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## Implementation and Dissemination of Agripreneurship among Youth of Sudan

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### ABSTRACT

Youth unemployment is a global issue, particularly in Africa. The majority of African countries have made progress in youth policies. These policies were used to increase employment opportunities for youth. The agriculture sector has the potential opportunity to provide gainful employment opportunities for many young people. Sub-Saharan Africa reflects high entrepreneurial activity rates. In the 2000s, several governments in Sub-Saharan African countries set up special funds to support youth enterprises. This was a direct response to high youth unemployment rates. Sudan was one of the first African countries to have the African Development Bank's approval to implement the Youth Empowerment Programme in the agricultural entrepreneurship sector since 2016. The present study investigates the impact of agripreneurship implementation and dissemination among Sudanese youth. The study was based on secondary data, the results, and discussion were based on qualitative data putting the primary focus on Sudan. The results showed an increase in income of graduates, some of the graduates developed ideas for pioneering projects, the programme provides a number of regular jobs and seasonal jobs for unskilled labour, and graduation of graduates from the cycle of unemployment and disposal of psychological and social effects. Also, the programme faced many obstacles. From this study, we can conclude that the majority of projects implemented by Sudanese youth in various States of the country increased graduates' income and inspired them to engage in agribusiness work. Thus, the study recommends that the graduate's employment programme.

**Keywords:** Youth, Agricultural entrepreneurship, Sudan, implementation, Dissemination

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### 1. Introduction

Youth unemployment is a global phenomenon especially on the African continent. Therefore, it has become a major political agenda for African countries. The United Nations defines youth as individuals in the age group ranging from 15 to 24 years. African countries have the youngest population in the world and represent 60% of unemployment. Filmer *et al.* (2014). Most African youth live in rural areas and have limited employment opportunities (Allen *et al.*, 2016). African youth's high unemployment and poverty rates have many negative consequences for the development of Africa. These include young people's migration to the developed world or the oil-rich Arab Gulf states. Youth unemployment in sub-Saharan Africa is higher than adult unemployment, and in fact, youth are twice as likely to be unemployed than adults (AGRA, 2015). The relatively low youth unemployment rate in sub-Saharan Africa indicates that a large proportion of jobs in sub-Saharan African economies are in the private sector (Wabena, *et al.*, 2013).

African youth could provide needed production labour, which would improve productivity (Kwabena and Kimenyi 2013). Furthermore, if they were gainfully employed, income inequality would be reduced and they could become reliable consumers of goods and services. The majority of African countries have made progress in youth policies. The motivation for developing youth policies in Africa was reported in several reports as shown in the literature. These policies were used to increase

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employment opportunities for youth because they increase the chances that a young person with the right skills will find work by increasing the demand for his or her labour (Wabena, *et al.*, 2013).

Aging the agricultural sector is not limited to developed countries. In Africa, farmers are average 60 years old, although 60 percent of Africa's population is under 24 years of age (FAO, 2014). To reduce unemployment and distress migration, attracting and retaining youth in agriculture is crucial (FAO, 2016). As a result agriculture remains the largest employer of any sector in the economy for African countries. Agriculture absorbs about 65% of the total labor force in Sub-Saharan Africa countries. Many Sub-Saharan Africa countries have a farming population greater than rural populations. Therefore it is the logical sector to focus on when designing policies to provide jobs for youth. Agriculture is a suitable sector to focus on when designing jobs policies for youth (AGRA, 2015).

The first step to introducing youth to agriculture is to establish policies that will provide youth with the tools they need to empower them as agricultural entrepreneurs. In addition, policies should provide an environment conducive to seeing agriculture as a suitable place for them. Agricultural entrepreneurship (agri-entrepreneurship) is entrepreneurship that relates to the marketing and production of various agricultural products, as well as agricultural inputs (Ferris and Lucia, 2016). Sub-Saharan Africa reflects high entrepreneurial activity rates. The rate is among the highest in the world, mostly motivated by necessity and survival strategies (Herrington and Kelley, 2012). The majority of entrepreneurs are in the informal sector and earn low and insecure wages that often contribute towards maintaining a family before they can embark on concrete plans for wealth creation (Filmer *et al.*, 2014).

Agriculture is a youth sector in Sub-Saharan Africa. The agriculture sector has considerable potential future to provide gainful employment opportunities to a large number of young people if it is supported with increased investment and conducive legal and policy frameworks (Koira, 2014). Filmer *et al.* (2014) reported that youth employment in Sub-Saharan Africa presents four basic pathways to employment in agriculture that vary in their requirements for land, capital, and skills. These pathways include:

1. Full-time on an existing family holding, which requires no additional land, but necessitates medium capital and medium skills;
2. Full-time on an upcoming holding, which requires high land, high capital, and high skills
3. Part-time, combined with household enterprises such as processing, trading, and sales of services, which require low land and medium capital, but high skills; and
4. Wage work on the family farm, which requires no land and no capital, but requires medium or high skills.

The present study investigates the impact of agripreneurship implementation and dissemination among Sudanese youth.

## **2. Methodology**

This study was based on secondary data collected from different published sources such as reports, web sites, journals, newspapers, and social media. The results and discussion were based on qualitative data with a primary focus on Sudan.

### **Youth unemployment in Sudan**

One of the important challenges facing governments and policymakers of African countries today is how to provide opportunities for the continent's more than a million youth so that they can have decent lives and contribute to the economic development of their countries (Wabena *et al.*, 2013). The African Youth Report (2009) defines youth as people between 15 and 39 years of age. The Economic Commission for Africa report (2012) revealed that youth aged between 15 and 24 accounted for 17% of Sudan's total population of 30.5 million in 2008. Data from the 2009 national household survey shows that youth labour force participation and unemployment rates were 32.9% and 22%, respectively. This is compared to 43.0% and 11% for adults.

Mahgoub (2012) mentioned that the major factors that increased youth unemployment in Sudan are:

- 1-Revolution in Higher Education.
- 2- Lack of governmental spending on the health, education, industrial sectors and increased spending on the military and security sectors.

3-Lack of development focus in Sudan also contributes to youth unemployment.

### **Youth agripreneurship in Africa and Sudan**

Starting in the 2000s, several governments in Sub-Saharan African countries set up special funds to support youth enterprises as a direct response to high youth unemployment rates. Sudan was one of the first African countries to have the African Development Bank's approval to implement the Youth Empowerment Programme in the agriculture entrepreneurship sector. Ushary (2017) reported that the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is making extensive efforts to promote the agricultural sector. The ministry's main objectives are to involve graduates and integrate youth in the agricultural sector through various activities in line with the strategic directives of Sudan regarding the issue of employment of graduates within the framework of the National Agricultural Investment Plan in line with the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Initiative and the Five-Year Plan of the country.

Sudan is one of the first African countries to have the African Development Bank's approval to implement the Youth Empowerment Programme in the agripreneurship sector. It started sending missions in 2016. In 2016, a memorandum was adopted to prepare the outputs of these missions. The programme's activities are:

- 1- To spread awareness and promote agriculture.
- 2- To create youth-oriented agricultural entrepreneurship programs.
- 3- To rehabilitate their agricultural entrepreneurship incubators.
- 4- To provide the necessary equipment and technical training.
- 5- To train in business development.

The programme targets youth both male and female in cities and rural areas in all states of the country. It targets youth in the age group between 18-35 and at a minimum level of university education. Each programme project is expected to absorb 12,000 beneficiaries gender-equally. The programme is working in partnership with the existing funding institutions to provide funding for graduates according to the stated policies where there is initial approval from the financial institutions, namely the Savings Bank, the Farm Bank, the Family Bank and the United Finance Bank, where they initially committed an amount of about 60 million dollars for five years. This large programme is also funded by the African Bank with 32 million dollars. This represents 90% of the required money and the rest 10% from the local component. Thus the programme will provide an opportunity for young people to improve their lives.

According to the Economic Commission for Africa report (2012) there is a heightened sense of awareness about the challenge of youth employment in Sudan. This is since the decision to double the intake of higher education institutions in Sudan was taken in 1991. A national project to accommodate graduates was introduced in 1999. This was followed by a more inclusive youth employment programme, introduced in 2008 in collaboration with the UNDP that was subsequently transformed into a graduate employment fund supported by the Ministry of Social Welfare, Women and Child Affairs (MSWWCA) and the Sudan Multi-Donor Trust Fund with a budget of USD 319 million. The Programme aimed to employ 300 000 graduates (which equates to 50% of all unemployed graduates for the 2000-2009 period) in the public sector and private sector by facilitating migration, retraining, and encouraging self-employment in small and medium projects. Other related graduate employment programmes include "Start Your Project" and "Small Business Incubators". The former started in 2008 and is organized by the MSWWCA and the Sudanese Businessmen and Employers Federation. It aims to retrain graduates to run microfinance projects. Trainees are directly supervised by experts over a one- to three-year period to increase their business skills. Successful candidates can start their own businesses with funding from Bank of Khartoum.

The mentioned programme emerged and was used to solve the problem of graduates unemployment, which cast a dark shadow on the Sudanese society map in light of the large numbers of graduates who accompanied the higher education expansion policy. The graduates' employment programme foreshadowed a confident start toward self-employment and keeping young people away from the public sector constraints in an era of privatization. The project (programme) is a serious beginning towards alleviating poverty, as unemployment and poverty are two sides of the same coin, especially the graduates represent the enlightened and aspiring segment that has the real and potential

energy to advance the country's development. The project provides a broad opportunity for graduates to enter the field of self-employment. This opens up prospects for generating income, increasing self-reliance, solving unemployment problems and reducing job inflation.

**Programme goals**

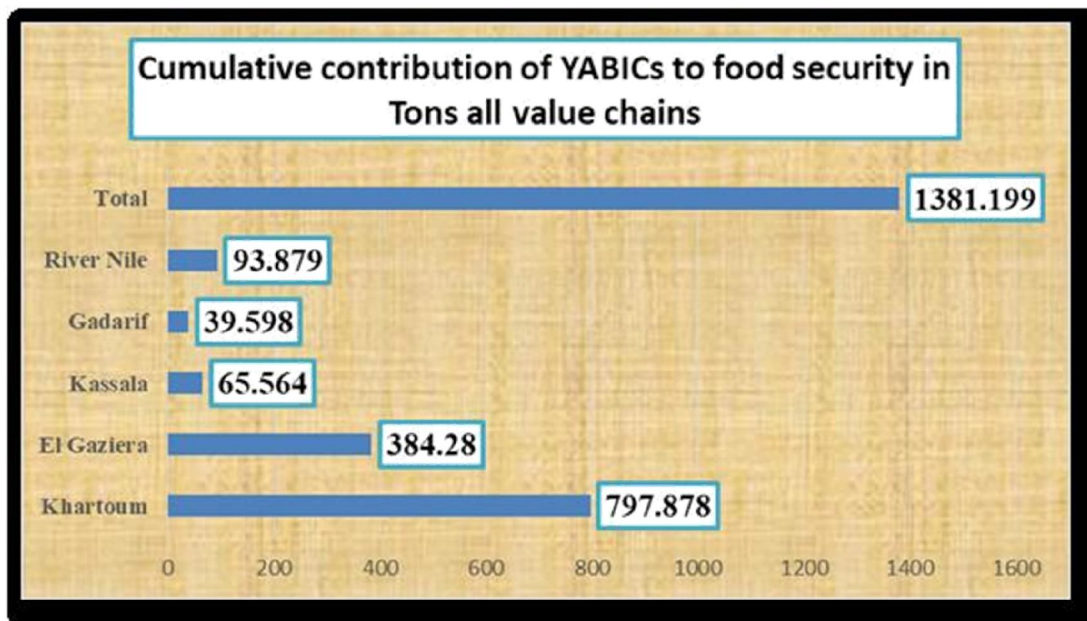
- 1) Dissemination of entrepreneurship culture and philosophy among young people.
- 2) Reduce the unemployment rate in society, especially among graduates.
- 3) Utilizing youth potential in development.
- 4) Discover the manifestations of genius and creativity in graduates and allow them to explore pioneering and innovation.



Fig.1: The programme approach is value chain  
Source: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, 2022

**Economic and social impacts of the project**

1. Increase the income of graduates who benefit from the project and their families.
2. Some of the graduates developed ideas for pioneering projects (extraction of medical and aromatic oils).
3. The programme provides regular jobs and seasonal jobs for unskilled labour.
4. Disposing of psychological and social effects after graduation from unemployment.



Source: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, 2022

**Obstacles**

- 1.Lack of funds from the Ministry of Finance.
- 2.Lack of clarity about the original funding ownership.
- 3.Lack of clearly defined operational structure and responsibilities.
- 4.The complexity of the procedures and the high fees for ratifications and licenses.
5. Due to the nature of a number of projects and persistent marketing obstacles, the recovery period failed.

Despite the short duration of phase one and limited impact, it succeeded in giving indicators to use as a base for the planning of the second phase. It also avoided many problems that emerged during phase one implementation.

**Project in the States**

The project was launched in 12 states:

1. South Darfur State. 2. North Kordofan State. 3. West Kordofan State. 4. Blue Nile State.
5. White Nile State. 6. Gezira State. 7. Khartoum State. 8. Nile River State. 9. Northern State.
10. Kassala State. 11. Sinnar State. 12. West Darfur State.

**Table 1:** Examples for projects based on value chain in some states

State	Manufacturing	Marketing	Input service	Fishes	Milk	Fattening calves
<b>Khartoum</b>	14	10	13	03	04	179
<b>Gezira</b>	01	05	03	19	04	66
<b>Gedarif</b>	07	00	02	00	06	50
<b>Kassala</b>	01	01	05	00	36	30
<b>Nahr El Nile</b>	03	03	17	00	09	20
<b>Total</b>	26	19	40	22	59	345

**Table 1:** cont.

State	Chicken	Improved seeds	Greenhouse vegetables	Open cultivation	Total
<b>Khartoum</b>	81	19	08	17	348
<b>Gezira</b>	21	17	03	09	148
<b>Gedarif</b>	04	27	00	25	121
<b>Kassala</b>	02	01	01	00	77
<b>Nahr El Nile</b>	09	06	00	23	90
<b>Total</b>	117	70	12	74	784

Source: Federal Ministry of Agriculture, 2022

In Africa, similar results were reported by Yami *et al.* (2019) who cited that youth agripreneurship programmes such as the agribusiness parks in DRC, IAA programme in Morocco, Jeunes agriculture in Senegal, and UniBRAIN initiative in Zambia provided employment opportunities, increased agricultural productivity and value addition, improved market linkages, and increased competitiveness. Similarly, Mwaura *et al.* (2017) reported that educated youth in Kenya now perceive agribusiness as among the socially accepted career options as gainful employment opportunities have emerged following rural transformation. The positive change in educated youth's perception toward agribusiness in Kenya came about following rural transformation. This shows how investment in agricultural infrastructure and living conditions can influence youth aspirations toward agribusiness activities positively. Similarly, agricultural youth in Burundi are now aspiring to engage in agriculture as they have noticed improvements in the sector's profitability (Berckmoes *et al.*, 2016). In Ghana, increased profitability of agribusiness activities attracted youth to the sector (Banson *et al.*, 2015 and Yeboah *et al.*, 2017).

**Conclusion and Recommendation**

From this study, we can conclude that the majority of projects implemented by Sudanese youth in various states of the country increased graduates' income and inspired them to engage in agribusiness work. Thus, the study recommends that graduates' employment programmes should continue to promote agricultural entrepreneurship among the country's youth.

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