product or services**

Clearly describe the main products and services your group or cooperative wants to offer. Make sure to explain why these products or services matter—how they will help farmers or target buyers and how they will benefit your cooperative or group in the long run.

#### d. Learn more about the enterprise



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from Noun Project

The group can explore more through interviews and visits to business establishments to gather useful info. For example, the Panaw Sumilao Multi-purpose Cooperative Youth Committee chose to focus on high-value vegetable production. To learn more, they visited several greenhouses and talked to the owners and managers.

This helped them understand the market, see how greenhouses are designed, and find out how much capital would be needed to get started.

Another example is the PARBEMCO Youth Committee who decided to sell coffee beverage. They visited coffee shops and talk to owners to understand better the business.

## 2. Preparing the feasibility study, business plan, or proposal

Item	Feasibility Study	Business Plan	Project Proposal
<b>Main Question</b>	<i>Can this idea work?</i>	<i>How will the business work and grow?</i>	<i>What support do we need for this project, and why?</i>
<b>Purpose</b>	To test if an idea is realistic, profitable, and doable	To run and grow an existing or planned business	To request funding or approval for a specific time-bound project
<b>When Used</b>	Before starting or investing in a new business or activity	After confirming feasibility and deciding to go forward	When submitting to a funder, donor, or organization
<b>Content Focus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Market need</li> <li>- Technical requirements</li> <li>- Risks</li> <li>- Cost-benefit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vision, goals</li> <li>- Marketing</li> <li>- Operations</li> <li>- Budget</li> <li>- Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Objectives</li> <li>- Activities</li> <li>- Timeline</li> <li>- Budget</li> <li>- Expected results</li> </ul>
<b>Audience</b>	Internal decision-makers (cooperative, management, investors)	Owners, managers, banks, partners	Donors, government agencies, grant providers

The questions below show the difference of a feasibility study, a business plan, and a project proposal. The group must verify the requirement of the cooperative, donor agency, and financial institution.

- **Feasibility Study** = *"Is it worth doing?"*
- **Business Plan** = *"Here's how we'll do it and make it grow."*
- **Project Proposal** = *"Please support our project — here's the plan."*



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from Noun Project

The business plan and proposal must be jointly prepared with co-op leaders and youth committees/group. In addition to their cooperatives, there are programs directed to youth and youth and to access these programs, business plan and project proposal must be prepared carefully.

New enterprises often face difficulty in computing expenses and profit during planning, highlighting the need to determine if expenses, including time and labor, can be recovered. A feasibility study is important for Start-up enterprises.

The group can go directly to business planning if the intent is to enhance or expand an existing enterprise. The preparation of feasibility study and business plan can be done with support from partner agencies.

*Templates are available in Annex 3.*

### 3. Implementation



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It helps to have a focal person or small core team to check on things regularly and track how plans are going. Youth projects grow over time. For youth-led enterprises (especially new ones), it's not a one-time effort — it's a long process.

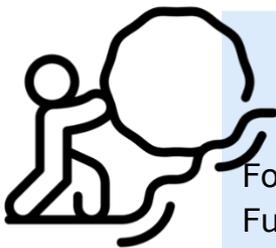
Youth need:

- Training on agripreneurship (how to run a farm as a business)
- Financial management skills
- Technical training based on the chose enterprise — like sustainable production, food processing, or packaging.

These training can include topics like:

- Good Agricultural Practices (how to farm safely)
- Climate-resilient farming (so farms can survive and recover quickly even in extreme weather)

Experts from government offices, NGOs, and schools will help train you.



Created by Gung Yoga  
from Noun Project

There will be challenges along the way that must be collectively discussed and addressed.

For programs like the AFA Young Farmers Challenge Fund, checking in regularly and keeping in touch helps the project succeed. Some of the challenges experienced by AFA members and partners include:



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- Sometimes, youth drop out because of other responsibilities or changes in leadership.
- Lack of support while doing the project as compared to before the start of the project
- Some planned and necessary activities may lack resources

## C. Cases

### Case 1. AFA's Young Farmers' Challenge Fund

The **AFA Young Farmers' Challenge Fund** supports youth-led agri-enterprises across Asia. Launched through the Forest and Farm Facility (FFF), it builds on earlier efforts to organize National Young Farmers Committees (NYFCs) in 10 countries, including the Philippines.

In Phase 2, youth receive training and tools to develop enterprise proposals. Cooperative Boards help review and mentor these proposals.

Each approved project receives a \$3,000 grant, disbursed by FFPOs as 0% interest loans. As of August 2024, the fund has supported 224 young farmers in six countries.

Projects must aim to:

- Build or strengthen agri-forest enterprises
- Increase youth income
- Promote sustainable, gender-sensitive livelihoods and climate resilience

Only 10% of the grant may be used for small equipment, with repayment expected in 6 months.

The process includes submission of plans, AFA approval, fund release, implementation, and reporting with narrative, finance, and video documentation.

Key enablers include support from parent cooperatives, mentoring by Business Development Officers, and strong coordination. Challenges include language barriers and grant repayment issues. AFA's model allows youth to practice enterprise skills, especially where direct funding is limited.

## **Case 2. PARBEMCAFE: A Youth-Led Coffee Enterprise**

PARBEMCO Youth, with support from their cooperative and AFA SPADe Project, started their very own coffee enterprise, PARBEMCAFE, to explore agripreneurship, introduce Tagbina coffee, and earn income. Progressive Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries Multi-Purpose Cooperative (PARBEMCO), located in Tagbina, Surigao del Sur, is a coffee consolidator. The café sells coffee drinks to locals and tourists

### **How they did it**

The youth themselves led the process:

1. Organized as a youth group and did a SWOT activity (to know strengths and challenges)
2. Chose coffee as their business since many families already grow it and the cooperative have a coffee trading business
3. Did a business planning writeshop to write their own plan with support from a technical facilitator who finalized the writing of the business plan
4. Presented their plan to the cooperative Board of Directors to get support

### **What helped them**

#### **Support from the cooperative and partners was key**

- The coop built the café and the AFA SPADe project provided equipment, tools, and start up coffee bean supply
- Youth got hands-on training, including barista skills and coffee tasting (cupping). They even trained at a café in Siargao to learn from real experience.
- More learning visits are planned so youth can see how coffee is grown, processed, roasted, and sold.

#### **Early results**

- Run by 18 youth members (15 women, 3 men)
- Earned PHP 16,531 in just 20 days and managed snacks at a conference and made a PHP 6,000 profit, which they reinvested to buy supplies

#### **What made it work**

- Strong support from their cooperative
- Clear business plan and series of capacity building
- A committed youth leader and committee members

#### **Challenges they faced**

- Some locals don't drink much black coffee yet
- Startup capital was hard to find (they had a building but no cash at first)
- They still need training in Barista & customer service, Managing inventory, Food safety and hygiene, and Equipment care

#### **Takeaway for Youth Groups**

Starting a business like this takes time, patience, and strong support. But with a clear plan and teamwork, youth can build their own enterprises and even inspire others to do the same!

### **Case 3. Youth-Led Agri-Enterprise in Gupitan, Davao del Norte**

The Kapalong Cooperative (KC) in Davao del Norte has been working with farmers' association in the municipality. Youth from the Dibabawon and Ata Manobo tribe in Sitio Langan and Sitio Dugayan, Brgy. Gupitan, are taking the lead in the initiatives, together with the women's committee. Two farmers organizations are involved namely, Langan Farmers Association (LFA) with 10 youth members and DUKKIFA with 30 youth members.

#### **Enterprises**

- Mass production of black pepper seedlings for distribution to farmers
- Production of high-value vegetables
- Producing foliar organic fertilizer for the fruit tree seedlings
- Running seedling nurseries and growing seedlings to meet the contract requirement

#### **Capacity development activities**

- Enterprise planning & agri-training (black pepper, veggie growing)
- Youth camp and agrilympics
- Dialogues
- Nursery immersion (soil, grafting, layout plans)
- Learning visits and farm tours (Cavite, MBLRC, etc.)
- Proposal-making workshops for youth enterprises

#### **Barriers youth face**

- Not enough knowledge on sustainable agriculture technologies or capital
- Previous failed projects made some youth hesitant
- Indigenous youth often excluded from opportunities
- Losing traditional teamwork (bayanihan) in the community

#### **What helped them**

- Strong mentorship, including from tribal leaders
- Links to cooperatives
- Trainings tailored to hands-on learning
- Support from government (PRDP, DTI-RAPID, DENR-NGP)

#### **Early results**

- Secured contracts with government projects to procure seedlings from them
- Youth take on leadership roles
- Better market access for young farmers
- Community works together

#### **Lessons Learned**

- Hands-on training works best. Youth learn better by doing (like grafting and pest control) than just listening.
- Long-term skill-building matters—one training isn't enough.
- Having a farmer-trainer (someone who teaches and farms) builds more trust.
- Projects should match community needs

## **Case 4. Layuan Nature Integrated Farm**

### **Marione's Journey Back to the Farm – Bulan, Sorsogon**

After working in the food industry, Marione Calveen Gueta, a food tech graduate, went home during the pandemic. While many young people dream of city jobs, Marione chose to return to the province to prove that farming has a future.

#### **Starting Small, Dreaming Big**

Marione began managing their family's farm in Bulan, a town where most people focus on fishing. There weren't many farming programs locally, so he traveled 2 hours just to study organic agriculture. There, he met farmers who believed in food sovereignty — the idea of communities growing their own food.

He noticed that even though locals could farm, most produce in Bulan came from Quezon. His dream: a town that feeds itself.

#### **Building Layuan Farm**

Marione together with his family developed the Layuan Nature Integrated Farm, where 60% of the activities involve community work — helping neighbors grow food and improve their livelihoods.

He applied to be a learning site and was accepted by ATI under the RCEF program in 2023. He also received an ₱80,000 grant through the Young Farmers Challenge, which helped him start—but he realized it's only a small step.

To earn extra, Marion took on freelancing jobs while running the farm and doing training.

#### **What makes Layuan different?**

Layuan is an integrated farm, which means they don't rely on just one crop like rice. Instead, they grow and raise different products so they can earn income throughout the year.

They also:

- Host small training sessions
- Join trade fairs
- Dream of becoming a future farm school

#### **Why It matters**

Marione's story shows that farming can be a choice, not a last option. With support, creativity, and community work, young people like Marione are changing the image of agriculture.

# Chapter 5. Implementing Integrated Youth Capacity Development in Agriculture



Investing in youth capacity development is key to building the future of farming. It's not just about giving training—it's about helping young people build the right knowledge, skills, and mindset to grow as leaders and agroecological entrepreneurs. Integrated capacity programs should aim to empower young farmers and agripreneurs as leaders, innovators, and service providers in agriculture — able to contribute to food systems, rural development, and policy change.

This chapter shares the principles, strategies, and steps to design meaningful and impactful programs as well as learning experiences for youth in agriculture.

## A. Considerations for agricultural cooperatives and farmers' associations



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from Noun Project



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from Noun Project

An **integrated capacity development** program for youth in agriculture is a comprehensive and strategic approach that goes beyond mere training.

It combines

- education
- skills development
- practical experience, and
- access to support services to empower young farmers, fishers and agripreneurs to innovate, lead, and influence the agriculture sector.

The Philippine Youth in Nation-Building Act or Republic Act No. 8044, signed into law in 1995, institutionalizes the voice, role, and leadership of youth in shaping society. It ensures that government and partners treat youth not just as beneficiaries but also as active contributors to national development.

The Philippine Youth Development Plan (PYDP) 2023–2028 identified ten key areas where youth can actively take part and make a difference. This framework can serve as a guide in planning and identifying programs and services

Participation centers	Vision Statement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governance</li> <li>• Active Citizenship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Filipino youth are protected and empowered to realize their full potential and to shape their family, community, and country.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empowerment</li> <li>• Global Mobility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Filipino youth are economically empowered and have a comparative advantage in the use, transformation and innovation of digital technology.</li> <li>▪ Filipino youth are enabled to promote ASEAN identity, develop deeper awareness of ASEAN and greater understanding of</li> </ul>

	ASEAN’s shared values, including in the context of promoting and protecting human rights
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Agriculture</li> <li>○ Environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Filipino youth enjoy food security, and a safe, livable, and climate-resilient environment.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Peacebuilding ad Security Social Inclusion and Equity: Health and Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Filipino youth enjoy peace and security and have equitable access to social protection, and to quality and affordable health and education services.</li> </ul>

Key considerations when designing capacity development strategy for young farmers and agripreneurs.

## 1. Needs and interests



Created by Firda Wahyu Dianti from Noun Project

Understand the real needs, goals, and challenges of young farmers.

Make programs youth-centered: ask what skills they want to learn (e.g., agribusiness, climate-smart farming, marketing, etc.), what innovative services they need, which is in line with their current realities

Include newer technologies and approaches like digital tools and social media marketing

## 2. Inclusive participation



Created by Mar'atus Ratna Kumia from Noun Project

- Ensure equal access for all youth, including:
  - Young women
  - LGBTQ+ youth
  - Indigenous and minority youth
- Remove barriers like gender bias, language issues, or cultural disconnects.

### 3. Practical, hands-on learning



Created by Fahrul Oktaviana  
from Noun Project

- Focus on experiential learning: farm demonstrations, learning-by-doing activities, internships, immersions and hands-on fieldwork and youth-led projects.
  - Use mentoring and coaching, not just classroom lectures
  - Use visuals, local language, and storytelling.
- 
- Knowledge-Skill-Attitude- focused capacity programs should be well-planned and goal-oriented, with a clear understanding of what learners should know and be able to do. It can include:
    - Workshops and informal dialogues
    - Farmer-to-farmer learning exchanges
    - Visits to farms and cooperatives

### 4. Long-term support & sustainability

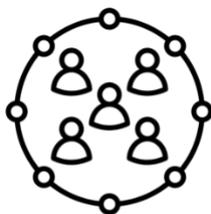
- Avoid one-off workshops. Offer continuous learning, follow-ups, and support networks
- Create peer networks to keep engagement and motivation high

### 5. Linkages with institutions

Partner with:

- Agricultural training centers
- Schools and colleges
- Government programs
- Financial institutions

## B. Processes and activities



Created by Lulis Dian RP  
from Noun Project

While developing capacity development programs for youth in agriculture presents significant challenges, several processes and activities are worth considering in better preparing for capacitating youth in their priority knowledge, skills, and enterprises.

## 1. Assess needs and interest



Created by Firda Wahyu Dianti  
from Noun Project

You can do this in a casual group discussion with a youth committee or core group—no need for it to be super formal.

Talk to youth committee members directly through interviews and focus group discussions to find out:

- What they already know
- What skills they have
- What challenges they face (financing, or technology)

The goal is to:

- Understand what youth still need to learn
- Plan relevant trainings or workshops
- Identify gaps like:
  - Knowing how to grow vegetables in protected spaces
  - Understanding how to manage groups or cooperatives
  - Learning business and leadership skills
  - Building confidence to run agri-enterprises

This helps design better programs that match what youth really need.

## 2. Designing capacity development programs for youth in agriculture

Capacity building program for youth in agriculture involves more than just enhancing knowledge, skills, and attitude —it means creating enabling mechanisms for them to thrive in the agri-food sector.

### *a. Define clear objectives and goals*



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from Noun Project

It is important to answer the question, what is the program aiming to achieve? (e.g., establish youth-led agri-enterprises, strengthen youth participation in cooperatives)

For training and education programs, it is important to establish what is it that learners should be able to do after the training or learning visit. Here are some examples of crafting objectives: i) participants should be able to explain or describe the principles of agroecology, ii) participants should be able to perform grafting.

### ***b. Design the capacity development using a holistic approach***

The program can be designed based on the following aspects:

- **Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes** - technical training, digital skills, enterprise development such as business plan development or financial literacy, leadership, communication, negotiation, advocacy skills, gender and inclusion
- **Mentorship and coaching** - ongoing support
- Access to services – advisory or extension, financial, market
- **Enterprise support** – invest and help in setting up youth-led enterprises or agri-startups, launch incubation programs
- **Organizational development** - strengthening youth-led structures



Created by Aijex Tole  
from Neun Project

#### **Examples of programs:**

- Youth camps or bootcamps such as AYA Camp of AgriCOOPH and Young Farmers' Camp and Agrilympic of AFA.
- Community-based Agripreneurship Training with financial support
- Leadership development programs

### **Tips in implementing training and education!**

- Use hands-on, experiential learning: demo farms, processing centers, nurseries
- Include peer learning, mentorship, and interactive sessions, field visits & immersion programs, for example a 5-day immersion in a commercial nursery to learn the whole process involved in producing seedlings for sale

- Organize farm visits, cross-visits, and learning exchanges
- Use simulations, role-plays, games, visuals, simple language, and local examples
- Include follow-up mechanisms:
- Mentoring – after training, get help from mentors for farming, business, and leadership
- Support systems – build youth groups, spaces, and networks to stay active
- Follow-up – get help to apply what you learned (like writing or starting your business plan) and mentors can guide you as you try out your ideas

### ***c. Partner with experts and institutions***



Created by K 30 JUZZ  
from Noun Project

The cooperatives together with their youth-led groups can partner with government agencies that are implementing youth development programs and financial institutions with tailored financial services to young farmers and agripreneurs.

For education and training, the cooperative or youth-led structure can tap young agripreneurs as facilitators or mentors and link to formal accreditation or recognition (e.g., NC II certification). Government agencies can also send experts to teach skills (like farming, business, or sustainability).

Below are the list of agencies, financial institutions and government programs

- **The Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP) of DA** – rural development
- **The Rural Agro-enterprise Partnership for Inclusive Development and Growth (RAPID Growth) Project of DTI** – business support for farmers
- **Expanded National Greening Program of DENR**– tree planting and green programs
- **Landbank of the Philippines**– financial services
- **The Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC)** - financial services

- **Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)** - offers skills training for youth in farming and entrepreneurship such as NCs in Agroentrepreneurship, organic agriculture; cooperatives can register with TESDA to become training centers
- **National Youth Commission (NYC)** - trains youth in leadership and financial literacy; helps set up youth councils (LYDC) and register youth organizations (YORP)
- **Local Government Units (LGUs)** - can support or fund youth training, but sometimes they don't budget for agriculture programs—youth can advocate for this
- **NGOs, schools and partners** - can provide extra training and support; working with universities or coalitions can make your program stronger

## C. Cases

### Case 1: TESDA's Community-Based Agropreneurship Training

Sta. Catalina Multi-purpose Cooperative in President Roxas & Makilala Multi-Purpose Cooperative in Makilala organized an **Agropreneurship Training AFA and TESDA**.

TESDA Cotabato Province worked with two cooperatives to implement the Community-Based Agropreneurship Training. This training discussed how to become agri-entrepreneurs. Sta. Catalina MPC had 10 youth participants. The cooperative is running several agri-enterprises. Makilala MPC had 14 youth participants

#### Content of the training

- How to spot business opportunities
- How to make a farm plan
- How to manage money and budget wisely
- How to market and sell products

Each training started with a discussion to know what the youth already knew and needed to learn. Then, TESDA and the youth built a plan together.

#### Recommendations

- Focus on farms as business
- Sessions must have visual aids and interaction, incorporate practice and mentoring
- Use hands-on learning, storytelling, and real-life examples
- Teach useful skills like bookkeeping in a clear, fun way
- Add farm visits, immersion trips, and learning exchanges
- Add farm visits, immersion trips, and learning exchanges
- Support youth after training (mentorship, proposal writing, business launch)
- Build local youth spaces for continued learning and support
- Include job opportunities when promoting the course
- Show how a TESDA NC2 certificate can really help youth get jobs

## **Case 2: Youth in Agri Forum – Region 13**

The Youth in Agri Forum brought together 54 young participants (under 30) from 15 cooperatives in Region 13. It was part of the AFA SPADe project and aimed to encourage more youth to join and lead in agriculture and cooperatives, especially since many farmers today are getting older. Forums can be an avenue to share experiences and inspire youth actions.

### **Who made it happen**

- Organized by AFA, AgriCOOPh, PAKISAMA, and the National Youth Commission (NYC)
- NYC helped run the forum and facilitated sessions focusing on youth leadership and engagement in policy processes

### **What youth learned**

- The current challenges rural youth face
- The role of cooperatives in empowering communities
- How to become leaders and agripreneurs
- The importance of youth in nation-building and policy-making (e.g., LYDC, YORP)

### **Highlights**

- Young farmer shared personal story to inspire others
- Youth named challenges and proposed solutions
- A fun “Youth Parliament” session gave a feel for policy work
- Hands-on activities included crop mapping, team games, and role-playing

### **Key takeaway**

This forum showed how youth can lead, grow, and make a difference in agriculture when given a voice, support, and fun ways to learn.

## Chapter 6. Supporting Youth-led Institutions and Groups to Engage in Governance and Decision-making



Without strong policies and advocacy, it's hard for youth-led initiatives to survive. But with the right support, young people can lead the way in creating a better and more sustainable future for farming.

This chapter shares how youth can join and take part in decision-making within cooperatives. It also shows how young people can raise their voices in other governance spaces outside of cooperatives—like local councils or Sangguniang Kabataan—to push for real change.

## A. Why it matters



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from Noun Project

Policies are laws, rules or plans created by the government or organizations (like cooperatives and farmers' associations) to guide what actions should be taken. For youth in agriculture, it's important that these policies support and invest in young people, and recognize them as an important part of the country's present and future.



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from Noun Project

Policies make sure that youth involvement is not just a one-time project, but part of the long-term plan. They help:

- Get official support from cooperatives or the government
- Set aside budgets, training, and staff to help youth grow
- Create formal youth engagement plans, like youth committees or seats on the board

Advocacy is when people speak up, organize, and push for change. Advocacy undertaken by youth helps them:

- Share their voices and concerns with decision-makers
- Push for better laws, programs, or funding such as the Magna Carta for Young Farmers and Fishers that PAMANAKA put forward to the Congress
- Break down old systems that leave youth out

## B. Advocacy spaces

Here are some of the relevant advocacy spaces:

### 1. Advocacy and policy change within cooperatives

***a. It starts with building youth formations and creating spaces for youth participation***

One big step in making sure young farmers and agripreneurs are heard in cooperatives and associations is to form youth groups, committees, or organizations. These can be formal or informal spaces where youth can:

- Share ideas and concerns
- Learn from each other
- Work together on projects
- Speak up as one strong voice

Programs like AFA SPADe have helped start these youth spaces so young people can organize and take action.

Youth organizing isn't just about forming a group — it's about:

- Training young leaders
- Building confidence
- Creating change in your community

### ***b. Taking part in decisions***



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from Noun Project

Youth groups aren't just for activities — they're also a way to join in governance. This means being part of decision-making in your cooperative, like helping plan programs or vote on projects.

The goal is for youth to:

- Have a seat at the table
- Help lead and guide the cooperative's future
- Be part of real leadership, not just token voices

Groups like AgriCOOPH's AYA are already pushing for youth to join boards and committees.

### **c. Budgeting for youth projects**



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Advocacy also means asserting for a youth budget. This makes sure your projects aren't just ideas — they get funding, too. Some coops already set aside 3–5% of their Cooperative Development Fund (CDF) just for youth programs — even without being required by law. That's a win!

Having your youth plan approved by the coop's board helps make it official.

### **d. Dealing with leaders' perceptions**

Sometimes the biggest challenges are inside the coop itself. Maybe:

- The rules (bylaws) don't allow youth committees
- Leaders don't believe in youth programs

That's why part of advocacy is reaching out to cooperative leaders and showing them the value of youth participation.

## **2. Advocacy and engagement with Local Government**



Created by Jesus Puertas  
from Noun Project

Getting involved with local government is important if youth want their voices be heard — especially in agriculture and farming. Laws like RA 8044 (Youth in Nation-Building Act) exist, but sometimes these don't reach our communities. That's why youth need to speak up and get involved in decision-making.

### **a. Local Youth Development Council (LYDC)**

- The LYDC is like a youth council that helps guide local leaders on youth-related issues.
- They help create and push youth development plans in your barangay.
- They also work to secure a budget for youth programs (like training or agri-projects).
- They team up with YORP (Youth Organization Registration Program) to support legit youth orgs.

If your youth group is registered under YORP, it can join LYDC and help shape policies!

### ***b. Sangguniang Kabataan (SK)***



Created by EX Liberus  
from Noun Project

- The SK can be a platform for youth leadership and funding.
- But in some places, SK leaders don't focus much on agriculture.
- This means there's no budget for agri-projects through SK — something we can work to change!

If you're part of SK, raise agri-youth issues! You can be the one to put farming on their agenda.

### ***c. Engaging Local Government***

*To make change, youth can:*

- Attend public hearings or forums
- Engage with offices like the Department of Agriculture (DA)
- Join planning workshops where municipal programs are discussed
- Learn how local budgets work and push to include youth agri-projects

Skills like knowing parliamentary rules or how laws are made (taught in Youth in Agri Forums) help you speak up with confidence.



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from Noun Project

Politics and local dynamics can make it tough to get youth programs supported. But with teamwork, confidence, and the right tools — change is possible. Stay informed. Be organized. Keep showing up. Youth voices matter — especially when it comes to food, farming, and the future.

## C. Cases

### Case 1: Magna Carta of Young Farmers

The **Magna Carta of Young Farmers** was proposed because there was no law focused just on young farmers in the Philippines. Groups like AFA and PAKISAMA wanted to change that — they started a movement to make it happen.

#### How It Started:

1. National Consultations – Young farmers shared their stories and ideas.
2. Writeshops – These were writing sessions where the first draft of the law was created.
3. Support from lawmakers – They looked for allies in Congress to sponsor the bill.

In 2019, the bill was even listed by NEDA as a priority economic bill, which was a big win!

#### What's in the Proposed Law?

- Land transfer made easier – The bill says that if a parent wants to give land to their children, they don't need to pay transfer taxes. This makes it easier for young people to take over farms.
- Support for youth in farming – The law wants to give young farmers more access to land, support, and resources.
- Even with all the work done, the bill hasn't been passed into law yet. That means young farmers still face many barriers, especially in getting land.
- The Magna Carta is more than a law — it's a symbol of recognition for young farmers. Groups like PAKISAMA and their youth arm PAMANAKA use this campaign to teach leadership and build the power of youth voices.
- Pushing for the Magna Carta is about making sure youth farmers are heard, supported, and empowered — in cooperatives, in farming, and in law.

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## Annex 1. Sample Youth Plan Template

### Title of the Action Plan

#### I. Background / Rationale

Briefly explain why the action is needed. *What issue or opportunity are you addressing?*

Example: "Many young farmers lack access to training and resources. This action plan aims to strengthen youth participation in cooperatives through leadership development and agroecology training."

#### II. Goals and Objectives

State your overall goal and specific objectives. See example below

**Goal:** Empower youth in agriculture and cooperative leadership.

**Objectives:**

- Organize a youth committee within the cooperative
- Train 30 young members on agroecological practices
- Conduct a youth-led local market campaign

#### III. Target Group

Who are you working with?

Example: Youth aged 18–30 in Barangay X, especially young farmers and agripreneurs

#### IV. Key Activities and Timeline

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Lead Person</b>	<b>Resources Needed</b>
<i>Form youth committee</i>	<i>July 1–15</i>	<i>Youth leaders</i>	<i>Meeting space Food/Snacks</i>
<i>Agroecology training workshop</i>	<i>August 5–7</i>	<i>Coop + Trainer</i>	<i>Venue, materials, trainer Food/Snacks</i>
<i>Community food and seed fair (youth-led)</i>	<i>September 20</i>	<i>Youth committee</i>	<i>Booths, posters</i>

#### V. Partnerships and Support

Who will help make this plan happen?

Example: Cooperative officers, local government, NGO partners, schools

## **VI. Expected Results / Outcomes**

What do you hope to achieve?

Example:

- 1 functional youth committee
- 30 trained youth in agroecology
- Increased youth visibility in cooperative activities

## **VII. Monitoring and Evaluation**

How will you track progress and success?

Example: photos and attendance sheets for activities

## **VII. Sustainability**

How will you continue the activities or project?

Example: link youth products to cooperative marketing channels

## **Annex 2. Questionnaire to assess if enterprises are aligned with agroecological principles**

### **Principle of Agroecology and key questions (Biovision, 2024)**

#### **Recycling**

- Does your farm / business recycle waste, materials and byproducts?
- Do you recycle wastewater for agricultural, industrial or other uses?
- Do you use energy derived from biomass residues?  
Please note that this category includes energy generation from organic waste and residues only.
- Have you adopted practices that increase cycling and sequestration of major greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide)?

#### **Input Reduction**

- Have you improved water efficiency or reduced overall water use on your farm / in your business operations?
- Have you reduced application of synthetic fertilizer?
- Have you taken any steps towards reduced application of synthetic chemicals and antibiotics on your farm or toxic chemicals in your business operations?
- Have you taken steps towards reduced use of new and single-use packaging materials?
- Have you optimized energy use in your operations (including transport) and sourcing, through reduced fuel consumption, with improved technology and equipment, by shortening supply chains, or through using renewable, low-carbon energy sources?  
Please note that biofuels are not included in this category.
- Have you managed to reduce losses and waste during harvesting, post-harvest, processing, manufacturing or service delivery through the use of better technologies or equipment?

#### **Soil Health**

- Have you adopted practices to reduce erosion / run-off and retain soil moisture?
- Have you adopted practices to increase soil organic matter?
- Do you practice conservation tillage or no-till?
- Do you practice improved grazing methods to maintain or enhance soil health?

#### **Animal Health**

- Do you ensure that livestock and work animals are provided with ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour?

- Do you provide a living environment where animals are able to express their natural behaviour, social relationships are formed and aggression / competition is reduced?
- Do you take proactive steps to help avoid animal pain, injury, disease and emotional distress and suffering?
- Do you take steps to minimize stress and pain before, during and after transport of animals, as well as before and during slaughter?
- Do you consider animal welfare in your breeding and selection practices?

### **Biodiversity**

- Do you practice agroforestry (integrating trees in farming system)?
- Do you select and breed local or regional crop varieties/breeds?
- Do you grow or raise native or locally/regionally adapted crops and animals?
- Do you practice crop rotation on your farm?
- Do you practice multi-cropping, poly-cropping, inter-cropping or related practices?
- Do you protect or enhance biodiversity in and around your farm?
- Do you sustain local pollinators (and their habitats)?
- Do you conserve and/or restore wetland, riparian areas or natural bodies of water?
- Do you make sure to not clear, degrade or convert critical ecosystems around your farm for agricultural production?
- Do you identify and take action to protect rare, threatened, and endangered species in and around your farm?

### **Synergy**

- Do you apply biological or non-synthetic pest management practices?
- Do you grow cover crops for weed and pest control?
- Do you grow perennial crops?
- Do you associate certain plants and/or animals for mutually beneficial interactions?
- Do you practice habitat manipulation/management as a form of integrated pest management?
- Do you practice landscape planning to bolster ecosystem services (excluding pest management) beneficial to agriculture?

### **Economic Diversification**

- Does your business strategy involve the production of or trading in diversified farm products or multiple product lines?
- Does your marketing strategy prioritize selling to multiple buyers or market outlets?
- Does your business have multiple revenue streams?

### **Co-Creation of Knowledge**

- Do you facilitate the sharing and co-production of knowledge between farmers and also with other actors?
- Do you educate / raise awareness about sustainable food production and consumption?
- Do you support the capacity-building/skills development of employees and/or other supply chain actors?

### **Social Values and Diets**

- Do your business operations/activities sustain or promote local food culture(s) and traditional diet(s)?
- Does your business enable consumers to access healthy, diversified and seasonally appropriate diets?
- Does your business provide affordable and nutritious food for the local community?
- Does your business have a policy to buy from local suppliers and hire from the local community?

### **Fairness**

- Do your employees earn a fair and sufficient wage that allows for a decent standard of living?
- Does your business promote a diverse workforce through specific hiring practices and fair compensation?
- Depending on the local context, diversity in employment can imply differences of gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, disabilities, immigration background and/or low-income status, social groups facing discrimination, social exclusion or stigma.
- Do you pay fair prices to suppliers and any other workers throughout the value chain?
- Do you support workers' rights to free association, collective bargaining and worker-formed associations?
- Does your business guarantee a fair distribution of benefits to indigenous and local communities resulting from the use of their genetic resources and traditional knowledge?

### **Connectivity**

- Does your farm/business help to create close connections between producers and consumers?
- Does your farm/business establish or improve confidence between producers and consumers about origin, quality and safety of food products?
- Is your farm/business mainly benefitting the local economy?

### **Land and Natural Resource Governance**

- Does your farm/company have policies or incentives aimed at ensuring the equitable governance and respect for traditional rights over land and natural resources?
- Do you inform, contribute to or promote public policies that support the interests and needs of family farmers / smallholders / peasant producers and their rights to ownership and use of natural resources?

### **Participation**

- Do you facilitate or encourage the participation of producers and consumers in the governance and management of local food systems?
- Does your farm/business support the development of organizational capacities of producers, consumers and other food system actors?

## Annex 3. Templates

### Template 1. Feasibility Study

<b>1. Description of the products and services</b>
<p>a. What are the products and/or services which are being considered? It is important that this description captures the most important aspects of the products and/or services (example is the menu of products and services to be offered) that the cooperative or group is considering as well as how it may benefit customers and the cooperative.</p> <p>b. What are your strengths, weaknesses/barriers, opportunities, and threats? (cooperative/ group/ as an individual agripreneur)</p> <p><u>Internal (examples include skills, coop capacity, location of the coop) – what you can control</u></p> <p><i>Strengthens</i></p> <p><i>Weaknesses/barriers</i></p> <p><u>External (examples include market drivers, calamities, hazards, peace and security) – what you cannot control or difficult to control</u></p> <p><i>Opportunities</i></p> <p><i>Threats</i></p>
<b>2. Product demand</b>
<p>a. Is there a need or want for your product or service? (you can do surveys here) Is the need already being met, or is there room for another product?</p>
<b>3. Market conditions</b>
<p>a. Who would buy the product or pay for the service and where are they?</p>

<b>Target group/s</b>	<b>How much do they usually spend on the product/service?</b>	<b>Can you serve their location? Or is your site accessible to your target market?</b>	<b>What are the types of marketing you will utilize?</b>

b. If you plan on having a physical business center, what is the estimate number of moving traffic in the identified site

- Monday
- Tuesday
- Wednesday
- Thursday
- Friday
- Saturday
- Sunday

c. Is the market saturated, or is there room/need for more products?

d. Who are the competitors? How are they selling the products and how much are they selling it?

<b>Competitor</b>	<b>No. of operating hours</b>	<b>Price</b>	<b>Product type</b>	<b>No. of years in business</b>

e. Why will customers choose to buy your products/services? What is your competitive advantage?

f. How does your products and/or services differentiate itself from its competitors?

#### 4. Pricing

- a. What do current customers/users (student, self-employed, employee, tourist) pay for similar products?
  
- b. What do you need to charge so that you will be profitable, and will consumers pay your price?

#### 5. Technology Considerations

Explain any considerations you must make with regards to technology. Many new initiatives rely on technology to manage or monitor various business functions. New technology may be developed internally or contracted through a service provider and always result in costs which must be weighed in determining the path forward.

#### 6. Staffing

No. of staff needed to operate the enterprise and average salary per staff

#### 7. Schedule of operation

No. of days and time per day  
No. of months per year

#### 8. Financial Analysis (use excel sheet)

##### a. Projected sales

Products	No. of consumers per day	% of willingness based on survey	Price	Sales per day	No. of days per month	Sales per month	No. of months / year	Sales per year


**b. Costs**

*Raw material/meal or recipe costing (use the amounts needed for the end product)*

Raw material/Ingredient	Amount	Total cost

*Equipment/Machine cost*

Item	Quantity	Unit cost	Total price

*Supplies*

Description	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Price

*Inventories/Ingredients/Consumables*

Description	Unit Price	Weekly		Monthly		Yearly	
		Quantity	Total Price	Quantity	Total Price	Qty	Total Price

*Utensils/Apparatus/Tools/Devices*

Description	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Price

*Salaries*

Employee Position	Hour/day	Day/week	Salary/wages daily (PHP)	No. of Employees	Day/month	Salary/wages monthly (PHP)


*Building cost/rental*

Materials	Price

**c. Income statement**

	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>
Total Revenue from Sale			
Cost of Goods Sold			
<b>Gross Margin</b>			
Operating Expenses			
<i>Advertising Expenses</i>			
<i>Employee salary and benefit</i>			
<i>Office Supplies</i>			
<i>Office equipment</i>			
<i>Communication - Internet and phone</i>			
<i>Utilities</i>			
<i>Renting Expense</i>			
<b>Total operating expenses</b>			
Income before taxes			
Income after tax			
<b>Net income for the year</b>			

**d. Breakeven point analysis**

**9. Risks**

a. What are the risks associated with your idea?

**10. Probability of Success**

a. Can you reasonably overcome the risks to become profitable?

## **11. Findings and Recommendations**

- a. Summarize your findings of the feasibility study and explain why this course of action is or is not recommended. This section may include a description of pros and cons for the initiative being considered. This section should be brief since most of the detail is included elsewhere in the document. Additionally, it should capture the likelihood of success for the business idea being studied.

## **Template 2. Business plan**

### **1. Executive Summary**

A brief description of the cooperative profile, the product/service, who it will serve, results of the feasibility study including the market demand and size and other analysis, the competitive advantage of the business, business objectives, budgetary requirements, and the financial summary/ profitability estimates.

### **2. Organizational details**

Description of the cooperative

### **3. Description of products or services**

A description of how the business idea was conceived, why it is needed, why it is distinct, and comparison with similar products/services in the area; highlight the competitive advantages but include also the disadvantages; describe who the intended buyers or customers are; and the financial estimates

### **4. Description of the business**

Describe the business goals and objectives, the intended location of the business (and why), an explanation of the organizational set-up, comparisons with similar businesses

### **5. Market description**

This section presents the findings of the feasibility study (market conditions), including the secondary information gathered.

### **6. Marketing strategy**

Describe how the cooperative/group is going to announce its products/service, how it will be advertised and promoted, the costs involved, market entry barriers (and solutions), the intended price of the product, and distribution plans (and costs). Include a description of selling procedures and how staff will be organized.

Advertisement and promotion strategy

Pricing Strategy

Distribution strategy

### **7. Operating plan**

Production Process

Capital Asset Required/Startup Cost

Capital Assets Invested Required

### **8. Financial overview**

This section presents the findings of the feasibility study - financial analysis.

### **9. Contingency plans**

Identify all possible scenarios that will affect the business or value chain activities and describe ways to mitigate them.

## **Template 3. Project proposal**

### **A. Project Title**

*A short and compelling title that captures the essence of the project.*

### **B. Executive Summary**

*A one-page overview of the project, including:*

- What the project is about
- Why it matters (especially to youth and agriculture)
- What you aim to achieve
- How much support or investment is needed

### **C. Cooperative / Organization Profile**

- Vision
- Mission
- Cooperative structure

### **D. SWOT Analysis (cooperative and the group)**

- **Strengths:** What are your current capacities (skills, land, networks)?
- **Weaknesses:** What challenges do you face internally (lack of tools, skills, etc.)?
- **Opportunities:** What market, policy, or support systems can you tap into?
- **Threats:** What external risks might affect your success (e.g., climate, prices)?

### **E. Business Experience**

*Describe any past or current enterprises, it can also be that of the cooperative*

- What did you produce or sell?
- How was it managed?
- What worked and what didn't?

### **F. Proposed Project**

#### **▪ Problem Statement**

- *What challenge or opportunity is this project responding to?  
(Example: "Many young farmers in our area lack access to markets or startup capital to launch their farm-based enterprises.")*

▪ **Objectives**

- *What do you aim to achieve (specific, measurable goals)?  
(Example: "Train 20 youth members in organic vegetable production over 6 months.")*

▪ **Project Description / Plan**

- *What will the project do?*
- *Who will benefit?*
- *What are the main activities and strategies?*

**D. Investment Plan / Budget**

- *Break down the resources needed (tools, seeds, training, marketing, etc.)  
Include possible funders or partnerships.*

**E. Operational Plan**

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Responsible Youth/Group</b>	<b>Expected Output</b>
Example: Set up seedling nursery	July 2025	Production Committee	1,000 seedlings ready

**Comments**

- Link with Youth Laboratory
- Lobbying CDA