AYLFAIN Newsletter

Edition 1, 2020

Cameroonian Chonyui Duna

From tech graduate to agribusiness

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Disclaimer: The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual contributors and do not necessary represent the position of AU-IBAR. The contributions are primarily to galvanize information and experience sharing and to foster discussions.

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Editorial

The African Union InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) is happy to launch the first edition of the bi-annual Africa Youth in Livestock, Fisheries, and Aquaculture Incubation Network (ALYFAIN) Newsletter. ALYFAIN portrays what youth involved in Livestock, Fisheries, and Aquaculture agribusiness in Africa looks like. How important agribusiness is in creating livelihoods, jobs, and wealth creation.

This first edition provides a brief background of ALYFAIN and its objectives. Since its onset in 2018, the network has been involved in establishing and strengthening its governance mechanisms. We have the privilege to interview ALYFAIN's first continental president, Jean Baptist Hategekiman. His interview focuses on "Favorable policies to boost youth-led agribusinesses."

The foundation years of ALYFAIN also focused on regional chapters having to strategise about critical initiatives and engagements in the current and upcoming programmes with other stakeholders – such as national governments. We are happy to note that several national chapters have been launched out of these efforts, with more countries strategizing for their national chapter launches, particularly in 2021.

The newsletter brings to the fore a much-needed discussion about what needs to be done to empower youth in agribusiness. We feature 7 stories from different countries that highlight the various characteristics shaping youth in agribusiness in the animal resources sector. The issues captured in this edition look at hydroponics feeds, snail farming, poultry production, land issues, and much more.

Through the stories captured in this newsletter, we hope that more partners and institutions can be motivated to either support and join the network. There is much potential in the network as a springboard for young people's innovative initiatives in Livestock, Fisheries, and Aquaculture, and a meeting place of all stakeholders for the realisation of these ideas. In short, ALFAIN is ideas, actions, and experiences with and by young people. Much of AU-IBAR's value add is about linking technical and strategic agribusiness processes.

Connecting youth in the animal sector across the continent and creating opportunities towards ownership, the sustainability of agribusinesses, and access to finance for the youth is, therefore, a critical mandate. These objectives were realized through AU-IBAR's facilitation of regional benchmarking trips to industrial parks. These trips were an ideal opportunity for knowledge sharing and learning. In 2019, through the African Union Member States, AU-IBAR provided grants to support existing enterprises and early start-ups for youth and women. Some of the recipients of this grant are from ALYFAIN and feature in this edition.

While there is more to share, not everything can be shared in this newsletter. We look forward to future editions that will showcase more on the ground experience of youth in Livestock, Fisheries, and Aquaculture from across the continent. We invite contributions to all concerned with youth empowerment and agribusiness in the animal resources sector.

We are sincerely grateful to the authors of these stories and for portraying their successes and challenges, without whose insightful contributions would not have made this publication possible. We are also grateful to the European Union for their invaluable support in funding this newsletter's production.

Prof. Ahmed Elsawalhy,
Director, AU-IBAR

African Youth in Livestock, Fisheries and Aquaculture Incubators Network (AYLFAIN)



BACKGROUND.

The Pan-African Support to the AU-IBAR for a Sustainable Development of Livestock for Livelihoods in Africa - Live2Africa supported the establishment of the African Youth in Livestock, Fisheries,and Aquaculture Incubators Network (AYLFAIN). The network commissioned its beginning at a meeting held from 25 to 27 July 2018 at Safir Hotel in Cairo, the Arab Republic of Egypt. ALYFAIN is envisioned to reduce unemployment in a continent where 400 million youth make up most of the population, but over 40% are either unemployed or underemployed. Within the network, there are already young people engaged in viable enterprises (e.g., in cattle rearing and ICT) that create jobs for other youths, demonstrating that youth possibilites are immense.

Recommendations by the youth in AYLFAIN:

Respective Ministries responsible for Animal Resources should facilitate the establishment and official recognition of national AYLFAIN chapters. The leaders of the Veterinary Education Establishment should support the AYLFAIN by providing relevant and dynamic education and training that will enable youth competiveness for rapid transformation of the livestock sector.

Veterinary Statutory Bodies to continue providing the enabling policy and institutional environments for inclusive integration of the youth into animal resource value chains.

AU-IBAR and partners to support the establishment of Regional Incubation hubs and Small Scale Incubation Hubs across the continent to drive the job creation agenda of AYLFAIN.

Development partners to engage and support the youth in business Incubation, value addition and access to markets.

Key actions for Live2Africa(AU-IBAR) support of AYLFAIN:

The Network registered and endorsed by the African Union Summit.

Youth desks/ secretariats established and operationalized at the continental and regional levels.

Governance and management meetings supported.

Development of hubs and national networks supported in 15 Member States. The development of a five year investment plan and strategy supported.

Development of technology platforms supported.

A database of youth in agribusiness established.

Capacity development supported through sub-delegation.

The Results Oriented Monitoring Mission for the Live2Africa Project overview

European Union commissioned a Results Oriented Monitoring Mission to assess the implementation arrangements and progress made by Live2Africa. The Consultant gave a debrief, which highlighted the need to further elaborate Live2Africa's Theory of Change, to enhance the convergence of activities under each Result, providing clear justification for the specific activities, and how they join up together; conceptualization of the linkages between the Results; clarity on the roles of Regional Economic Communities, articulation of a framework for the Member State Focal Persons; development of a Gender Strategy; rationalization of the M&E indicators to create a monitoring system that works for decision making; and refinement of the subsidiarity principles to define ways of working with weak and strong partners.

The European Union commissioned a Results-Oriented Monitoring Mission to assess the implementation arrangements and progress made by Live2Africa. The mission highlighted several areas for further attention. Some included:

The need to further elaborate Live2Africa's Theory of Change,

To enhance the convergence of activities under each Result, providing clear justification for the specific actions and how they join up together; Conceptualization of the linkages between the Results;

Clarity on the roles of Regional Economic Communities,

Articulation of a framework for the Member State Focal Persons; Development of a Gender Strategy;

Rationalization of the M&E indicators to create a monitoring system that works for decision making; and

Refinement of the subsidiarity principles to define ways of working with weak and strong partners.



Q&A

AYL-FAIN President
JEAN BAPTISTE HATEGEKIMAN



Favorable policies will boost youth-led agribusinesses

"Young people lack platforms to express themselves and influence policies to provide a conducive environment for their participation in animal resource development," says AYL-FAIN President JEAN BAPTISTE HATEGEKIMAN in an interview. Here are the excerpts:

In your view what are the major challenges hindering participation of the youth in livestock resource development?

Young people lack skills, land and other natural resources, finance and markets, which are necessary in agri-business development. They also lack the space or platforms through which their views can be heard and incorporated in policy formulations. All these can be bandied into lack of national specific policies and strategies that can help address the challenges facing the youth. With proper policies we will have a conducive environment for the youth to venture and succeed in livestock resource production.

Why should the youth in Africa be supported to have a greater role in livestock resource development?

The youth are key in transforming the livestock sector in the continent because they are able to bring innovative ideas. Education and the fast-developing ICT infrastructure in Africa have played a key role in enhancing knowledge, skills and access to information among the youth and all that is needed is to engage them by triggering their brains and give them financial backing to bring solutions to the sector. They are the majority, patriotic, mentally and physically fit and if well supported they can be more productive in the livestock sector and help increase trade volumes.

There has been a drive to mobilise the youth and launch national chapters of AYL-FAIN. What is the progress so far?

We started the process in October 2019 and went all the way to February but because of Covid-19 pandemic, all activities were disrupted and we had to suspend the launches. About 15 countries had already launched their national chapters by the time and we hope to resume the process so that we can now begin serious lobbying for the governments and other stakeholders to support our agenda. We are resuming the exercise so as to ensure all countries in Africa are having National Platforms/ Chapters to uniformly spur innovative approaches in livestock agribusinesses aiming at jobs and wealth creation.

Several young farmers allied to AYL-FAIN have expressed high hopes in the network and your leadership. How will you manage their expectations?

There is goodwill from AU-IBAR and governments and when we engage with various development partners such as, FAO, IFAD and World Bank what they recommend are national policies that clearly spell out the needed support for youth in livestock resource development. The network is an officially approved Continental entity and that is a step ahead in terms of lobbying for recognition and support from other stakeholders.

In Rwanda, for example, the government is already supporting the youth by handing over management of fishponds to them, forests are also being availed to the youth to participate in bee keeping. We know much is being done, for example in Uganda where lots of efforts are being put in livestock, in Kenya it is the same, in Nigeria, Ghana and other countries and we hope these to be learning examples to other countries stakeholders so that the voice of the youth can be heard and considered in all aspects of livestock resources development.

Once this is done, the youth will be able to access

opportunities and increase their contribution to the sector.

Which are the key areas of your focus in delivering the network's vision/mandate?

My first priority is to see the successful launch of the network in all AU member states. This will give our members a voice to influence policies and strategies targeting the sector so that they are conducive for their participation. As the countries are aiming at reaching Malabo Agriculture Financing targets, we want every country to set aside a percentage of their budget for promoting youth involvement in livestock production and this can only be possible if the network is given legal basis and recognition at the national levels.

Once the governments set aside specific funds to support the youth, more organisations including the private sector will come in and make their contributions. This will be meant through inputs and outputs markets development, financing models diversified and improved as well as skills developed and paired to innovation and research in the domains. With the national guidance we will be able to discern what the youth in each country need to effectively engage in livestock value chain.

What are some of the ongoing projects at AYL-FAIN that members can tap to address challenges affecting them?

Before the Covid-19 outbreak, the AU-IBAR had started giving grants for development of agribusinesses and we had identified about 20 youth and women across the continent to receive between 10,000 and 20,000 Euros. We have been identifying other incubators to help in skills development and we are grateful for the African Incubators Network that has been very supportive. We have also been approaching the AU leadership and its agencies like New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) to have a back-up to ensure sustainability of the projects we are undertaking as a network. We want the interventions at the national levels to be in tandem with what is happening at the continental level. Specificall , in Burundi there is PRODEFI II project, financed by IFAD and where youth can take advantage of and get financing options. In Rwanda there is RDDP and many more projects. Opportunities are in building strong partnerships and engaging with them on aligning their endeavors to the level that youth can afford to be part of the processes. We have contacted a number of partners and we hope the future is bright for the Network with a diversified package of markets, skills and financing options.

Where do you see the network and livestock resource production in Africa in the next five years?

In the next five years, I see a functional network across the continent which are effectively responding to national challenges like food insecurity and malnutrition, creating new inputs and outputs markets for animal resources, contributing to the trade volumes of our respective countries. The current members who are young should have already grown into big and established entrepreneurs who are driving the progress in the animal resources value chains and supporting youth of those times. They should be in a position of role models creating jobs to the young ones so that the leadership of the network at that time will be concerning itself more with influencing trade policies at national and international levels to create a conducive environment for the subsector and agribusiness to flourish

What legacy do you want to leave at the end of your tenure?

I want to leave the legacy of having African Youth being confident with themselves in actively engaging in livestock and related agribusinesses. This is paired to each country having an AYL-FAIN National Chapter, which is well-grounded and effective in engaging various stakeholders towards supporting the AYL-FAIN's course. The chapters should offer the youth a platform to have their voices heard and concerns raised addressed. They should be key in promoting agribusiness through fundraising for grants, exhibitions for marketing opportunities and increased innovations. I will be happy, when I have left, to see AYL-FAIN has functional National Chapters and respective offices where there are databases of young livestock farmers associations, cooperatives, enterprises and other value chains actors which will enhance knowledge in agribusiness among the youth. The network should attract as many youths as possible and grow into an effective platform for enhancing livestock resource development.

Hydroponic feeds: A boost to livestock production in drought-hit areas of Namibia



Recent technological advancements have brought limitless agricultural opportunities even in areas where farming was impossible only a few years ago. Hydroponics farming is doing precisely that – making it possible for farmers to harness productivity in areas with scarcity or soil absence.

Thirty-seven year-old Agnes Tengovandu Tjindjo has tapped the technology. The process involves growing plants under controlled conditions, water volume, and nutrient supply, to grow feeds for her livestock in drought-hit Erongo Region, north-west of Namibia.

Raised in a family where livestock farming was the only source of income, Agnes' dream was to venture into her own business and specialize in dairy farming to produce milk products that would sell beyond her home region.

At the age of 32, she began to pursue her dream, starting off with five cows she inherited from her parents and 10 goats bought from her savings. However, she soon realized that the communal piece of land on which she rears her livestock on free-range could not ensure the level of productivity she required to succeed in dairy farming. Drought that has ravaged the area for the last five years has also made animal feeds scarce.

But as luck would have it, while on a tour of Mauritius and Madagascar where Agnes was representing her local Rural Women Assembly (RWA) in a farmers exchange programme, the idea of hydroponic farming was introduced to her. Right there, she had found a solution to the feed challenge that was standing on her way to being a successful dairy farmer.

"When I came back to Namibia, I shared my knowledge on hydroponic farming of animal feeds with other women in our assembly then to other farmers,

and we began growing feeds on a small-scale basis by fabricating units at our homes. It is a good initiative especially during drought as it ensures a continuous supply of feeds to the animals," says Agnes.

A hydroponic fodder structure takes different components to build, including the growing cabinet, tray racks for the watering system, seeds, motor and timer. The government of Rwanda has already realized the potential of hydroponic feeds farming in addressing scarcity of animal feeds, especially during drought and is supporting the women with more modernized systems. A hydroponics system favours the fast growth of fodder and vegetables by promoting efficient consumption of nutrients.

Although this revolutionary farming method has boosted her animals' productivity, increasing production, and more earnings, the challenge has been accessing the seeds, which is the primary input.

"In Namibia, we do not produce barley seeds, and we have to import them. This comes with a lot of costs. Our plea is that the government should subsidise the seeds so that we can grow more feeds to boost productivity and increase livestock production," she says.

Agnes would like to produce the hydroponic feeds on a large scale and sell to other farmers and increase her herd through animal reproductive technologies. This, however, has not been easy due to inadequate capital. Thanks to hydroponics, Agnes is now living her dream without moving her animals from the communal land. Today she has more than 60 cows and 32 goats and sells more milk to farmers and other locals. The goats are mainly for meat, and she can always sell them at the market whenever she needs extra money. Agnes wants the youth to venture into agribusiness for income generation as agricultural sector has numerous opportunities that are worth investment.

She cites aquaculture, apiculture, horticulture, and livestock farming as some of the areas of agriculture where the youth can invest at any point of the value chain to earn income and create employment for others. "It is quite unfortunate that in a country like Namibia we are importing a lot of products yet we have the youth who can work on our farms to produce locally. With value addition we can do more while at the same time create employment," she laments. Agnes believes the internet and social media applications offer farmers, especially tech-savvy youth, enormous opportunities for marketing that extend beyond the national borders at minimal cost and should be exploited to boost earnings from livestock production.

She hopes that the launch of national chapters of the Africa Youth in Livestock, Fisheries and Aquaculture Incubation Networks (AYLFAIN) will create a platform for youths to learn about best practices and benefit from others' experiences.





How hatred for hunger led Cameroonian tech graduate into agribusiness

When Chonyui Bouldwin Duna graduated from the College of Technology, University of Bamenda in Cameroon with a Bachelor of Technology in Livestock Production, he had hoped to get a white-collar job that would guarantee him a good life.

But after spending several months moving from one office to the other without success, he realized that he had a more urgent need to address. This could only be achieved at the farm - away from the black and mortar enclosures furnished with high-end interior decors, and furniture.

"I hate being hungry. I hate seeing other people hungry and I will do everything to bring food to each and everyone's table," he says. It is this hatred for hunger and passion for feeding others that saw Duna venture into agribusiness, where he rears livestock as a source of income and proteins for people.

With a capital of 150,000 CAF, he started brooding broilers in 2015 and the number has since increased to 400 hens. Then he expanded her stock to include turkeys before bringing in quails, which are in high demand in the West African country due to their nutritious eggs that have medicinal value. "Quails' eggs are very nutritious and contain a lot of protein which is good for children and cancer, diabetic and high blood pressure patients. They contain antibodies which fight diseases and is good for old people and young children which it helps develop their brains," explains Duna.

The latest addition to his livestock farm are pigs, which he introduced in 2019 and have already increased to 28. His decision to diversify into pig farming had more to do with the high demand of pork, which has created a ready market. While broilers mature fast, there isn't ready market for them.

He sells his farm produce directly to consumers and wholesalers and also retail at the farm level.

Duna attributes his success in livestock farming to fermented feeds, which has hugely lowered production costs by 25 percent and increased his animals' productivity.

He mixes maize, soya beans, fish meal, and concentrates depending on the bird's age, then ferments them for three days to produce quality animal feeds.

"Fermentation must be procedural since if it is not well done the feeds will grow moulds and develop aflatoxin which is not good for animals.

Proper fermentation introduces to the feeds lacto bacteria which is very beneficial for the growth of animals and even human beings. Fermentation also increases volume of feeds and make them more palatable for animals," Duna explains.

Currently, he only ferments feeds for his animals and not for sale as preserving them is a challenge due to the high cost of installing refrigeration equipment.



Asked to rate his success, Duna says he had achieved almost 85 per cent of the goals he set out to achieve five years ago when he ventured into agribusiness. He has registered his farm, which sits on a 300-acre piece of land. He is making a significant impact on transforming the livestock subsector in Cameroon, offering internship opportunities to students and training more youth to influence them to join the sector.

He has now set his eyes on the ultimate goal: establishing a livestock training centre to nurture more youth and influence them to join the agriculture sector.

"I already have the technical knowledge and what I need is finances to acquire more land and set up infrastructure for the center. My desire has always been to share my knowledge with young people so that they can have a greater involvement in animal production," he says.

Duna says the youth have been shying away from agriculture because of a lack of proper orientation about farming. "They do not view the sector as a source of lucrative jobs. They think when you are a farmer you have to take a hoe and go down to the farm and till the soil. And that is not the case as nowadays we practice second generation agriculture where everything is done by machine and technology has made the work easy."

Most youth also think that to venture into agriculture, one must have a lot of capital. Duna dismisses this, noting that most of the farming requirements are natural things that are given by nature; such as sunlight for photosynthesis, rain, soil. All that one needs, he notes, , is the human knowledge to put those things in order and obtain output.

Although he abandoned his search for a white-collar job in favour of farm work, Duna says his degree in livestock production has contributed to his success in farming. He has been able to apply some of the things he studied in class at the farm, and the college he attended has become the main source of market for his produce.

He avers that technology is necessary in livestock production to increase productivity and enhance food security. However, he faults those who come up with new innovations but fail to put their creations to impact the subsector and agriculture in general.

"When you bring new innovations you have to sensitize and train farmers on how to use the technology or idea but most of them are introduced without these two crucial components hence very few people are aware of them or even know how to use them to improve productivity," he says.

The young but successful agripreneur is counting on the AYLFAIN as the platform to share his knowledge with other young people in animal farming. He is also confident that the platform can influence more youth to join agribusiness as an income source, help in poverty reduction, and boost food security.

Benchmarking trips boost youth participation in agribusiness



The Africa Youth in Livestock, Fisheries, Aquaculture Incubation Network (AYLFAIN) conducted its first-ever regional benchmarking trips from 9th to 25th October 2019 to network and enhance their knowledge on agribusiness. Benchmarking is part of the network's strategy to boost the participation of youth in animal resource development.

The trips were held separately in Lusaka (Zambia), Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) and Dakar (Senegal) for Sothern, East Africa, Western and South Africa regions, respectively. In their key note addresses to the participants,

during the Southern Africa benchmarking trip, AU-IBAR representatives Mr Edward Nengomasha and Ms. Patricia Lumba underscored the industrial and technology parks roles in boosting innovation, knowledge transfer and collaboration necessary for the continent's economic growth.

The industrial parks, they noted, are an ideal catalyst for industrialization and economic development and will help put into place an infrastructure that fosters and attracts agribusiness entrepreneurs.

During the four-day event, regional communication leads presented their plans for promoting information flow and understanding among various stakeholders within the animal resource value chain for greater involvement of the youth.

The participants noted that timely, accurate and consistent flow of information on AYLFAIN and the sector will enhance the youth's participation in agribusiness, trade and investment and in the network's activities.

According to a joint report of the trips, the overall communications aims to change mind-sets and perceptions of the youth towards agribusiness, livestock and fisheries by equipping them the with appropriate agribusiness skills, knowledge and information.

Communication will promote youth inclusive climate-smart agricultural technologies and create green jobs for environmental sustainability while increasing utilization of agricultural products through value addition.



Enhancing the network's communication will also enhance access and sustainable use of land for youth in agribusiness and create open forums where the youth can air out their grievances and share their thoughts on agribusiness, according to the report prepared by AYL-FAIN communications lead, Paul Akatsu.

"We intend to make agribusiness as sassy as possible. Therefore, messages should motivate as many youths to sign up with the network and create a greater following towards this course of development in the Agribusiness world," said Akatsu who is also the Ghanaian AYL-FAIN chapter president.

The messages will be delivered in the four standard languages acknowledged by the African Union - are English, French, Arabic, and Portuguese as they cut across all the 55 AU member states.

Several media platforms will ensure communication reach various target audiences who are principle stakeholders in the animal resource value chain. Participants were able to identify a lack of access to ICTs services due to limited internet connectivity and electricity as a significant challenge that may affect information flo , especially among young farmers in rural areas.

AYL-FAIN members were also encouraged to adopt increased use of social media platforms like Whatsapp and Facebook, and other applications developed for agriculture to tap opportunities that they provide for agribusiness growth. MAgri app in Botswana was cited as an example of applications that provide regular updates on the latest trends and best practices in the agriculture sector.



Fish flour porridge earns young Malawian agripreneur accolades

Grace Sakala, 32, is a resource mobilization manager at Ecoret Limited, a consulting, training, innovation, and incubation company in Malawi. Although this is a demanding full- time job, the mother of two can still pursue her passion for agribusiness and is successfully balancing these with her family chores as a woman.

She is the founder of Emma Nutri Porridge Enterprise, the producer of nutritious animal-source porridge for children. A venture that has earned her international recognition due to the health impact the porridge has on lives of infants, pregnant and lactating mothers in the central African nation. The porridge is processed from nutrient-rich foods, such as corn, grains, soya beans and fish flou .

"When you have passion for something you will surmount every challenge to succeed and balancing business and work is just a matter of planning," says Grace, a graduate in Food Science and Nutrition. "When you plan yourself well, you know what time to concentrate on work and when to do business. If you have a product to be processed, you have to decide whether it do on weekends or after working hours."

Grace founded Emma Nutri Porridge three years ago after realising that many mothers were feeding their children with porridge made from maize flour only, which lacks nutrients, hence the high rates of malnutrition in the country. At the time, the Government was also advocating for mothers to incorporate animal-sourced foods in infants' diets.

Emma Nutri Porridge, named after Grace's first born baby Emmanuel. The business was formulated after a series of studies that she conducted for her Masters of Science (MSC) project at the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources – and after she tried the porridge on her child who accepted it.

"During the project we took the porridge to mothers to taste and feed their children and we found the flour blend to be highly acceptable by both mothers and Under Five children. The blend also has appropriate shelf life with therapeutic properties,"

she explains. The study aimed to assess the acceptability, nutritive value, and shelf life of soy flou , which has fish flour in it.

Emma Nutri porridge is therefor made of fish flour as the animal product. At the moment the business only produces the porridge flour but plans are underway to develop more animal source based products.

The uniqueness of the product and its impact in addressing malnutrition in children has improved livelihoods. This recognition enabled Emma Nutri Porridge Enterprise to be one of the proud recipients of the African Union Member states funded grant for Youth and Women in Livestock, Fisheries and Aquaculture Agribusiness Incubation awarded on the 13th of September, 2019 in Nairobi, Kenya. With the grant, Grace has been able to acquire a state-of-the art mill and install a processing plant to increase and speed up production. Once the plant is operational, she will expand her supply network and handle large orders from various organisations.

"It is excellent to know that such a noble initiative impacts children who are using our porridge are thriving. We are saving many mothers a lot of time which would have otherwise been Utilised in preparing the food," says Grace.

Although many cite lack of capital as the primary factor hindering the youth from venturing into agribusiness, Grace differs, noting that one can succeed in animal resource value chain with passion and commitment.

In her case she didn't need a lot of money to start her enterprise. "We have been doing manual production since we started and it is only now that we are set to mechanise the process. Even the maize is roasted manually. I am in it because of passion – I love food processing and that has made it easier for me to succeed." She says the agricultural sector in Africa and specifically Malawi has abundant opportunities for youths with entrepreneurial minds. With value addition, one can earn a lot from several farm products available. "Value addition for animal resource products is one area which is yet to be explored well in Malawi. We have Lake Malawi which has abundant fish but I have never seen fish powder or fish sausages packaged and being sold in the supermarkets. You can't even find meat powder in the shelves," she laments. However, Grace is concerned that exorbitant taxes, bureaucratic procedures in registering companies and obtaining standards certification are dampening many youths' entrepreneurial spirits. .As part of her expansion strategy, she is focused on venturing into international markets and making Emma Nutri a household brand.

"I don't just want the product to be for Malawian kids but also to help fight malnutrition in other countries across Africa where the numbers are still very high. This is a product which if accepted outside there will have a huge impact in the lives of under five children," she concludes her interview.



Diversification into poultry production paying off for Zambian agripreneur



In 2015, Mwala Mooto founded Mooto Cashew Suppliers Limited to cash in on the crop that was first introduced in Zambia in 1940s. But two years down the line, Mooto, a professional accountant saw a lucrative investment opportunity in poultry production, which he quickly embraced and added to his investment portfolio.

Today he has all the reasons to smile as poultry production and processing has become the primary income-generating activity for Mooto Holdings Ltd. The company is registered in Mumbwa District, and has operations in the capital Lusaka and Western Province with a combined workforce of 26 full-time employees.

"I saw a lot of opportunities in poultry as there are very many commercial farmers in that area in Zambia and there is also a lot of demand for the products. It therefore became part of our business expansion and diversification strategy," says Mooto.

He says the business has been profitable except for challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has resulted in an economic slowdown in all sectors across the globe.

Mooto Holdings boasts of a seven-acre farm in Lusaka's Mwembeshi area, where they produce eggs from commercial layersand rear broiler chickens for meat. Currently there are some 7,000 Lohman brown commercial layers which produce an average of 6,200 eggs daily.

For the chicken produced, the company has ensured value addition by coming up with other products like sausages, which is processed and packed into standard packages for various market segments t. The products are mainly sold to local eateries and supermarkets and in Lusaka.

Mooto was lucky to have saved some money from his employment for four years, which he used to start the business, but he contends this is not the case with most of the youth intending to invest in agribusiness.

"The intensive capital investment in farm animals, infrastructure and capacity building and marketing of the products are some of the



challenges that make it difficult for the youth to participate effectively in animal resource development," he notes.

An inherent burning desire to be a successful agripreneur has already made Mooto train his eyes ahead. His desire is to progressively build the enterprise into an agribusiness venture that provides small-holder farmers in marginalised rural communities access to stable markets for their products through value addition. Soon he wants Mooto Holdings to be a diversified agribusiness operating in all the subsectors within the agricultural industry. He is focused on making a mark in cattle, goat, sheep, dairy production and processing.

Within three to five years, he also wants to explore the international market by taking his products to neighboring countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Angola and Malawi.

As a member of the Africa Young in Livestock s (AYLFAIN), Mooto hopes the network will enhance access to finance, capacity building opportunities, and knowledge sharing especially for young entrepreneurs with passion in the industry.

He avers there is need for more youth to participate in the agriculture if the sector is to be transformed into a key driver of economic growth in Africa. "The youth are the majority in Africa and if they are not involved in any economic activity then it means leaving out a larger segment of the population and it is very likely that we will continue to experience inequality in continent," he says.

His advice to the youth is that agribusiness in Africa is very ripe for investment, and resources such as land are available in abundance. Mooto wants the youth to take advantage of several opportunities in the livestock resource production value chain. The increased funding that various players are currently channeling to the sector should be sustained to ensure youth participation and transformation of the sector.

Young Tendai overcomes odds to make a living from pig

In the early 2000s, the Zimbabwean Government under the late President Robert Mugabe initiated land reforms in which land belonging to more than 4,000 white commercial farmers were compulsorily acquired for redistribution to natives. The government argued the reforms were necessary to correct a colonial imbalance in which a few white farmers owned most of the country's arable land.

Whereas some analysts have written off the fast-track land reforms as a complete failure, many believe that it created an agricultural model from smallholder farmers with a significant number of Zimbabweans gaining access to land.

Tendai Rugare, 34, is one of the beneficiaries of the process that has seen more than 17 million acres redistributed in the last 15 years. Tendai was awarded 25 acres of land on which she rears goats and breeds pigs. She also farms maize and sunflowe , which forms the bulk of feeds for her animals. In a continent where only 15 percent of landholders are women while the youth generally lack the means to own land, she counts herself lucky. But it was not an easy process.

There were thousands of applications at the Ministry of Lands, and one had to undergo a slow and tedious assessment process to establish suitability at the district level. Driven by a passion for agriculture and an undying spirit to fulfill her childhood ambition of being a successful farmer, Tendai had to go up to the provincial office to plead her case.

"Fortunately the government was running a program to empower young women farmers and I had already started an agricultural project which was already a success. Because of my persistence and passion, they awarded me the land so that I can be used as a success story for the program," she explains.

Tendai is one of the few youth in Zimbabwe who are profiting from livestock farming. Born in Chiredzi in Masvingo Province, she has become a household name in her community where many are relying on her for quality pig and goat products.

She sells the products directly from the farm to consumers at a butchery in the local shopping centre, thus creating a value chain. "When we slaughter the pigs, we deep freeze the pork and then slice the chops into braai packs for those who want to do open fi e grill. Zimbabweans love braai and we give them the





perfect meat for it," notes Tendai.

The butchery is located in a densely populated area with s high traffic of people and liquor outlets that provide ready market for the braai packs. She has also established braai stands where households visit to buy meat for home as well.

At only 34 years of age, Tendai is not only benefitting from livestock farming where she rakes in an average of USD 10000 annually but has also created employment for her fellow youth. She employs seven permanent workers at the farm and the butchery and employs more worker during peak seasons. She credits her success partly to the Africa Youth in Livestock and Fisheries and Incubation Network (AYLFAIN) which as a member has enabled her to think outside the box given available resources, problem and solution giving to any situation and challenges as a farmer. "The networking opportunity with other young farmers around the continent has been made immense contribution my success in farming."

Agribusiness is not short of challenges, especially for a young woman like Tendai, who has to face fie ce competition from her elderly male counterparts who have been in the business long. "They always try to shoot down my products, this is the story of the patriarchal society I come from. However, I would like to thank the government, which through key ministries has been lobbying for women's involvement in farming and gradually this perception of looking down on women as drivers of change and development is changing."

She believes that agriculture and food security can be transformed across Africa if the power of women and youth to bear on the challenges can be factored.

Tendai's typical day at the farm starts at 0500hours (South African Time) when she carries poles for fencing before feeding and cleaning pigs and sties from 700hours. This takes about two hours, then at 1000 hours, she tends to the goats by which are given feeds and water.

Once the pigs and goats have been slaughtered and delivered to the butchery on slaughter days, she freshens up then head to the shopping centre to monitor how the business is running and stock counts.

But it is not all work and no play for the youthful animal farmer who describes herself as a hardcore Christian and nature lover. "Nature walk helps me to meditate and reconnect with myself. Just to be in the wild scenic environment is soothing and therapeutic. And that is priceless!"

SNAIL FARMING: How the Anglophone crisis opened success door to young Cameroonian lady

There is always a story of deaths, untold suffering, shattered dreams and missed opportunities in any armed conflict. But for Pamela Bang Ochon, 27, the Anglophone crisis which began in 2016 in Cameroon birthed an idea which has seen her succeed in the most unconventional type of animal resource production – snail farming.

In 2017, she was in her final year at the University studying animal production technology when the protests spiraled in the English-speaking regions over the overuse of the French language in schools and courtrooms. Learning was disrupted and Pamela who hails from Bemenda in the northwest region of Cameroon, one of the epicenters of the crises, was staring at a bleak future.

We were unsure whether we would graduate, so I decided to obtain skills in pedicure and manicure. But after a while we were back at the University to complete our studies," she narrates.

But upon graduation, Pamela was once again confounded with an uncertain future as the crisis took another turn. The economy was on the slide. There were no jobs and nothing productive to engage in. That is when the idea of venturing into snail farming hit her. She started with a small snail farm, which she has maintained to date. Here, she keeps the slimy, tiny animals, multiplies and processes them into different products for sale.

As she explains, in snails' production, nothing goes to waste. "I don't only sell the snails alive but also process the products into ready to consume products. When I scoop the snails from the shells, I either cook, dry or fry them, depending on the tastes of the customers, and then use the shells as source of nutrient for the animals."

For the slimy liquids produce by the snails, there is a ready market in the beauty and cosmetics industry where they are used to manufacture various kinds of products.

Just like the Anglophone crisis has refused to go away, Pamela has stayed put with snail farming despite sometimes venturing into interpersonal skills development like embroidery and environmental protection.

She says that despite the potential of snails as the only animal whose products and byproducts are completely consumable, this resource has received little attention from investors.

"The snail shells is rich in calcium, the slime is a very good cosmic and medicinal material. The meat itself is very rich in minerals and high in proteins. When I looked into the nutritional content of snail and its other advantages I had no other option to choose their production as the most appropriate animal subsector to venture into and give it the popularity it deserves," says an optimistic Pamela

In addition to her farm produce, Pamela either picks the snails from other farms or buys from the very few producers available in Cameroon. And as she says, snail farming does not require huge capital investment to venture into, unlike other agribusiness enterprises. All that one needs is as little as 20,000 francs (CAF), then one is set to go.

"When you have constructed the pen, and you have got a packet of snails which goes for 7000, you will feed them on pawpaw leaves and coconut leaves from the bush. By the time you get to a particular stage, you shall have been able to start selling them and sort out many things and still purchase more for farming," she says.

Pamela relies on local households, restaurants, beauty parlours, and individual cosmetic consumers for the market. But snail farming has not been an all rosy affair for Pamela,



who describes herself as an agriculturalist specialized in animal production. Animal predators like ants and thieves who prey on the animals. Limited capital and the region's ongoing crises are setbacks that Pamela has had to overcome to stay on course to realize her goals.

Asked about her view on youth involvement in animal resource production, her answer is more poetic: "There is an adage that says that show me a home without a young person and I will show you another home without a future."

Young people are tomorrow's future, but they cannot be the future in the agricultural sector if they are not the now of today. If we want the agricultural sector to grow and develop in Cameroon and Africa, we must encourage and support them to venture into the sector.

To her the sector is like a goldmine with little or no miners to mine the minerals hence the current stagnation and underdevelopment.

Although Pamela faced a lot of discouragement initially, today has carved a niche for herself in snail farming and influenced and inspired several youths to get into this non-conventional practice.

Her dream is to be a snail farmer who impacts lives and inspires young people. Bringing out the nobleness of the agricultural sector as a whole not only in Cameroon but also at the international stage is her vision to be attained in the next three years. .

Legend farm wooing youth into livestock production

Youth participation in agriculture, especially livestock production, has been minimal due to various reasons like lack of capital, limited knowledge, and prejudice. This has been blamed for the sector's slow growth as it leaves out a large segment of the population, which is vital in driving its transformation.

One organisation is, however, changing this narrative in Ghana. Footprints Bridge International is working with the Africa Youth in Livestock, Fisheries, and Aquaculture Incubation Network (AYLFAIN) to influence the participation of youth in the subsector by training and exposing them to various opportunities.

Through the Legend Farm, tucked away in Gomoa Ojobi, Central Region, the organization is working with the youth and women to improving their knowledge in agribusiness and integrate them in harnessing animal resources. In only 3 years of its existence, the integrated farm has trained about 250 youths, 100 of whom have already set-up income-generating projects in animal resource development value chain. Others are also operating in other agricultural value chains. Legend Farm youth development programme lead Paul Akatsu says the farm serves as an incubation centre and offers trainees practical knowledge in animal resource development from production level to marketing. "We started the farm at a small scale level but we have since increased production and we are now focused on making the livestock subsector

more attractive to the youth by using it as a platform for knowledge and information sharing. The practical lessons are meant to make the youth understand the entire animal production value chain and venture into it fully," says Akatsu.

The lessons emphasize participatory field work to optimize the number of youth engaged in face-to-face learning. There are also weekly workshops that allow youth and women to reflect on opportunities in the livestock value chain,

The farm has various aspects of agriculture including poultry, fishing, cassava, and pineapple production. Apart from the training component, the farm is also supporting rural youth and women farmers to break the cycle of poverty while making profit through the production and supply of high-quality poultry and fish products.

"Through the social enterprise concept, our main objectives is to provide healthy and delicious tasty fish and eggs while simultaneously improving the livelihoods of rural youth and women. Since the beginning of 2020, the farm has been producing over 20,000 eggs daily which is sold to the community," he says.

Akatsu, who is also the AYLFAIN lead in Ghana, says Africa youth require an enabling environment, knowledge, strong partnership, and collaboration to make economic sense of the livestock subsector and enhance food security and poverty alleviation.

He believes that with sustainable funding opportunities, Legend Farm can attract more youth into animal farming as those who have benefitted from it are already succeeding in their agribusiness.

Akatsu laments the lack of updated data on various aspects of animal resource production, which has affected the subsector in decision-making. A resource centre is being built to help create a knowledge pool for young agripreneurs.

With the successful launch of the Ghanaian national chapter of AYLFAIN, Akatsu is optimistic that the youth will gain from various opportunities that the network offers its members across the continent. ALYFAIN members have benefited from capacity building, grants for agribusiness development, and networking.

"We have a member who received funding for hydroponic fish farming and, we also have a training centre, courtesy of the network, and with more of such support, the youth will be well positioned to drive the transformation agenda in the subsector.

Legend farm is run by an executive director, a farm manager and a team of close to 10 laborers who regularly ensure smooth interpretations. The youth development programme, innovation, research, marketing and communication department is led by Akatsu.

With Ghana's general elections slated this year, Akatsu, like the rest of the youth in the western Africa nation, is upbeat. His wish is that the elected government prioritise youth affairs and the development of the agricultural sector.



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