

AGENTS OF CHANGE

Why the future of farming in emerging markets belongs to the next generation.



**AGRI
TERRA**



FOR COOPERATIVES

COLOPHON

Agriterra is an agri-agency founded by the Dutch agricultural sector and professionalises cooperatives and farmer organisations worldwide to better serve the needs and interests of their members. With their success they make an important contribution to employment and sustainable economic development.

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INTRODUCTION

Why is youth participation important?

Agriterra's Youth in Agriculture Programme focuses on youth participation and facilitative leadership, in order to transform the role of farming in rural communities in emerging markets. Let me tell it in the words of Lyn Untiveros, a participant in the 2018 edition of the Agriterra Youth Leadership Masterclass...

Lyn is a young Philippine and Cum Laude graduate in Marketing studies. Due to her academic background, you might typically expect to find her in the city - in a corporate environment with a big salary. Yet, Lyn is a Cashier at the Sorosoro Ibaba Development Cooperative (SIDC). "When college friends saw me there, they asked me: do you have plans for a better job or position? I tell them: Never ever work just for money." Lyn is from a farming family where she quickly turned to part-time work to fund her schooling. **"Each of us has our own tests in life", she says.** "Use them as your inspiration and ladder to success. Be thankful and be humble. Opportunities will come your way."

"Because who knows, one day you may come to The Netherlands to attend a Youth Leadership Masterclass organised by Agriterra. I want to be here. Agriculture is in my blood. I don't say this to brag, but to pass on a message: If you feel the world is against you, stand up, dress up, show up and never give up. Just continue flying and acting on your dreams."

At this year's Rotterdam youth debate, we were proud to bring together young farmers from all over the world, agri-agencies and multilateral institutions who shared their insights and expertise. In this magazine, we put five farmers from Africa and Europe - entrepreneurs in their own right - firmly in the spotlight.



Kees Blokland,
Managing Director
of Agriterra



CONTENT

4 A MATTER OF MINDSET

8 YOUTH IN LEADERSHIP

12 REFLECTING ON THE ROTTERDAM PANEL DEBATES

14 THE BIGGER PICTURE

16 ROADMAP TO 2030

"A cooperative comes with a Board of Management where decisions are made collectively. This is a real strength. It's better than a single bird at the top."

Petar Petrov, Chairman of the National Association of Young Farmers in Bulgaria

A MATTER OF MINDSET

More than 60 per cent of the world's arable land is located in Africa. And while 61 per cent of the population work in agriculture, the sector accounts for only 25 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). How can a shift in mindset – by both young and old – turn the situation on its head?

“Our cooperative used to consist of three senior delegates. Now, we have five – all young, all members of the Youth Council. Today, someone text me that there is a Women’s Council in the making! Credible leadership goes hand-in-hand with inclusion.”

Eric Munene, Kenya

“The challenge is two-fold”, Eric Munene explains. “Youth in my community see farming as a ‘dirty job’ and older generations see a threat to their livelihoods. Parents encourage their children to search for work in the city but they aren’t always greeted with bright lights and big salaries.” Through his own efforts in the community – which led him to become a Youth Leader at the cooperative – Eric quickly came to realise something. “If we can change this mindset, this idea that farming belongs to rigid tradition, then we can change the industry for the better.”

Moving with the times

And change is needed. Farmers are ageing and the declining number of youngsters in agriculture is a threat to the future of the sector. Besides this, population growth puts more pressure on the available income sources for young people, both in rural areas and rapidly developing cities. “Young people have a lot to give. The most important part is their ability to harness new technology”, Eric adds. “Whereas older generations stick to the conventional ways – youth have a real thirst for knowledge. They get online, google solutions to common problems and read e-books.”

ERIC MUNENE
Eric is an established coffee farmer - who works in production amidst the lush landscape of eastern Kenya. He joined the Meru Central Coffee Cooperative Union (MCCCU) some three years ago in a bid to attract young people to the industry.





AGRITERRA'S YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE PROGRAMME

Our Programme is a trajectory with a variety of interventions and activities, starting off by checking if the cooperative is really willing to put their energy in youth development. It's a challenge to attract youth and create job opportunities because of the limited access to finance and land, little knowhow, technical skills and the bad image of the agricultural sector. Many young (and older) members were trained in creating youth groups and activities. Some promising results: a group loan system which helps young people to start a small-scale farm; a mushroom plantation; milk transports with motorcycles; and a farm management system in which young farmers help out older farmers to increase their production. There is now an enthusiastic group of young farmers that grows their own vegetables. Another group gave the insight to young members to become active within the cooperative. In another training, we improved dairy skills. In the yearly Masterclass in the Netherlands, we empower young leaders to make a change and we train, inspire and help them with their challenges. This year we will also start with regional masterclasses. Mentorship on different levels is a must. The young leaders see it as their responsibility to mentor other youth and local members. They also need to learn about governance. We motivate our cooperative clients to include at least 1-2 young people and females in every training they follow. After all we need to make sure their skills improve so one day they become a perfect board member.

Value-added agriculture

This willingness - this ability to learn continuously - helps farmers identify and implement new methods. "Youth can bring value-added agriculture to the forefront", says Eric. "Older generations often accept their produce in raw form, with little room for profit. We can bring the industry-standard skills, that we learnt in college or university, back into agriculture and ultimately add value. The way in which we package, market and increase the value of produce is key. There's glaring room for improvement here."

Yet full participation across all generations is important. By excluding the older generations, youth participation will be challenging. But, by excluding youth, a momentous opportunity is being overlooked. Eric wholeheartedly believes this. "When young people set their mind to something they can achieve a great deal. All they need are the tools to do it. That extra push."

A facilitating environment

And that's where Agriterra comes in. Eric says: "Through my time at the cooperative and on the Youth in Agriculture programme, I've witnessed these tools - these means to an end - in practice. The set-up of business incubation centres - where youth can bring their ideas to the table and also receive mentorship and entrepreneurial training - have allowed us to come together and act."

He continues: "Then there's e-service centres. Young adults can access computers and

AGRITERRA'S 5 STEP APPROACH TO YOUTH PARTICIPATION

WORKSHOP	MASTERCLASS	MENTORSHIP	EXCHANGE	ADVOCACY
kick-off	youth leadership Masterclass in NL	mentoring of youth leaders	local/regional peer-to-peer learning	workshop FACT for youth
follow-up	youth leadership Masterclass local/regional	mentoring of youth leaders	focus on: sharing of experiences, best practices, and organising local youth events	other trainings developed and executed by Agriterra
focus on: awareness, mindset change, action plan, create youth groups (council)	focus on: (facilitative) leadership, group-activation, building self-confidence & broadening horizons and perspectives	youth group mentoring by cooperatives		focus on: better business environment for youth, work on improving skills and knowledge
		focus on: asking questions instead of giving answers. Inspire and exchange		

FACT: Farmer's Advocacy and Consultation Tool

e-learning programmes so that they can learn fast and overcome challenges." What else? "We desperately need marketing linkages", Eric enthuses. "Once production has taken place, the goods must be fit for market. The right market, the right price - this doesn't happen like magic. We might have great ideas but we lack working capital. If the connection isn't made, then the same energy that inspired the individual will turn into dissuasion. Affordable financial services and support will be a game changer."

Small feats, big goals

In many respects, the playing field has already changed. "The future is bright", says Eric, as he perches on the edge of his chair on the third floor of Rotterdam's towering UNESCO heritage site. "Not only for me, not only for coffee farmers - but for youth throughout Africa."

"Last year we lobbied the cooperative and the Board backed us. They created a pool of cash to set up city links for coffee planting and distribution." This means that young people - who are not yet able to join the industry, but are willing - will eventually have the means to do so. "The numbers are encouraging."

The Board couldn't supply enough city links for the young farmers that came out in the region. But, Eric is far from disheartened. "The whole community has woken up. They realise that young people in their society matter - and that, if given the chance, can play a bigger role."

"An idle mind is a devil's workshop. We don't want a devil's workshop in our society."

Eric Munene, Kenya



GEORGE RANJI

Five years in dairy farming, with big ambitions to join the Board of his cooperative, George is still convinced he made the right investment. Through the rolling farmlands of Kenya's central province lies Ndumberi – a small town that now plays host to his spirited campaign to help youth climb the ladder at their organisation.



YOUTH IN LEADERSHIP

Agriterra sees leadership, taking responsibility and inspiring others as key factors in the improvement of youth participation within farmer cooperatives. By meeting peers from other contexts – just like at the three day AgriCord event – young people can develop self-confidence, share ideas and ultimately take their business to the next level.

The knowledge chain

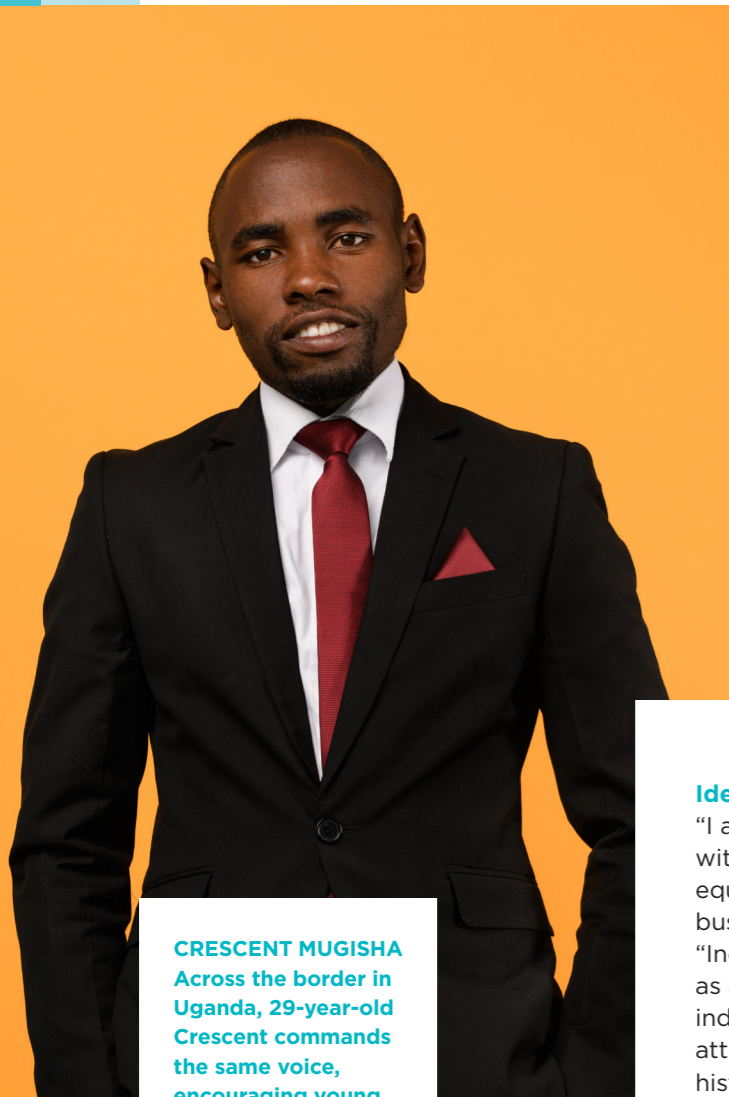
“The shortest route to success – if you’re willing to dedicate time and energy – is through a cooperative”, begins George Ranji, who is going from strength to strength at Ndumberi Dairy Farmers Cooperative Society - a small-scale coop specialising in pasteurised and homogenised milk. “When community leaders sit down and define policy they don’t give young people the chance to speak for themselves. If room is created to build these leaderships skills, and the youth perspective is heard, then policy will reflect the next generation of needs.”

Agriterra offers individual learning trajectories for and with young role models who have the potential to become leaders in their communities and beyond. They are identified during a Kick-Off Workshop, or during the course of an intervention; and then send in a motivation letter and CV.

“I don’t believe we would have the coming together of youth, this sharing of ideas, without the direction and learnings from Agriterra”, says George. “I am here in The Netherlands because of them. I am able to share my thoughts on zero-grazing – a trigger moment in my development as a farmer – and my desire to keep the simplicity of agriculture alive, with entrepreneurs who share the same vision.”

“The eye of society overrides everything. You have to wear dirty clothes, your workplace is far from the city, social benefits are limited and you don’t have a university degree... yet I earn more than friends who work in factories.”

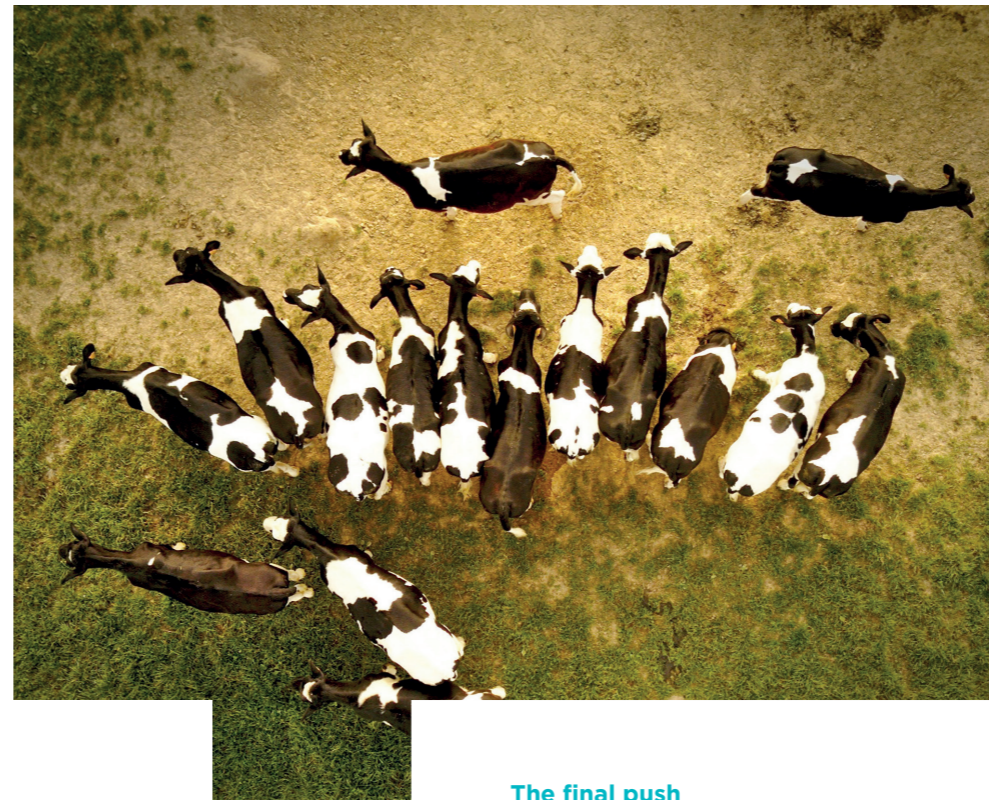
Petar Petrov
Chairman of the National
Association of Young Farmers
in Bulgaria (NAMFB)



CRESCENT MUGISHA
Across the border in Uganda, 29-year-old Crescent commands the same voice, encouraging young people to follow in his entrepreneur slash activist slash economist footsteps.

“I wanted to spark this idea of commercial farming in my community. This is a movement and young people are leading it.”

George Ranji



Identifying the problem

“I actually studied civil engineering”, he admits with a smile. “But I quickly realised that I was not equipped with the practical skills that lead to big business.

“Indigenous Ugandans do not treat agriculture as a commercial entity. As soon as I entered the industry, I saw this weak spot. It goes beyond an attitude towards farming, to a living obstacle: the historically high cost of production.”

Addressing the solution

Another face of the thriving African agri-industry, Crescent manages his own poultry, piggery and apple farm. Alongside this, and his role as Chairperson of the Kigezi Potato Farmers Cooperative Society, he also leads a savings and credit coop (SACCO). “In my eyes, you can’t have one without the other”, he says, in relation to both a produce-based and credit-based establishment. In this sense, Crescent started things single-handedly - convincing people to come on board, firstly, to save, but also to invest and grapple with the real struggles in commerce. “I wanted to spark this idea of commercial farming in my community. This is a movement and young people are leading it. We’re not there yet - the cost of capital is still a problem - but our collaboration with the Rukiga SACCO is a step in the right direction.”

Rukiga deals in banking services and Kigezi gets the product out to market. “Smart saving met with value addition is a new concept”, he adds. “I believe it could be a real breakthrough.”



The final push

With a clear direction, strong mind and plenty of charisma, does Crescent need more to put his plans into action? “Since 2018 our cooperative has led campaigns to mobilise young people. We’ve had seminars, workshops and peer-to-peer discussions. Agriterra has directly facilitated these initiatives.”

“It’s all about setting an example”, Jackson, key member of Chepkorio Dairy in Kenya, adds. “The cooperative environment, and NGOs like Agriterra, allow us to really drive this home.” And what about in the meantime? “I keep telling people in my community to hold on”, he says. “Farming is in my blood. My father was a farmer, I studied veterinary...I even took my friends to milk the cows after school. So there’s no doubt for me. But young people are impatient. You can’t expect them to sit tight; to hang around until harvest. They feel that they could have chosen a job that already rewards them at the end of the month. This is the next challenge.”



JACKSON KIPRONO
Farming is in Jackson’s blood. As a front runner within his institution, he works tirelessly to pass this passion on.

REFLECTING ON THE PANEL DEBATES

The 2019 Agriterra Meeting in Rotterdam brought young farmers from around the world together; to reflect and share their visions for the future.



PETAR PETROV
Petar is a dairy farmer in the village of Subotkovtski, nestled amongst the Bulgarian mountains. He believes the cooperative model has the power to break poverty cycles.

European Commissioner Phil Hogan, Dutch Minister of Agriculture Carola Schouten, President of LTO Marc Calon, Vice President of CEJA Iris Bouwers and Kees Blokland of Agriterra attended the morning panel debate, where – following the previous day’s action plan workshops – eleven young farmers from Europe and Africa put forward a proposal.

The guest farmers presented an approach (see Roadmap to 2030 pg. 16) on **how to implement the six recommendations of the EC Task Force Report for future collaboration between the European Union and Africa**. As the voices of the next generation, their contribution carried great weight and brought real problems – and solutions – within the industry to light.

From practice to policy

Bruno Declercq and Christina Miranda Gozalvez of the European Commission highlighted the ongoing need for structured partnership and investments. Africa has identified and actualised important opportunities. It now needs to develop its own policy in order to increase representation of farmer organisations and youth.

Kees Blokland, Managing Director of Agriterra and member of the Task Force, contributed greatly to this discussion. “It is not so much about money, but about cooperation”, he said. A comprehensive partnership on three levels – society, business and government – is required to boost youth employment on the continent.”

The european perspective

Across the Mediterranean in Europe, the cooperative model is making waves. Yet progress, in comparison, lags behind.

“I am very interested in the role of cooperatives”, says Petar Petrov, a young Bulgarian farmer fighting to bring the model to life in his society.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS :

short and medium term actions



“In my country there’s a few major difficulties. Getting a coop off the ground is hard – and even when you do, many are plagued by corruption.”

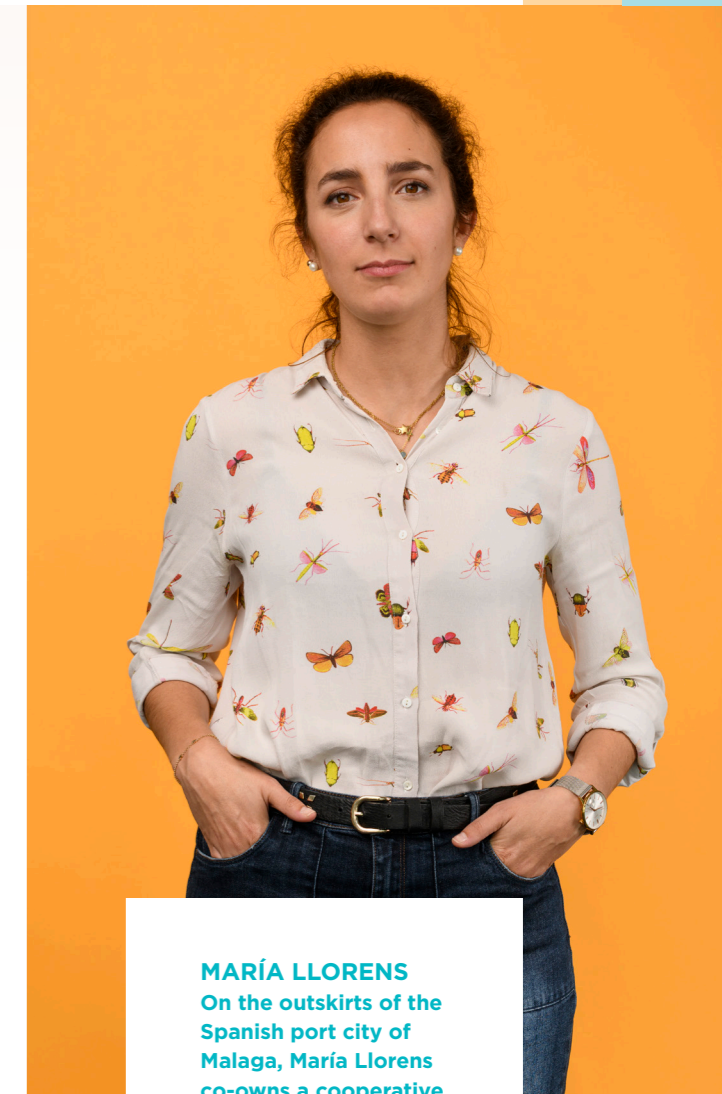
Despite improvements following the fall of Soviet control, Bulgaria still ranks at the bottom of EU lists on life expectancy and income per capita, while rural communities rely on agriculture for jobs. Petar continues: “My farmer’s association was invited to join this conference by Agriterra. I want to connect with others and encourage trans-border projects and collaboration.”

Fresh enthusiasm

And what has he learnt from his time in The Netherlands? “I have to admit – I didn’t expect young farmers in Africa to be so far ahead; to have active cooperatives or for them to work so well. This has been a real wake up call for me.” A positive reality-check nonetheless... Petar believes that it all comes back to mindset (see pg. 5) – be that the perception of the industry or the outlook of those in power. “Right now, I don’t have the option to join a coop. We are not that far in the process yet. We need to rally the European Union and the government to donate more money to the set-up of cooperatives. Today, one of the African farmers told me that he launched a coop with only four cows. Connecting micro-farmers to each other can work really well. It’s all about joining forces.”

Home grown

Co-owner of a vibrant family-run business in Spain, María Llorens couldn’t agree more. “We are re-organising our company to improve production and sales”, she explains. “By learning from other models, I go back better equipped to grow our product-base and implement new technologies.” With a great



MARÍA LLORENS
On the outskirts of the Spanish port city of Malaga, María Llorens co-owns a cooperative with her sister, selling olive oils made from local crops.

deal to contribute to the Rotterdam youth debate with Phil Hogan and Carola Schouten, María remains humble about her development. “I have a lot to learn”, she says. “The fixed population in Andalusia is ageing. It’s very important that we are not left alone. “Many are quick to assume they are ready”, she adds. “The head of the cooperative has to be prepared to take on such an important role. It’s a lot for young people to grasp.” Events like these are opening her eyes to that. “The African farmers; they show up eager but also equipped with the skills to do the job. They acknowledge the responsibility that comes with running a farm – this will make the difference for future generations.”

THE BIGGER PICTURE

It's clear, Africa is leading the way, offering dependable work opportunities for young people. Infact - from Kenyan telecommunications giant Safaricom to emerging community-based conservation models in South Africa - the continent is currently a hotbed for innovation.

“In today’s meeting we talked about our vision for 2030. In the next 10 years, I believe that young people have the potential to become leaders in their workforces, to enter into government, drive social change and fight for the policies that matter. Ultimately, they will contribute to a stronger economy.”

George Ranji, Kenya

Engine for growth

Yet – with the number of chronically malnourished people in Africa reaching 200 million in recent years - let’s not forget it’s an uphill battle. What is the likelihood that a thriving agriculture sector can lead to a growth economy? Can cooperatives provide an alternative to hunger and poverty? For Eric Munene, anything is possible. “We should never forget - or underplay - the bigger picture”, he insists. “When youth are actively involved in farming; and when cooperatives function to their best ability, young people are going to stay and contribute to their community. “This will go a long way”, the young farmer from Kenya adds. “Not only in creating sustainable employment opportunities but also improving local and national security.” Despite major disadvantages for small-scale farmers in rural areas, sustained and comprehensive action across different fronts could well be a game changer. As history demonstrates, established agribusiness and agro-industry sectors has been the driver of economic growth in countries such as Brazil and China. These success stories must be acknowledged. Then, we can hope to duplicate them or transfer the same learnings.

Focus areas

As for next steps...
 “We need to keep learning”, María insists. “...on how best to build and structure a cooperative. Collaboration between countries is very important.” “It’s also about timing”, Petar chips in. “Now is not the right time to become a young farmer in Bulgaria. Awareness-raising should start at Kindergarten, in primary schools, to change the mindset. Then, when the time comes, they’ll be ready.”



“I believe in accountable leadership. An understanding of what makes a great leader”, Crescent contributes, as he gets ready for his photo shoot at the Van Nelle Fabriek. “Without it, we may not end up achieving much at all.”
 “And this idea of inclusivity”, he adds. “Old people, young people, everyone! A uniform voice to demand better working conditions and cheaper credit. We can make this fast work, just like The Netherlands.”

Emerging trends

This is the emerging trend. Young minds; millennials transforming agriculture with smart ideas and smarter methods. Not only in Africa, but in some of the world’s largest - and poorest - countries. As demonstrated by our collection of young farmers, the key is using your voice, to rally others behind you and shift opinion. Menuka Pradhan, Marketing Coordinator at an umbrella organisation for tea cooperatives and district tea cooperative federations in Nepal is taking her authority to the social stratosphere. Bringing attention to highlight cases in Italy, France, Africa and more, she believes that it’s only a matter of time before farming becomes ‘sexy’ again. While it’s hard to keep young people in their hometown or community, the reality of life in the city is starting to turn the tide.

“A growing number of college-educated youth are fighting the stigma of farming (often associated with poverty) by using scientific approaches and data-crunching apps”, she says. “Not just to increase yields, but to show that agriculture can be profitable.”



MANUKA PRADHAN
 Marketing Coordinator
 at the Central Tea
 Cooperative Federation
 (CTFC)

The 24-year-old was the youngest participant of Agriterra’s 2018 Youth Leadership Masterclass, and, between juggling her role as a youth leader, cooperative member and budding Twitter influencer, is going from strength to strength.

VISION & APPROACH
 CTFC was established in 2010 to address critical issues of small tea farmers through cooperative ideology and movement. Together with Agriterra, they focus on capacity building, lobbying and advocacy, breathing new life into local entrepreneurship.

ROADMAP TO 2030

So there you have it, a vision for the future. But what does the future look like? And what are the tangible steps to get there? A clear destination is essential. Here, we provide a synopsis of the EC Task Force proposal.



1

LOCAL ACTION PROGRAMMES

Farmer ownership

In 2030, farmer organisations will take the driving seat in their own development programmes. This shift will revolve around participatory consultations, multi-stakeholder dialogues and public-private partnerships.

Farmers will benefit from these initiatives via:

- Value adding activities at the cooperative level (to connect production to market demand)
- Extension services from local organisations and cooperatives (continued peer knowledge exchange via training, advice and study tours)
- Access to inputs and finances (with an emphasis on local financial initiatives such as cooperative banks and SACCOs)
- Access to required infrastructure for climate change resilience

Better connections

Farmers will be connected to modern day information in order to develop competences and anticipate opportunities. We will strengthen our working relationships between governments, farmer organisations, companies and NGOs, primarily to influence government policy and extend their focus on production to the entire value chain. Above all, farmers need high performing agri-agencies.

2

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Risk management

In 2030, we plan to increase sustainable agriculture by 30% and cut our CO2 footprint in half by implementing a risk management system (climate change mitigation) and utilising certified eco-friendly methods of production (less input, water usage). The system will incorporate affordable insurance in the event of natural disaster.

Awareness-raising

Local knowhow has increased via the creation of an objective climate information system and knowledge-sharing platforms. Farmers have access to climate smart services, innovative models are accessible and it will be easy to diversify crops. Agriterra will support professional advocacy for an ample policy environment and farm inputs.

Greater rewards

Farmers will receive higher prices for produce that is made using sustainable methods via the development of and investment in local markets. All farmers are organised in farmer-owned, led and used associations or cooperatives. Term loans are readily available as well as mechanisms for assistance from chain parties.

3

KNOWLEDGE, INNOVATION & NETWORKING HUB

Digital prowess

In 2030, this hub is managed by farmers, providing a link between farmer organisations and research institutes; catering for innovation in agriculture, ICT and communication techniques (e.g. drones. New services and production models will spring up based on E-learning.

Fresh character

From these communication tools, farmer organisations will become virtual leading to a new level of professionalism. They will work closely with regional and national networks of value chain actors and support understanding between urban and rural areas, improving the quality of products brought to market.

New business models

The hub has developed new business models to finance extension and research. Infrastructure in rural areas (roads, electricity, water, internet, radio) and decentralised energy systems are common place. Collectively, this will enable legal administration and promote integration between production, raw materials, processing and consumption.



4

ACCESS TO PRIVATE FINANCE AND TO EU COOPERATION INSTRUMENTS

Private investment

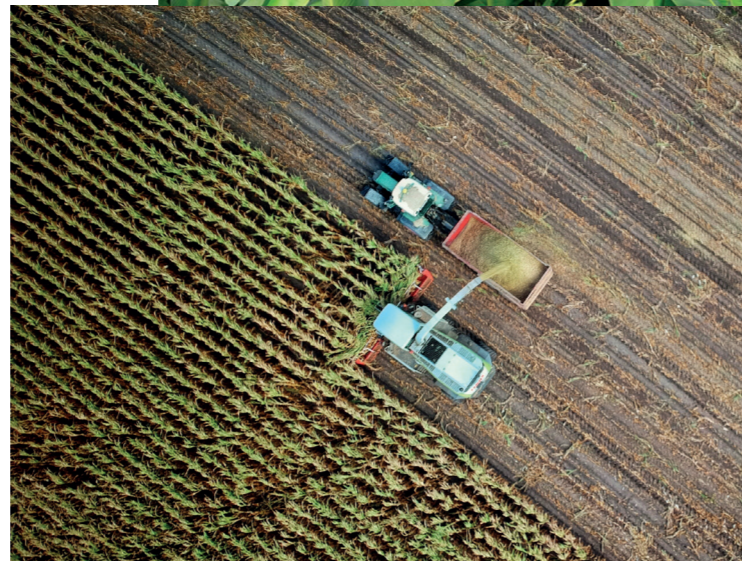
In 2030, cooperatives have developed solid business plans while farmer organisations' harness business units to provide sound technical advice to coops and associations. They will also provide technical consultancy and practical and theoretical training. Agri-agencies promote public-private producers partnerships (4ps), linking external parties with producer organisations.

Increased access

There will be a change in the mindset of banks, who will provide the same access for farmers as they do for commercial and industrial clients. Money is more readily available (when remittances can be done with lower costs), agriterra offers subsidies for start-ups and sacco's are top of the agenda. We will also increase outreach of external investors to rural areas via local funds, rural banks and rural private sector entities.

An enabling environment

Eu instruments to provide capital and funds, technical assistance and support are in place and farmer organisations can influence investment policies. More farmer plans will be built in investment schemes, with input from the eu. Land can be used as collateral, having gained female farmers' right to own land. Land and succession legislation will exist in many countries.



5

SCALE UP SUSTAINABLE VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT

Mechanisms for change

By 2030, coops and farmer organisations are the catalysts of rural transformation, with the integration of smallholder farmers into the value chain. Processing coops have increased and we see an upsurge in 'smoking chimneys'. Agriterra will establish business incubation centers within producer organisations, offering long-term coaching and support.

Stable supply chain

An established member commitment to cooperatives will ensure the stable supply and delivery of produce. This will be accompanied by a healthy balance and competition between farmer organisations and the private sector, and greater transparency and insight into value chain actors. Contract farming is key.

Trade & logistics

Cooperative governance structures at the regional level have contributed to the improvement of regional trade regulations (e.g. on taxes), resulting in aligned intra-regional regulation of trade and production. A regional trade and logistics infrastructure will offset a logistical system for agricultural products via farmer organisations. Products are available in local and regional stores.

6

SHARE TOGETHER EUROPEAN AND AFRICAN EXPERTISE

In the coming years, we will make rigorous steps to consolidate expertise between farmers, business' and governments in both continents. We have big goals in mind:

Local

- Formalised and secured land ownership
- Professional and profitable family farms
- An increase in on-farm and off-farm employment
- Enhanced farmer-to-farmer collaboration (via the introduction of genuine inter-regional business partnerships)
- Concrete platforms for exchange/ scholarships (resulting in higher yields, industrialisation, proper finance etc.)

International

- A Common Agricultural Policy for Africa
- A strong and ever-expanding network of international bodies (including ICA, WFO and research centres)
- A new tool to measure our Return on Investment (ROI) and economic impact
- New policies for cross border business collaboration
- A shift in narrative (thinking BIG and out the box)



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