



Report OFF No3: Youth Booklet No 2

# REGARDS WEST AFRICAN YOUTH'S VIEWS ON FAMILY FARMING

Second booklet of the farmer research conducted by ROPPA's Observatory of Family Farming (2019-2020)

## TABLE DES MATIERES

Acronyms:.....	6
Today's rural youth: how to help them get involved in the life of family farms ?... 7	
Abstract of Booklet 2: «Rural Youth's Views on Family Farming».....	9
Presentation: a farmer research conducted in 2019 and 2020 within the framework of ROPPA's Observatory of Family Farming.....	12
In-depth study of one of the questions that led to the first report of the Observatory.....	12
Issues related to the relationship of rural youth to family farming to which OFF/ROP-PA was seeking answers.....	14

### 1.WHAT FUTURE FOR RURAL YOUTH ?..... 19

1.1: Uncertain Future.....	20
1.2: The Spectrum of Insecurity.....	22
1.3: The difficulty for youth to build a project.....	24

### 2. NINE SCENARIOS FOR THE POSSIBLE CHANGES IN RURAL YOUTH IN WEST AFRICA HIGHLIGHTED BY THE RESEARCH.....27

#### 2.1: When rural youth do not or only partially rely on agriculture to build their future: 4 scenarios.....28

Reasons for their pessimism about farming and family farming.....	28
<b>Scenario 1:</b> leaving and severing all ties with the family.....	30
<b>Scenario 2:</b> Succeeding elsewhere and helping one's family from afar.....	31
<b>Scenario 3:</b> Failing to succeed elsewhere and returning, often as a last resort, to family farming.....	31
<b>Scenario 4:</b> Conducting simultaneous non-farm and farm activities.....	33

How can these scenarios that keep youth away from the family farm be supported so that they benefit rural youth and their families ?.....35

#### 2.2: When youth rely on family farming to build their future: 5 scenarios..... 36

The desire for change that inspires these young people.....	36
<b>Scenario 5:</b> Continuing to work on her parents' or husband's family farm....	38
<b>Scenario 6:</b> Staying on the family farm by helping the parents transform it.....	40

<b>Scenario 7:</b> Starting a rural women's business.....	42
<b>Scenario 8:</b> Starting your own farm by leaving your parents' family farm....	46
<b>Scenario 9:</b> Consider returning to farming at a later date.....	50

How can we support these favorable scenarios for the integration of young people into the family farming to help them succeed?.....	50
---	----

<b>2.3: The first lessons that can be drawn from the knowledge of these scenarios.....</b>	<b>53</b>
--	-----------

There is a better understanding of how young people are approaching their future and that of family farms.....	53
--	----

We understand that nothing is definitely decided.....	55
---	----

We must not lose sight of the most discouraged youth.....	56
---	----

<b>3. WHAT NEEDS TO BE UNRAVELED TO RECONCILE RURAL YOUTH WITH FAMILY FARMING AND UNLEASH THEIR POTENTIAL.....</b>	<b>57</b>
--	-----------

<b>3.1: Money Issue .....</b>	<b>61</b>
-------------------------------	-----------

<b>3.2: Refusals That Frustrate Youth .....</b>	<b>61</b>
---	-----------

Refusal to share the management and benefits of the farm .....	61
--	----

Lack of dialogue .....	62
------------------------	----

Refusal to involve youth in decision-making .....	63
---	----

<b>3.3: The Knot of Lack of Consideration .....</b>	<b>64</b>
---	-----------

A great need for recognition.....	64
-----------------------------------	----

The main obstacle: the judgment that many adults have about youth .....	65
---	----

<b>3.4: Shortcomings in the support of young people.....</b>	<b>69</b>
--	-----------

The low impact on rural youth of State and local government actions .....	69
---	----

Weakness of farmers' organizations support.....	73
---	----

<b>3.5 : Blocking access to the earth.....</b>	<b>76</b>
--	-----------

A major challenge for the future of family farming.....	76
---	----

A source of tension within families.....	77
--	----

Elders' mistrust of young people .....	77
--	----

<b>3.6: Three insights provided by this research.....</b>	<b>79</b>
---	-----------

There is a family crisis.....	79
-------------------------------	----

The misunderstandings between the generations derives from two different conceptions of the family farm. ....	80
Dialogue can be used to get out of the current blockages .....	81

#### 4. ASSETS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF FAMILY FARMS.....83

<b>4.1: First asset: the existence of a sense of responsibility among young people .....</b>	<b>84</b>
Do not remain passive.....	84
Overcoming old divides, building new relationships.....	85
Commitment, organization, support among rural youth, .....	86
Looking for solutions .....	88
Cooperating with alumni .....	89
<b>4.2: Second asset: the openness of some adults.....</b>	<b>90</b>
Many adults are now convinced that there is a need to respond to the current situation, and that hope is on the side of the young people .....	91
Many are aware of the need to make the family farm profitable and secure to make it more attractive.....	92
Some are deeply questioning their relationship with their children.....	92
They call on the States.....	94
<b>4.3: Third asset: the existence of vocational training programs and support for the integration of young people.....</b>	<b>95</b>
Use of existing programs.....	95
Awaiting new programs.....	95
<b>4.4: Fourth asset: the renewed sensitivity of farmers' organizations to the issue of rural youth.....</b>	<b>96</b>
The transformation of the family farm and its environment.....	96
Cooperation between generations .....	97

#### 5. CONCLUSION: THE INITIATIVES TAKEN BY ROPPA TO MOBILIZE AROUND RURAL YOUTH ISSUES.....101

**5.1: The focus on youth in ROPPA's strategies since its 7th Convention in 2018..... 102**

Proposal of a responsibility pact to support youth empowerment initiatives..... 102

Proposing a Compact of Responsibilities to Support Youth Empowerment Initiatives.....103

Introduction of the «youth» dimension in ROPPA's new five-year plan ..... 105

**5.2: The contribution of ROPPA's Observatory of Family Farming.....106**

The first lessons learned by ROPPA leaders from the knowledge produced by OFF..... 106

How can we keep up the momentum ?..... 108

Table of boxes :..... 110

## ACRONYMS

<b>AFDI :</b>	Agriculteurs Français AFDI: French Farmers and International Development
<b>AJAM :</b>	Association of Young Modern Farmers of Benin
<b>ANOPACI :</b>	National Association of Professional Organizations of Côte d'Ivoire (farmers' platform of Côte d'Ivoire)
<b>APEJ :</b>	Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment (Mali)
<b>ASFED :</b>	Association for Family Welfare (Niger)
<b>BAC :</b>	Baccalauréat
<b>BFEM :</b>	average school-leaving certificate
<b>ECOWAS :</b>	Economic Community of West African States
<b>CFEF :</b>	Certificate of Completion of Elementary Studies
<b>CNCR :</b>	National Council for Rural Cooperation and Concertation (Senegalese Farmers' platform)
<b>CNOP/Mali :</b>	National Coordination of Farmers' Organizations of Mali (farmers' platform of Mali)
<b>CPF :</b>	Confédération paysanne du Faso (Burkina Faso Farmers' Confederation)
<b>CTOP :</b>	Coordination Togolaise des Organisations Paysannes et de Producteurs Agricoles (Togolese Coordination of Farmers' and Agricultural Producers' Organizations) (Togolese Farmers' Platform)
<b>ECOWAP :</b>	agricultural policy of the States of the Economic Community of West African States
<b>FF :</b>	Family farms
<b>FENAJER :</b>	National Federation of Rural Youth (Mali)
<b>IFAD :</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>FUN :</b>	Farmers Union Network of Liberia (Farmers' Platform of Liberia)
<b>GIE :</b>	Economic Interest Grouping
<b>GOANA :</b>	Great Offensive for Food and Abundance (Senegal)
<b>OEI/ROPPA :</b>	ROPPA's Observatory of Family farms
<b>FO :</b>	Farmers' Organization
<b>CSO :</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>PFN :</b>	ROPPA national farmers' platform
<b>PFPN :</b>	Niger Farmers' Platform
<b>PNOPPA :</b>	National Platform of Farmers' and Agricultural Producers' Organizations of Benin (Benin Farmers' Platform)
<b>REJEPPAT :</b>	Network of Young Professional Producers of Togo
<b>ROPPA :</b>	Network of Farmers' Organizations and Producers of West Africa
<b>FHB University :</b>	Félix Houphouët-Boigny University



## Today's rural youth: how to help them get involved in the life of family farms?

*The issue of rural African youth, which is at the heart of the future of the rural world and the communities of our countries, is today a concern for all stakeholders. Undymment of young people, urban sprawl, sporadic protest movements, the rise of new forms of delinquency, extremism and violence are all warning signs. .*



**Farmers**, who live these issues on a daily basis in their families, are very distressed when they see their children not wanting to continue their family farm, not finding gainful employment in other sectors and venturing down dangerous paths : then they fear both for their children's very uncertain future and for their own future since they will not be able to rely on them for support. They also fear for the future of their family farms, which are already stretched thin and may be doomed to disappear.

*Based on the exchanges organized in 7 West African countries, where 435 young boys and girls were confronted with the voices of farmers who could be their parents, the farmer research initiated in 2019 by ROPPA's Observatory of Family Farming shows that the relationship of these young people to family farming is **complex and ambivalent**. All young people long for change, but in different directions. A whole range of situations (we will speak here of "scenarios") has thus been uncovered from practical cases, ranging from a total rejection of farming - understood in the broadest sense - and village life, to resolute and imaginative involvement in the family farm and its transformation. The research has shown that the **paths followed by these young people that largely explain their relationship with family farming**: at each stage of these paths, which are described in a first booklet<sup>1</sup>, depending on whether things go badly or well, the young person can "drop out" or, on the contrary, be motivated by the jobs in the agro-sylvo-pastoral and fisheries sector and the family farm model. It is therefore necessary **to act on these pathways** to encourage their involvement in the life and transformation of family farms, especially since the scenarios are not*

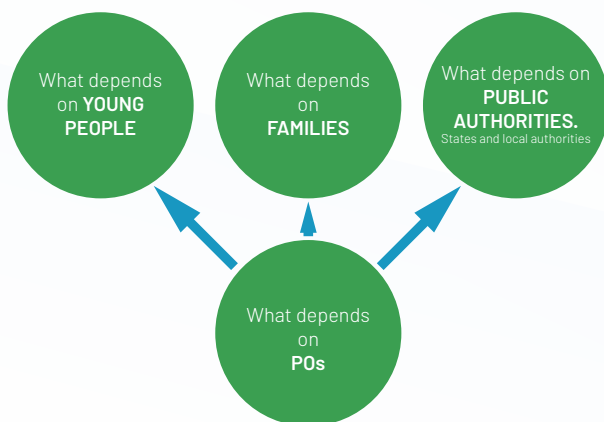
<sup>1</sup> A first booklet ("West-African rural youth's views on their pathways") details the contributions of this research on how these young people explain the construction of their personality through the stages of their life paths. It contains the keys to their social integration processes.

*set in stone, but can evolve according to the conditions created and the support offered.*

*This second booklet by ROPPA on the capitalization of farmer research provides, mostly through quotations, "**West African Rural Youth's View on Family Farming**". It reveals the visions that the young people who participated in this research have of their future and that of family farming. It also describes the different scenarios for the evolution of these young people, the obstacles that hinder them and the assets that promote a positive evolution for both themselves and family farming.*

*This research refrains from proposing "standard solutions": they are to be built in a concrete way with the stakeholders concerned so that they are committed to the decisions to be taken and that they are adapted to real-life situations. **Dialogue**, which is currently sorely lacking, must be favored, and FOs are well placed to encourage the establishment of face-to-face debates at the various levels where decisions and commitments can be made according to each context. The examples and keys given in the two booklets that exploit this research can be used to support these debates.*

**WHO CAN ACT** to have each type of situation change?  
It should be determined



A detailed reflection should be carried out by FOs to determine which stakeholders they can interact with depending on the case.

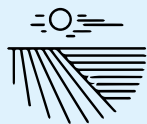




## Abstract of Booklet 2 :

### «Rural Youth's Views on Family Farming»

In a context characterized by uncertainty and which today is weighed down by threats to security and peace, it is difficult for rural youth to build a life project. Their perception of their own future is closely linked to their perception of the family farm. Some have a pessimistic view of it, while others have a more optimistic view.



**Those who do not rely on agriculture to build their future have lost hope** in the family farm and prefer

to look in another way. Four scenarios emerge from the accounts of the young people who took part in this research :

- Leaving and cutting all ties with the family: this is an extreme scenario experienced in particular by young people who are on the margins of society ;
- Succeeding elsewhere and helping one's family from a distance: the young person integrates into another environment, in the city or abroad, but retains a link with

his or her family and supports the family farm ;

- Not succeeding elsewhere and returning to the family farm: this is the frequent scenario of those who either failed in the adventure they had attempted to escape family poverty - for them, FF is a refuge - or had planned their adventure as a transitory step to support FF and planned to return to it ;
- Wearing a «double hat» by carrying out, as a main or complementary activity, non-agricultural activities; this scenario is also very common in FFs that are not self-sufficient.



**Those who rely on family farms to build their future are driven by a desire for change:** they generally

want to start a family different from the one they grew up in and develop a family farm that is more successful than their parents' are. There are five scenarios here:

- Continuing to evolve on their parents' or husband's family farm: this scenario is dominant among young girls who marry and only change FF. There are also young people who have interrupted their schooling and did not risk the adventure.
- Remaining on family farm by helping the parents to transform it:

this is a scenario of intergenerational cooperation where the young person is proactive and brings innovations to which the parents are receptive. It also happens that, while staying with the family and cooperating with them to transform the family farm, the young person creates his or her own farm, often in the form of a farm business, alongside the family's to ensure his or her autonomy.

- Creating a rural women's enterprise: sought by many young girls to become independent without

cutting themselves off from their families, this scenario, which keeps them in the rural world, often leads them to get involved in para-agricultural activities (product processing, catering, etc...).

- One of the reasons for this option, which gives the young person complete freedom to run his farm in any direction he wishes, may be that he disagrees with his parents about his project or the way in which the family land is used.
- Consider returning to farming later after having made a career in another sector.



The question of how to assist these different scenarios to foster a positive outcome for rural youth and their families leads to the identification of a number of knots that need to be unraveled in order to reconcile rural youth with the family farm and unleash their potential. What young people say helps to identify what currently frustrates them (exploitation of their work without participation in the management and benefits of the farm, lack of dialogue, and imposition of decisions without consultation, negative value judgments and lack of consideration for them). They feel treated like children when they believe that their ideas would help transform FF and lift it out of the fatality of poverty. Access to land, however, remains an

important blocking factor for them. They denounce strong deficiencies in the practices of assistance and the measures supposed to support them, from both the State and Farmers' Organizations.

Their words, like those of their parents who also expressed themselves in the framework of this research, reveal a crisis in the family and a generational split that is manifested around different conceptions of the family farm.

However, three assets that augur well for a positive evolution appear in the comments of both young people and adults.

On the one hand, young people have a clear sense of responsibility. They know that the future is in their hands and do not want to remain passive; they are seeking to overcome old divides and build new economic and social relationships; they are beginning to organize themselves among rural youth to support each other; and they give examples of creative ways they are finding solutions to transform family farms.

On the other hand, we are increasingly observing the open-mindedness of some adults who feel up to questioning themselves, to innovating on their farms to make them profitable and attractive, and to seeking to build different relationships with their children.

Finally, the renewed sensitiveness of POs with regard to the issue of rural youth is currently leading them to rethink their priorities in relation to it, particularly with regard to the transformation of FFs and cooperation between generations. The 7th ROPPA Convention in 2018 gave impetus to a series of initiatives to support them in this direction.





## Presentation: a farmer research conducted in 2019 and 2020 within the framework of ROPPA's Observatory of Family

**In-depth study of one of the issues on which the Observatory's first report was based.**

The Observatory of Family Farms (OFF/ROPPA) is an instrument that ROPPA has developed **to run and disseminate information and knowledge produced by farmers on the dynamics** of family farms in West Africa. The first workshop it organized in 2016 by mobilizing all national farmers' platforms of the network enabled to scan the main dimensions of family farm issues and to identify 9 cross-cutting issues of strategic scope to be explored in depth by farmers' organizations. Among these, the farmer leaders of ROPPA selected the issue of youth.

### { } Questioning the first report by ROPPA's Observatory of Family Farming (OFF/ROPPA) on the issue of rural youth

"Today, young people are not only growing in number, but their level of education is also getting better and they represent a potential, an opportunity for economic and social development. However, the lack of jobs for young people is a source of problems. Policies defined for youth are not up to the challenge. Also, farmers' concerns are not only in relation to the lack of interest of young people in agrosylvo-pastoral and fishing activities that favor to speed up exodus towards cities and to reducing the family workforce, but also in relation to the replacement on farms when they pass away.

These observations and analyses encourage ROPPA to

1. deepen the analysis of the evolution of the situation of young people on family farms,
2. conduct a critical analysis of youth policies,
3. acquire the means to better understand the reasons that motivate young people to leave family farms, and
4. produce a reflection on how to make FFs more attractive, identify successful integrations and capitalize on them".

*(Summary and conclusions of the first OFF ROPPA report, January 2017 - seventh cross-cutting question: how to act for a better consideration of young people in policies?)*

Following up on this first report, the seventh ROPPA convention (Banjul Convention, November 2018) launched a series of actions aimed at youth and recommended that the OFF take up this theme in its third report in order to deepen the issue of **the relationship between rural youth and family farming**. In 2019, the Observatory therefore mobilized its mechanism to produce, with the voluntary farmers' platforms of 7 countries (Burkina Faso, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo), knowledge gained from interviews between 435 young boys and girls who freely discussed their condition in small focus groups. Parallel focus groups of parents were organized in each country. In February 2020, a regional workshop organized in Nyéléni (Mali) allowed to share and deepen this research.

One of the perspectives opened up by this rich experience is to continue and generalize this type of exchange among young people in order to build responses based on their perceptions and aspirations, knowing, according to one of them, that "the future of young people depends on young people, so young people **should continue to see each other, to exchange** and try to resolve the situations that arise on their own. Because sometimes the solution to our problems is in the hands of another young person" (focus group North Senegal). The National Youth Colleges set up by the National Farmers' Platforms from 2006 (St Louis Convention) and the Regional Youth College established in February 2020 will be able to use the results of this research to build and strengthen their own dynamics.



<sup>2</sup> These actions are described in the conclusions of this booklet (chapter 5: «Initiatives taken by ROPPA to mobilize around the issue of rural youth»).

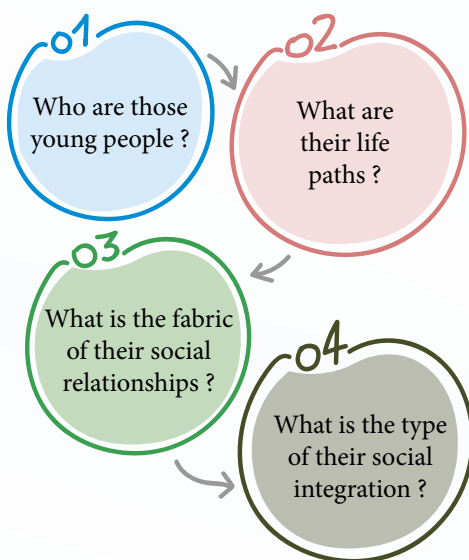


Issues related to the relationship of rural youth to family farming to which OFF/ROPPA was seeking answers

ROPPA is the voice of West African farmers, and the fundamental issue for it is the future of family farming. Its two main concerns in relation to the issue of youth are, on the one hand, how rural youth, who are the agents of this future, will organize their lives in relation to family farming, and on the other hand, what needs to be done to promote their involvement and commitment in the life and development of family farms.

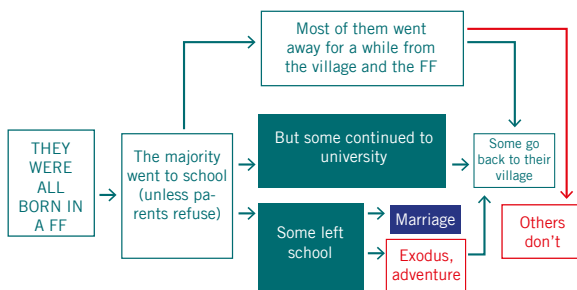
It is in this perspective that a group of farmer leaders and support officers from ROPPA's executive secretariat formulated 12 "research questions" to be used in the focus group interviews.

#### 4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND HOW YOUTH INTEGRATE SOCIALLY

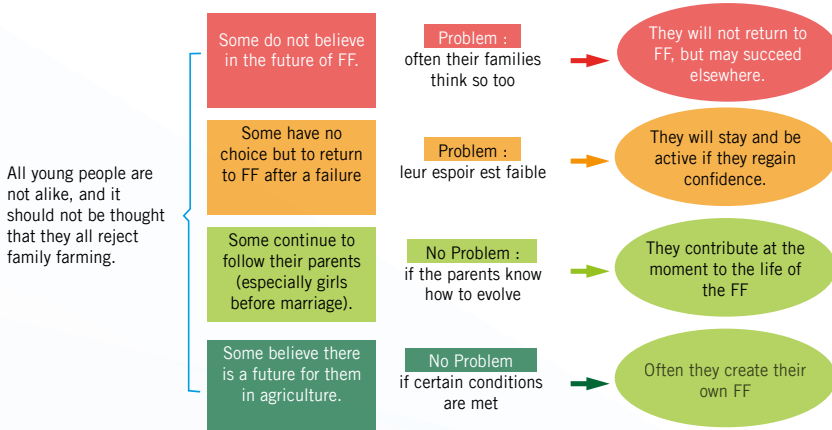


The first four questions aimed at getting to know these young people better in order to understand how they can integrate socially.

LIFE STORIES told by the focus group participants made it possible to reconstruct the stages of the pathways that shape their personalities and to better understand how they favored or did not favor their integration into family farms.



This part of the research is exploited in a first booklet of the third OFF report ("Views of West African rural youth on their pathways"). It shows that in almost all cases these rural youths began their lives on a family farm, that a large proportion of them moved away from it at some point, and that not all of them will return, but that the majority still keep links with the family. Their relationship to the family farm is different depending on their individual stories. Responses to young people's expectations in order to promote their integration into family farms must therefore be adapted to the different situations. OFF research highlights four main scenarios, which can be broken down into several scenarios :



This further knowledge of the different positions of rural young people in relation to the family farmhouse must allow families to better understand their children and the farmhouse to better adapt their actions as appropriate.

This booklet capitalizes on the research that helped to deepen our knowledge on how these young people see their future in the rural world and the different visions they have of the family farm. The contributions of the focus groups and the regional workshop for sharing and deepening are used to refine the understanding of the factors that determine these young people in their relationship with the family farm.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS ON THE RELATIONSHIP OF YOUNG PEOPLE TO FAMILY FARM

### QUESTIONS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE POSITION OF YOUNG PEOPLE FROM FAMILY FARMS

#### **5** How do they see their own future?

Their way of planning their own future sheds light on their relationship to the FF, to their homeland (and to local development), to the rural/urban world, and on their vision of the family they will start, their socio-professional integration and the type of society they want.

#### **6** How do they see the future of family farms?

How do they make out the transformation of the family farm according to their own ambitions? What future do they want for their own family members and how do they think their ambition can contribute to this future? More broadly, what vision do they have for the future of their community?

#### **7** What vision do they have for peace and security?

What do they make out to be the elements that threaten or impede peace and security in their community? What are the causes? What is their reading of the responsibility of youth in the current situation of peace and security? What do they see as the role of youth in keeping peace and security in their communities?

#### **8** What is their reading of the current dynamics of youth support?

Do they make out the actions carried out by FOs, CSOs, States, FBOs, etc. towards youth (have they heard about them, do they benefit from them themselves)? If so, how do they understand this recent interest in youth? How do they appreciate the support, targeting of youth etc. (do they think it meets their needs)?



## QUESTIONS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND THE STANCE OF ADULT MEMBERS OF FAMILY FARMS WITH RESPECT TO YOUNG PEOPLE

9

### How do adult members of family farms view young people?

We know that young people's attitudes depend very much on the way adults (especially their fathers and mothers) look at them: they may feel understood or supported, or on the contrary misunderstood, underestimated, and suffer as a result. This adult perspective is built from the expectations that parents have of their children (which vary according to the age of the children, whether they are boys or girls, children they sent to school and children they did not send to school) and their understanding of social and cultural changes. It can be positive or negative, which is reflected in the types of judgments adults make about young people.

10

### What are the concerns and hopes of adults in family farms about their children and youth today?

Children have traditionally been the «life insurance» for the elders and the family farm that they are supposed to keep going. This assumes that they are socially successful as well and if possible better than their parents and that they support the family farm. However, many things have changed over the last few decades that are all factors of new concern for parents (lack of after-school opportunities, new influences on young people and new behaviors at home, desertion from FF and the rural world, etc.). The aim here is to identify the concerns currently dominant among those in charge (men and women) of family farms, and the outcomes they foresee.

11

### What responsibilities do adults feel towards today's youth?

- Some of these responsibilities relate to the present situation: they are the responsibilities born by adults in the current difficulties of youth. It is a question of identifying whether or not they are aware of this part of the responsibility of adults with regard to youth problems and they analyze it.
- Others are about the future: it is a question of identifying whether or not families refuse to « give up » and what they are ready to commit themselves to, without waiting for the intervention of external stakeholders, to facilitate the socio-economic integration of young people tomorrow.

### 12 How do they see the future of family farms and their communities?

Based on their reading of the current situation and their responsibility for the future of the young people, how do they analyze the future of family farms? What is the responsibility of young people in this future as well as their own? What future do they see for their community ?





# 1 *WHAT FUTURE FOR RURAL YOUTH?*

The fifth question in this research on youth focused on how young people who participated in the exchange talked about **the future**<sup>3</sup>. Their comments show that the future for them is uncertain.

<sup>3</sup> Fifth research question: HOW DO YOUNG PEOPLE SEE THEIR OWN FUTURE? Their way of projecting themselves into the future sheds light on their relationship to FF, to their home land (and to local development), to the rural/urban world, and on their vision of the family they will start, their socio-professional integration and the type of society they want.

## 1.1 Uncertain Future

«Often when I stay and reflect on the suffering I endure, I wonder if one day I will get out of this suffering; personally I have doubts about my future,» said a young Togolese man in his focus group, while another added, «I am disgusted with life! As we often say «he who lives hopes», "I tell myself that one day my situation will change. I want to be a great merchant in my future, but I am afraid to remain in this chronic suffering».

Difficulties encountered by some young people in their current situation give them little hope for the future.

### {2} Burkinabe youth share concerns about the future

Both boys and girls say they all see their future as uncertain, both for themselves and for their growing children. Productivity and agricultural production are in sharp decline. The land is getting poorer and poorer, and there is a large increase in population(...). Food insecurity that we want to avoid will be an obvious reality. Cities will grow larger and the State will be forced to import more food to feed families, towns and villages. The poverty of rural populations in particular will worsen. Villages will be emptied of their youth.

Family farms that will not have the means to transform themselves will be called upon to empty themselves of their able-bodied young people. Life of the community will undergo a change. Young people are concerned about the lack of jobs. Benao Batibié says: "For the public service competitions this year, for 5000 places, we were more than 1,600,000 candidates. I am afraid and I doubt for my future. The lack of jobs in the civil service will force me to return to Agriculture in order to have an occupation, but not with the current means of work that are not innovative and efficient. I also tell myself that I can

succeed, but it takes a little bit of means to get started.'

The profitability of agriculture is low. Nignan Talibou says: "Currently on the market it takes 1.5 to 2 bags of corn if you want to buy 1 bag of fertilizer. Marketing of agricultural products is done in poor conditions."

Various secondary activities that young people have developed to improve their income and therefore the living conditions in their FFS and in the family are deteriorating day by day, the risks of accidents are very high and the hard work in the sector is hardly improving. "For us young people, the government does not support and/or create better conditions for rural youth."

(summary focus group synthesis Tiano, Centre West Burkina Faso, by CPF)

"The future is fraught with uncertainty if there is no support in terms of knowledge, effective empowerment, clear guidance adapted to their underemployment situation and support for modernizing their production activity" (focus group Imasgo, Centre Ouest Burkina Faso).

Frequently stigmatized by adults, the change in morals does not only worry them: some young people fear its consequences for tomorrow's society.

### {3} Young people are concerned about changing morals

As for the future of their community, many youth expressed fears about the behavior of other youth. They are pessimistic about the future of the youth and the community because of the negative effect that music and soap operas have on young people. Many believe that it will be difficult for young people to grow up with two things that are now sex-oriented. According to HELLE Gabriel, "music and soap operas limit or format their ideas. Music and soap operas are sex-oriented, which curbs the development of youth. Young people's brains are limited and turned towards sex, and the media simply pass this on as a model".

Others mentioned the consumption of alcohol as a factor in the idleness of young people. "For them, this situation threatens peace and security in their community and slows down its development because it leads to laziness, theft, robberies, delinquency, killings, witchcraft, etc".

(focus group Togo)

"If young graduates do not succeed in self-employment in their villages or districts, the only paths open to them are those of emigration to foreign lands, or the drift towards theft, drug and alcohol consumption, prostitution, gold panning, in short, delinquency" (research by CNOP/FENAJER, Mali).



## 1.2: The Spectrum of Insecurity

Rising insecurity and extremism are a major source of uncertainty and concern in West Africa today. The question of how this issue is of concern to rural youth was explored. Those who participated in this research shared their views on this issue in one country: BURKINA FASO.

### {4} A situation exacerbated by the security problem in which some rural youth are involved.

This alarming situation is exacerbated by the country's security problem, which is characterized by the involvement of rural youth in internal and external terrorist groups. The issue of the place and role of young people in preventing insecurity and violent extremism is paramount in Burkina Faso. Emphasis must be placed on intergenerational dialogue to take into account the demands and need for recognition of young people (CPF research, Burkina Faso).

"The future of the family and even the community is very worrisome if nothing is done about the security issue that our country is going through today." (Youth focus group in Koin, Boucle du Mouhoun region, Burkina Faso).

"There is the threat of terrorism, conflicts between breeders and farmers, the border with Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire which is not secure, the

accessibility to roads" (a young breeder from Batié). "No security for people and goods, no community peace, terrorism, inter-community conflicts: Burkina Faso is not stable! We must get involved in security resolution, we must unite" (a young farmer from Batié). (focus group of Batié, South-West Burkina Faso)

"As for the future of family farms, it is already on the brink of collapse in some regions of Burkina Faso as a result of insecurity linked to terrorism, which continues to gain ground. Terrorists choose to kill the men who are the able-bodied men in the fields".

(Presentation of the research from Burkina in one of the panels of the regional sharing workshop).

The sharing workshop sought to understand why young people from other countries, particularly MALI and NIGER that are particularly affected in this respect (in some areas, for this reason there has been no cultivation for two years - intervention from Mali) had not raised this issue in their exchanges.

<sup>4</sup> **Seventh Research Question: WHAT VISION DO THEY HAVE OF PEACE AND SECURITY?** What do they see as the elements that threaten or impede peace and security in their communities? What are the causes? What is their reading of the responsibility of youth in the current situation of peace and security? What do they see as the role of youth in keeping peace and security in their communities?





It appeared that, far from being absent from the concerns of young people, this issue, which is very much linked to tensions between communities, land tenure insecurity (intervention by Mali), paralyzes because it is too sensitive.

"There is rape of women, theft of livestock, burning of crops, and radicalization of young people: men are afraid", a Malian mother suggested as an explanation in this discussion. "No one wants to talk to her, even though she is starting out on the family farm. Young people don't talk about it because they are accused of being involved," explained a participant from Niger.

The question to be asked is, of course, why some rural youths go down these extreme paths. The CPF suggests one element of an answer when it advocates emphasizing intergenerational dialogue to better respond to young people's need for recognition: they have been marginalized because they have been marginalized by those who do not give them space, do not listen to them or condemn them, and these young people are all the more at the mercy of the dream merchants because the difficulty they experience in the current context in building a project makes them vulnerable.

## 1.3: Difficulties for Young People to Build a Project

The uncertainty within which these young people are with regard to their future is not conducive to the construction of life projects.

### {5} Lack of solid reference points to plan for the future

#### **no landmarks**

In the past, young people learned from an early age the basics of life (society, work, culture, etc.) in order to be able to situate themselves in the future. However, things are different today since the young person has not learned much about all this, making it difficult for him or her to find his or her place in the future.

#### **inaccessible dreams**

As far as the future is concerned, rural youth do not have the same perspective. A first observation shows the attachment of many young people to a dream that they never reach or will never reach because they are in a hurry to become rich without going through certain important stages of life.

#### **left to fascination and manipulation**

The base eludes them and they are attracted by luxury, obsessed by happiness which pushes them to be manipulated by politicians, religious, media, scammers, armed movements etc. and the latter make them leave the farms for false hopes.

This search for ease means that a large number of able-bodied people do not give importance to their exploitation because for them it is hard work, risky and without guarantees.

#### **influenced by the outside world**

All these facts (related to their pathway) and the advent of democracy coupled with the opening to the outside world (new technologies) play a lot on the perception of young people regarding their future.

(research CNOP/FENAJER, Mali)

ROPFA's Observatory of Family Farms was interested in the question of whether and how, in this difficult context, rural youth could envisage their future on family farming.

<sup>5</sup> **Sixth Research Question: HOW DO THEY SEE THE FUTURE OF FAMILY FARMS?** How do they perceive the transformation of family farms according to their own ambitions? What future do they want for their own family members and how do they think their ambition can contribute to that future? More broadly, what vision do they have for the future of their community?



The young people's paths described in the first booklet of this research<sup>6</sup> show that for many of them the burden of poverty and the pressure that is exerted on them to ensure their survival and that of their families on a daily basis prevents them from planning for the long term. Several factors, most of which are beyond their control, will shape their lives. ***"If we have support (training, materials on grant or credit) we will stay and continue the production activity in a different way from our parents. If we don't have the support we need to evolve, we will be forced to try to do something other than agricultural production."*** (a young man from Imasgo, Burkina Faso).

So there is not a single answer to the question of how young people will shape their lives in relation to family farms, but several options, several scenarios for the future that will depend on the confidence that each of these young people has, based on what they have encountered in their life paths and what has marked them, in family farming.

Some have a pessimistic vision of the future of family farming and do not rely on it to build their lives, others are more optimistic and envisage their future in the rural world, provided it changes (conclusion of one of the panels of the regional sharing workshop).



<sup>6</sup> see Booklet 1: West African Rural Youth's Views on their pathways (OFF Report N°3)





## ***2 NINE SCENARIOS OF THE POSSIBLE CHANGES IN RURAL YOUTH IN WEST AFRICA HIGHLIGHTED BY THE RESEARCH***

## 2.1: When rural youth do not or only partially rely on agriculture to build their future: 4 scenarios

### Reasons for their pessimism about farming and family farming

Rural youth's perception of their own future is intimately linked to their perception of the future of FFS. What is widely shared by young people is that the future of FFS is also uncertain under current conditions (shape, size, knowledge transmitted, access to resources, policies, etc.). (first research summary).

These scenarios drawn from the focus group analysis refine the major trends identified at the end of the regional workshop to share this research

THE CURRENT STANCE  
OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN  
RELATION TO FF

Some do not believe in  
a future for FF

Some have no other  
solution than to return  
to the FF after a failure

Some continue to  
follow their parents  
(especially girls before  
marriage).

Some believe that  
there is a future for  
them in agriculture

- 1 Leaving and severing all ties with the family
- 2 Succeeding elsewhere and helping from afar
- 3 Not succeeding elsewhere, and returning to FF as a last resort
- 4 Carrying out simultaneous agricultural and non-agricultural activities
- 5 Continuing to progress in the parents' or husband's FF
- 6 Remaining in FF and helping to transform itself
- 7 Starting a rural women's business
- 8 Starting your own farm and leaving your parents' farm
- 9 Considering returning to farming at a later date

### {6} Loss of Hope in the Future of Family Farming

*Many feel that family farming has no future.*

TOSSA Yaovi believes that: "Family farming is even disappearing. Because it does not cover the needs, the arable land is being sold so that it is shrinking." In these conditions, PELLA Kodjo Victor, in the prefecture of Vogon, believes that "in 10 years, if there is no improvement, family farming will disappear. (focus group Togo)

"We shouldn't think 10 years from now, but even now FFs are beginning to disappear, at least in the form they used to have. Also, it is important to know that the land of FFs after years of chained cultivation has a lower and lower yield". (focus group North Senegal)

***The current conditions are demotivating for them.***

For the young people we met, the future of their families is not promising because they say that their level of poverty does not allow them to meet their needs and create favorable conditions for the development of family members and therefore of the entire community (CPF research, Burkina Faso).

"A large proportion of participants emphasized that young people are disinterested in farming, disheartened by the difficulty of the work, the social stigma and the challenges of earning a decent income." (FUN research, Liberia)

"There is a feeling of disappointment among youth in the sector because other sectors are thought to be less physically demanding and more profitable. "Some young people see agriculture as an "old-fashioned job" traditionally practiced by our parents" (Mariama and Seydou, focus group Casamance, Senegal).

"Hearing them talk, the youth almost gave up hope that these places would be able to address their current concerns. All they think about is leaving overnight and the few who wish to stay don't think that family farms (agricultural, pastoral

and fish farms) can, as things are going on, allow them to realize themselves (get married, start a home, prosper)". (FNFP research, Niger)

"I come from a poor family. I have lived in this village since I was born. I live on the agriculture that I inherited from my family. It is my main source of income. Some of my friends are gold panners; others are also farmers like me. With this unprofitable activity, it is difficult for us to make a living. The land is no longer fertile as it used to be, which reduces production. There is lack of equipment and inputs. If nothing is done for me in terms of aid, I don't hope for a better future" (focus group Sikasso region, Mali).

"There are no modern agricultural technologies introduced in this community to encourage young people to take up farming". (FUN research, Liberia).

"If policies don't value our products instead of facilitating imports, we can do everything, it won't work". (focus group, Togo).

***They prefer to move in another direction***

"Even if you're from the region and have an agricultural background, taking over a family farm is a bit of a milestone. The first problem is access to land, it's not that there is lack of land, but young people always have access to marginal land, most often the most remote and least fertile in the village, and once they have been developed, they are taken over by the owners." (a young 27-year-old agro-fisher, focus group Niger)

"If an alternative investment program that could provide employment opportunities were available in this community, young people would forget about farming because the work is hard." (FUN research, Liberia)

Some parents encourage them to leave the family farm.

Parents are in favor of their children (young boys in particular) leaving the family in search of a better and brighter future elsewhere under other skies (gold panning, migration/emigration, rural exodus ...). (research CPF Burkina Faso)

One father, Omar Diatta, says, "We are living hard things in the village. We only listen to the civil servants who are in Dakar and elsewhere. At the congress, they always have the last word. You have to be brave to keep your children in the village. The school has meant that no one wants their son to stay at home. Parents pray that their children are not farmers. They are the ones who do not encourage their children to stay." (adult focus group from Casamance, Senegal)

Some parents say they are ready to follow their children on adventure, but the effect of age is a very limiting factor. The risks are higher for them than for young people. Messrs. Kadio Yahaya and Nignan Yacouba affirm this, and Ms. Ziba Zalia and Ms. Benao Alimata maintain that "sometimes our husbands and children leave, and if it were possible to follow them, I am ready to follow them" (focus group adults from the Centre West, Burkina Faso).

## S1 Leaving and severing all ties with the family



This extreme scenario, which was barely mentioned in the focus groups, often concerns young people who tried their luck by leaving their families but whose adventure turned out badly ("the majority of these young people experienced the adventure in Nigeria, Benin and Côte d'Ivoire. Unfortunately, these adventures turned into a drift, thus shattering their dreams" - CTOP research, Togo) or led them to integrate into unapproachable environments (e.g., extremist groups), about which there is no news. This may also be the case for men who have rebuilt their lives elsewhere and are abandoning their families.

## {7} Husbands who left and forgot their families

Some young women's husbands who went on adventure (migration to Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana or gold panning...) and do not return and/or do not send them money. Sadia explains: "My husband has been away for a while now, but he is not sending me anything at the moment. I manage alone with the children; his brothers help me at times" (CPF Burkina Faso research and focus group from the Center-West).

## **S2** Succeeding elsewhere and helping one's family from afar

The methodology used in this research did not make it possible to associate young people from this second scenario with the focus groups since they are no longer in the village. Indirectly, we know that these young people have not come back because they have managed to integrate well in other environments, in either the city (social promotion through employment in the civil service, the tertiary sector or in companies) or abroad (successful migration, sometimes marriage abroad). Most keep ties with their families, which they support financially. Their success is also a reference for those who hope to improve their situation by imitating them.

However, this scenario was raised in the focus groups by young people who consider it for themselves, or by adults who wish to do so for their children because they expect it to have repercussions for the family.

### **{8} Hope of succeeding elsewhere**

"I decided one day to leave my family to start gold panning activities which led me to Komabangou, a village located about 200 km from Niamey, the capital city, in the municipality of Téra, Tillabery Region "in the hope of finding a better life than the one I was enjoying in the village" (a young agro-fisher, focus group Niger).

"If we don't have the necessary support to progress, we will be forced to try to do something other than agricultural production. If we are called to leave the village for another job in another country,

we can only provide support to alleviate their difficulties" (focus group Imasgo, Centre Ouest - Burkina Faso). "If I have another job I can leave, but I will still send money to my family. (focus group groundnut basin, Senegal).

"My father wanted me to continue my education and then get a job that would give me a steady income. Once I have this income, I will be able to reinvest it in the field" (intervention of a young person from Côte d'Ivoire in one of the panels of the regional sharing workshop).

## **S3** Failing to succeed elsewhere and returning, often as a last resort, to the family farming

This scenario is very common. According to the testimonies collected, most of the time these young people who left for the city or tried the adventure of emigration return to their families because they failed or could no longer bear the difficulties of their exile ("those in the village have been in the city, only they have not found anything: that is why they are here" comments an adult in the Casamance focus group). For them,



the family farm is a refuge: "a good number of young people, including former adventurers, graduates, gold diggers and even delinquents who have converted, have chosen to return to the country to devote themselves to family farming. For these young people, the family remains their main recourse, since everyone knows that they will find the minimum of help and security to live in case of need" (research by CNOP/FENAJER, Mali). Some, however, had planned, often with the approval of their families, their stay abroad as a transitory step to build up a nest egg or provide financial support to the family, and they had planned their return from the outset. Depending on the case, these young people thus return to the family farming in a different mindset.

### {9} Comeback to Family Farming

#### **coming back to the village empty-handed, and start from scratch again**

coming back to the village empty-handed, and start from scratch again

"Lack of support from parents or family and community members has resulted in many young people experiencing the adventure. Many have had trouble in the adventure, victims of false promises and exploitation in various forms; they have not been able to achieve their goal. They came back to their village to start all over again" (CTOP research, Togo).

"What motivates me and has helped me to become who I am today is in part what I have experienced in the past. Since I was a child I fell ill, which caused me to drop out from school, then once I was cured and could no longer go to school and tempted by adventure, I left for Kayes and then for Kangaba for gold panning and it is during these adventures that I experienced hell (illness, hunger,

violence, poverty etc.). Not being able to bear it anymore, I returned to the village almost empty-handed.

I started working alongside my parents for a while. Because of the rumors about the gold panning areas, I returned in the hope of earning a better life this time; which was not the case.

So I decided to return home to work the land I inherited from my parents. Today I work with my brother and we live from farming. All this to tell you that if for a long time I had taken over the work I am doing today, I probably wouldn't be in trouble where I am today. What has been more useful for me are the experiences I have had even though I am young, but I would prevent my younger brothers from making the same mistake" (focus group from the Koulikoro region, Mali).



### Rebuilding your future

"I learned that adventure is pitiful and I decided not to go back. I have a future despite being backward; it is still showing me the right way. With little support I will be able to improve my activity". (Moussa Traoré, focus group from the Ségou region, Mali)

Holder of a Master 2, Abdoulaye Mbodji explains: "In 2018 I wanted to emigrate but it did not succeed. So I gave up emigration to devote myself to breeding and agriculture." (focus group North Senegal)

"I am 27 years old and married with two children. I went to school but I dropped out since the first cycle, something I regret today. After dropping out from school, a few years ago I went on an adventure in search of happiness. Unfortunately, my wishes were not granted and I returned to my parents who still supported me by encouraging me to go to work in the field. A few years spent at their side learning practices and advice, and today thanks to them, I am able to run the activities of a farm and benefit from them. Also the meetings with the young people of agricultural profession, the structures and organizations working in the field have helped me a lot. What is useful for me is to be able to do something

honorable and what is more precious to me is my work" (accounts of Moussa Diarra, focus group from the region of Koulikoro, Mali).

"Currently I am back from exodus where I decided to build my future and I won't leave anymore. At present, I have sources of income in three areas:

- My main activity is the production of animal feed using a millet stalk grinder. This is the grinding of millet stalks, mixed with cowpea tops to produce multi-nutrient blocks for animal feed. I do not own the grinder, but I am a simple laborer who signs a contract with grinder owners.
- My second activity that brings me money is the production and marketing of fresh cow's milk, produced from my dairy cows. This activity provides me with an income of about CFA f 2,000 /day.
- Finally, the third activity is my job as an endogenous facilitator. Thanks to a training course on simplified farm assessments, I was able to acquire experience in conducting simplified assessments within volunteer families and the resulting advisory support. "(accounts of Amadou, focus group Niger). d'Amadou, focus group Niger)

## S4

### Conducting simultaneous non-agricultural and agricultural activities

This scenario of the "cap of duplication" is also very frequent, especially in the many family farms that cannot cover the family's needs from their animal or plant production alone. Agricultural and non-agricultural activities can be carried out simultaneously (seeking additional income through small trades) or alternately (exodus in the dry season, gold panning, etc.). There are two variants in this scenario.

In some cases, the young person focuses mainly on non-agricultural activities and considers agriculture, in which he or she has little faith, as a secondary activity.

#### **{10} Favor non-farming activity to have an income that does not depend on FF**

A large number of the young people we met are involved in agriculture as a secondary activity. Many do it for their own consumption. Above all, they have learned a trade (mechanics, sewing, hairdressing, etc.) which they practice in one way or another as their main occupation. Some unemployed people prefer to engage in other activities, which they believe to be more lucrative, such as petty trade, driving motorcycle cabs, selling adulterated fuel, etc. These people are more likely to be employed in these occupations than in agriculture. Thus, in the future, they would like to develop these first professions before thinking about farming. (CTOP research, Togo)

#### **{11} Carrying out a non-agricultural activity while remaining attached to agriculture**

"The real problem in agriculture today is its low profitability, and this is what leads some young people to work in other sectors of activity despite the low pay. It is therefore up to the young person to keep the cap of double employment, i.e. to combine service activities and agricultural production" (focus group Casamance, Senegal).

"I am a seasonal worker in N'SUKALA (sugar factory) for 5 to 6 months of the year, and then I work on the family farm" (19 year old unmarried and without children, focus group Ségou, Mali).

"I work as a domestic servant every year during the drought" (20 year old girl, one child, focus group Ségou, Mali)

"I want to be an engineer and work somewhere else, but I also want to alternate between the two. Since I'm the son of a farmer, I don't intend to change jobs." (focus group groundnut basin, Senegal)





## How can we support the scenarios that keep young people away from the family farm so that they benefit rural youth and their families?

The challenge is **to maintain the youth's loyalty to his or her family and community**, either so that ties are maintained in the case of the first two scenarios where it is known that the youth will not return to family farming but can continue to support it, or to encourage a refocusing of the youth's pathway towards family farming in the case of the other two scenarios. To do so, the family must anticipate the development of these scenarios.

Ideally, of course, the family farm should be able to transform itself in time to remain attractive to young people before they consider moving away from it. It is often impossible or too late to do this when these scenarios come true, but it is a perspective that is very much on the minds of youth who are about to embrace the family farm under the five scenarios that will be described later when they are already thinking about their own children and want to pass on a viable farm to them.

However, in all cases, these scenarios can change for the better if parents are able to **give** their children **confidence**. This assumes that the children feel encouraged to succeed where they have committed themselves (outside of FF or in the community).

These opportunities for parents to

"give confidence" to their children arise in early childhood and at each stage of the young person's life course described in Booklet 1 of this research, but to be exploited they require an understanding of the concerns of today's children and often a change in parental mentality. This is one of the knots to be unraveled, which will be discussed in the third part of this booklet; it will open up avenues on how to change mentalities in order to overcome current block<sup>7</sup>.

Finally, actions of a political nature, which are the direct responsibility of the FOs, can aim to improve the development of these scenarios. These include advocacies at the national level for vocational training to better prepare young people for agricultural and non-agricultural jobs (in relation to scenarios 3 and 4), but also for higher education to enable graduates to succeed in their professional integration (in relation to scenario 2); at the national and international level for positive support for migration so that it is an opportunity and not an adventure (in relation to scenarios 1 and 2). It is also about advocating to local authorities for vigorous local development that diversifies opportunities for gainful employment (related to scenario 4).

<sup>7</sup> **Chapter 3:** What needs to be unraveled to reconcile young people with family exploitation and unleash their potential

## 2.2: When young people rely on family farming to build their future: 5 scenarios

### The desire for change that inspires these young people

A young Togolese man said in a focus group: "You have to start thinking about your future very early. If at 27 your life does not change significantly, know that there is a good chance that you will miss your whole life." Although their future is being taken hostage," commented FENAJER (Mali), "they prefer to keep on fighting at all costs to succeed and overcome all the obstacles that weigh on the youth, especially in rural areas".

#### {12} Desire for autonomy without breaking family ties

The support that families can offer today is no longer enough, especially because young people want to live differently than their parents and previous generations did. Hence a strong desire for autonomy, which is achieved without breaking family ties, but usually with severe tensions between:

- the desire to ensure their well-being, to build an identity other than the one provided by the fabric of social relations. The young person considers assuming this desire for autonomy and taking steps to achieve it as elements that contribute to self-fulfillment.
- Everyone knows the rules of behavior that young people must adopt, and no one wants to admit that they can be shirked. In the cultural, ideological and social universe of Malians, it is obedience that prevails: obey elders, and everything else will follow!

(conclusion of the research CNOP/FENAJER, Mali)

They want to start families different from the one they themselves grew up in.

"We see our family as a place of fulfillment. But it's a pity that the confidence of young people in family farms is not built up. We don't want our children to be like us in the same difficult working conditions. We hope to be able to offer them education, knowledge and let them choose the trade or the job they want. "I would like my children to return to farming. Some of my children

will be oriented to have knowledge in agricultural production activities to support the continuation of the family farm"(focus group Imasgo, Centre-West Burkina Faso).

"I want my children to become someone tomorrow" - "because I want my child to be better than me and to be somewhere else" (focus group young girls Tiano, Centre-West Burkina Faso).

"I was married to a man without my consent and I suffered a lot because my in-laws and I didn't get along at all. This marriage has taught me a lot as a woman not to involve children in marriage against their will. (focus group young girls Koulikoro, Mali)

Creative behavior change is needed for birth control, as well as increased awareness for family planning use (FUN research, Liberia), Liberia)

They want to start families different from the one they themselves grew up in.

#### {14} Changing farming techniques and changing mentality

Given the crisis in salaried employment in urban areas, the majority of young people in rural areas have stronger convictions about farming as a way out, but above all about farming being more modern, more efficient and more productive than the one being practiced in the FFs. This requires improving activities on these farms and working by diversifying production. At the same time, the existence of large-scale farms can facilitate marketing and access to inputs and credit for family farms while offering employment opportunities - temporary or sustainable - for young people. Some young people even speak of the "de-skilling of traditional FF". For the latter, it is necessary to move towards entrepreneurship in order to embark on rural entrepreneurship, towards market-oriented agriculture. (research CNCR, Senegal).

"In one of the focus groups in Togo They want to start families different from the one they themselves grew up in., a young person thinks that: "If we have to do the family farm like our parents, I think we will be miserable all our lives, we must change the techniques and also change our mentality. We need to develop technical training that can be directly and easily applied in the field with the means at hand". Another affirms that: "Our land today is no longer fertile; we have to put a lot of means to hope to harvest something. That's why many people no longer have a passion for the land and want to engage in animal husbandry"



Other young people tell him that the future of these family farms is promising if this activity is professionalized by introducing agricultural machinery and innovations. A young girl from the maritime region finds that: "this will lead to improved productivity and the farmer will be able to take pride in his work and take better care of his children's education". (CTOP research, Togo)

Some young people also want to promote environmentally friendly agriculture (see boxes {23} and {30}).

**S5****Keeping up with the family farm of her parents or husband**

This was once the normal evolutionary scenario of a farmer's child who reproduced in this way the rural society of her fathers. Almost all of the young people we met helped their parents with their farms. Some of them acquired passion for farming activities and stayed there. Some even dropped out of school to devote themselves to the field. Thus PAYATA Essobrou, born in 1995, says: "My father took me to school and I ran away because seeing how he was doing in the field, I told myself that I would follow him to the field". (focus group Togo).

**{15} Staying to ensure taking-over**

AFANSOUNOUDJI Yao Mawuli, 30 years old, breeder in Vogan, states the following: "I stopped in class of 3rd and I made a training in breeding. I also do agriculture. Our Dad doesn't let us go on adventures; the farm belongs to him. My dad has a lot of children (16) and I am the only one who stays on his farm (breeding). I plan to continue and expand my Dad's farm. I also want to create new ones. I am not at all afraid for my future". (focus group Togo)

Some of the young people have chosen to work on the farms either with their parents or on their own and earn a living from these activities. These young people have confirmed that they do not abandon their farms in order to be able to take over (CNOP/FENAJER research, Mali).

**{16} A young woman who, as the eldest daughter, wants to take over in the family**

Aïssata Ba is 31 years old; she is divorced and has two sons. She has a farm and a herd of 15 cows, and is trading in her village. Her elder brother manages the family's herd; he is in charge of the sale. She has been a member of 3 associations and a relay of the ASBEF (Family Planning) for 3 years. Aïssata says that she is a strong woman who only takes care of her own business, given her situation as a divorced woman who is not well appreciated in her community. She has no problems with her family. After her divorce, her father pre-financed her to start her own business; that is where she got the idea to open a store. She also plans to ask her father for some of their family land so that she can take over since she is her mother's eldest child. (focus group North Senegal)

In this scenario, it is common for some young people to farm small plots of land made available to them by their parents (father, uncle, brother or friend) on their own account. This is where they initiate their autonomy in decision-making and management (FNFP research, Niger).

This is also the dominant scenario for many young girls who change family farms when they get married, but remain in the same world. They know that their future lies on the family farm and some believe that "agriculture will never end until the end of the world", but that "we need to organize ourselves more to have the means to do what we want to do" (focus group young girls from Farakoba, Hauts Bassins region, Burkina Faso).

However, there are also young people who remain exploited because circumstances force them to do so. This is the case of young people who marry and do not have their own land, or of those who have returned to farming after failing their schooling (reported in a panel at the regional sharing workshop). Their attachment to the family farm remains fragile and will only be sustainable if their parents or husbands know how to change their farm to meet their expectations. Otherwise, they will leave too. This scenario is indeed uncomfortable when production and living conditions are not good. This can lead the young person to enter another scenario, in or out of the family farm.





**S6 staying on the family farm by helping the parents to change it**

This scenario varies from the previous one in that young people take initiatives himself to improve the family farm or get their parents to adopt innovations. It is an interesting scenario of intergenerational cooperation where the youth is proactive and their parents are receptive. Two variations of this scenario were encountered in this research:

In some cases, the young person acts within his parents' family farm:

**{17} Case of Bassirou Diaw, who puts back on its feet a family farm in difficulty**

"I was born in Dagana. After my Koranic studies, I started school up to the 7th grade. I stopped my studies to revitalize the family farm which was poorly run by workers (my father had a husking machine, the only one in the area). After 3 years, I had turned the family farm around and handed it over to my younger brother who had just stopped his studies and devoted myself to the fields and to the operation of the family EIG, which is active in rice, market gardening, poultry farming and the husking machine. In 2007, I became a relay of the tomato sector, a trainer in market gardening. Today, the family farm ensures all the needs of the family". (focus group North Senegal).

**{18} Case of Oumar Bâ who convinces his family to intensify his livestock breeding**

"I was born in Namarel, I am 29 years old. I stopped my studies in 9th grade. This is because the Fulanis do not like to study. I went back to the village after stopping my studies. I was angry with my family for not supporting me in my studies.

One year the drought decimated the herds. I then questioned my father about the need to resort to intensive breeding (...). In my family we used to do transhumance but I asked that part of the herd be left in the family so that I could manage it intensively, but I had difficulties. God gave me the chance to be open-minded and to meet farmers' organizations where I got to know them. When I decided to keep the cows at home, there was reluctance, but since at home they know that I am a person

who does not speak for nothing, and that when I defend something it is because it is important, so they agreed to let me do it and they saw the results. When they left and came back, they saw that the cows they left behind were healthier than those that had left.

Just because you were born in a family where people practice transhumance doesn't mean you have to do it too. There are new techniques that you can do easily and that can help to change things. There are even good practices that our ancestors did that we just need to improve a little and get solutions to some of our current problems. I'll take the example of silage: it's a technique that my grandfather practiced many times, only now it's being improved



according to the climatic realities of our times. I invite young people to create things for their communities based on the empirical knowledge of our

ancestors but also on new techniques, so we can move towards development" (focus group North Senegal).

In other cases the youth, while maintaining a close link with the family farm and contributing to its transformation, maintains his or her autonomy by creating his or her own farm outside the family. This scenario seems to be quite common among young people who choose the path of entrepreneurship.

### **{19} The accounts of Alioune Badara Dioungue (Senegal), who came back to transform his father's farm.**

"To make a long story short, my father told me every day "you were learning to be employed. Innocent, I understood nothing at all in the sense of his thesis.

It was only after I graduated from high school and his advice to me to go and take a training course and not to rely on general education that I began to suspect his wish for me to return and join the team on the family farm. He put a lot of effort into this painful activity, but he was illiterate and had difficulties in management and planning.

After my studies in administration and business creation, I went to companies to put the theories of teaching into practice until I got a job as an administrative and human resources assistant in a local company.

At the same time, I was thinking a lot about agricultural entrepreneurship. In order to do so, I started to practice poultry farming, which was not my family's activity, but which I thought could complement and diversify the activities of the family farm. This sequence of my life is very important because it allowed me to have a place in the family farm after having introduced myself to it. Before deciding outright, I took the time to compare and demonstrate to my father the difference between my salary and what I earned with the chickens. I managed to convince him to build on his land so that I would have the (local) resources to produce on a large scale. However, in exchange, I felt that day his greatest wish came true: to see myself in FF and to transform it.

My father asked me for activities beyond FF to find my account without a salary. In exchange, he put the rooms he had built at my disposal and I practiced poultry farming for my own account as if I was paying the rent in kind. Therefore, I was doing FF and Dad a service in his other activities.

I managed to expand my business and change the image of the family farm and, more interestingly, my father rests more and better by my presence at his side.

What made me prouder in this story was that my father and sister could not see that with such a high level of education I decided to quit my salary job to come and work the land with an uncertain future. With determination, I managed to transform the FF and I increased the cultivable area from 10 to 25 ha, that is to say 15 ha more in 5 years. This allowed my brother who lost his paid job to come and work in the FF. Now, I continue to fight to make the FF larger and to prepare the return of my stepbrother (currently in Italy), our elder brother to integrate ("reserve his place").

However, coming from a polygamous family, I am thinking of getting involved in the creation of my own farm. This is motivated by the certainty that one day this FF can be shared after Dad's death. Waiting for this may divert me from my goal and turn my life upside down."

(written account of Alioune Dioungue, presented at the regional sharing workshop<sup>8</sup>)

## **S7** starting a rural woman's business

Many girls who have or have not received training to start their own business, often in the field of poultry farming, processing of agricultural products, catering, sewing or trade, are interested in setting up their own business. Often they continue to farm in parallel with this business.

<sup>8</sup> Alioune Badara Dioungue, who is currently Chairman of the Youth College of the CNCR (Senegal), has a young wife trained in accounting to whom he plans to entrust the accounting of his company (he does not yet keep an operating account). Although he has "signed polygamy" ("to please my family"), he does not wish to take a second wife and reproduce the pattern of a polygamous family whose consequences he fears for the children. He has been active in student union at University and is currently involved in local politics ("I am feared by local elected officials"). His father, with whom he has a very strong relationship, is himself a farmer leader (he is Chairman of the National Union of Vegetable Growers of Senegal, and Vice-Chairman of the CNCR). The latter encouraged his son to buy a big car "to show that he is more successful than a civil servant".

(additional interview with Alioune Badara Dioungue during the regional sharing workshop).

### {20} Young girls who plan to start their own business

Pauline Kaboré is 18 years old and single; she left school in 6th grade and is studying sewing in a center in Tougan. She would like to reinforce her training and set up her own business with a modern workshop. (focus group Imasgo, Centre-West Burkina Faso).

Rosalie Kaboré is 20 years old, she is single. She participates in her family's agricultural activities. She did not receive any training but would like to create a clothing store. For this, she is negotiating with her grandfather to have a start-up fund (focus group Imasgo, Centre-West Burkina Faso).

Fatou Thior who is 27 years old is the daughter and wife of a fisherman. She says: "I stopped studies in twelfth grade. I am a development actor and I am a processor of fishery products. I am married. I have an older man. I had training in Ndjirnda. I manage the secretariat of a tontine at the local level. I have a support problem. I want to set up a business" (focus group groundnut basin, Senegal).

Fanta Pelly Diallo is 28 years old; she is divorced. She says: "I didn't like studying; on the contrary, what I liked was following the herd with the shepherds. My father who has been a trainer since 1987 trained me in Organic Agriculture in Fatick. I also did the transformation of local products, vegetables and fruits. I also participate in sensitizing the women of my neighborhood to use organic products. In the future, I would like to set up a company to manufacture local products and a laboratory for organic soaps and scrubs. I have submitted my projects to the DER and to the town hall of my locality". (focus group North Senegal)

Fatoumata Diémé, married in 2003 with a soldier who gave her in 2008, on her return from one of his missions, CFA F 200,000 with which she went to buy a refrigerator in The Gambia. She sold local juice and ice cream. With a project called Karongène (making a living), she benefited from training in fruit and vegetable processing. She makes local juice that she commercializes and sells vegetables in her neighborhood. At the same time, she did a training with Kawolore on compound flour for children and made animations for women. She plans to continue her activities until she sets up a processing unit and do some farming in the plot that belongs to her husband. For this, she needs technical and financial support (focus group Casamance, Senegal).

Maimouna Thioune, who had to fight a lot to continue her studies against her father's will, but failed her high school diploma, was aware of the Terre et Paix project; being a member of the GPF of Diouloulou she had participated in the meetings even though she was not a beneficiary. Following this, she attended a training course in Kabiline on parboiled rice. Currently she is in her first year of training in catering. She plans to complete her training and start a restaurant, but also to grow rice (focus group Casamance, Senegal).

Their main motive is to acquire independence, to fulfill themselves without cutting themselves off from their family.

**{21} Aminata Diarra's motivation: to earn a living without living at the expense of others, to take pride in succeeding.**

"I am 19 years old and married without children. I currently live in Kégnéba in the circle of Kita with my husband. I went to school but I didn't go far because of my parents' lack of means. My main occupation is trading in agricultural products and that's how I earn my living. What I like first of all is my family, and also it is to earn my living in this business without living at the expense of others. But what I hate the most is the failure. (...) In my business, relationships are not always convenient with the competition.

What holds me back today are the means and the information about my activity. I hear very often that there are opportunities for young people but I don't know how to look for them or who to talk to and I would really like to get out of these difficulties. In the future, I see myself as a successful entrepreneur who will make my family, my community and the youth in general proud. In order to do this I would like to have the means and the information about my business and in this case not only will I succeed, but I will create jobs for other young people who are going through the same situation that I am experiencing. "(focus group Koulikoro, Mali).

**{22} From school to starting her business: the journey of a young Nigerien woman, Aminatou Garka Mahamadou, as a fighter.**

"I am now thirty-seven years old. Going to school has allowed me to get a job and to be financially stable despite the difficulties I've encountered: I think I can have the life I want because I've been to school, but I've had a fighting career when I was in school. I still remember that frustration and lack of financial resources were frequent problems during much of my schooling. I know what it means to fight to study, but I always kept the hope that one day I would overcome these obstacles because I knew that studying would make me a better person and make my future better too.

After high school in an institution close to my neighborhood, I continued my higher education in a Rural Animation Training Institute. Suddenly my mother died when I was twenty-five years old. I then had to fight for resources to be able to continue my higher education. I started income-generating activities that I had seen my mother carry out since I was a child (making scarves, braids, making juices from local products, etc.), and I was able, by selling these products in the neighborhood and at school, to pay my school fees (schooling, supplies, transportation, clothing). After graduating as a Rural Animation

Technician in 2014, I developed the skills I had acquired and started an agri-food processing business, making articles from local materials and trained women and youth on income-generating activities based on my experience as a processor. I charge CFA f 5,000 for these trainings; it is like a small business.

Today, I have diversified my activity by widening the range of my products by transforming rice, corn, wheat into couscous, making soaps based on potatoes, peanut oil, and water acid. Then come other products, including ointments based on moringa, almond, coconut and garlic oil. In addition, I specialized in the production of perfumes (men and women), incense, earrings, decorative paintings, night-lights and culinary art.

I allocate part of these revenues to support other family members to provide for their needs, I support my young brothers to continue their studies, participate financially in their clothing, etc.

At the same time, I have been active in political parties where I met a farmer leader who directed me towards development associations'.

(story told during the regional sharing workshop by Aminatou, Niger, and transcribed by Adamou Bangna)



Many of these young women were able to take advantage of projects existing in their environment.

**[23] Mamy Aissatou Seydi wants to set up her own organic farm.**

She is a member of the GPF of Diouloulou where she was born. Born out of wedlock, she was sent at the age of 12 to her uncle in Dakar who raised her. She did her primary education in Dakar. After the death of her mother in 2005 she returned to the village. She met her father in 2007, who redid her birth papers with her name and enrolled her in school so that she could continue her studies. She obtained her BFEM in 2010 in Ndombo Ndir (Diouloulou) and was oriented to the high school of Diouloulou. son BFEM en 2010 à Ndombo Ndir (Diouloulou).

Three years later she failed the high school diploma twice without success but unfortunately became pregnant. What spoiled her studies she could not repeat the final year. She did small business to support herself. And when the meeting that Terre et Paix was to organize in Diouloulou was announced in the public square, she decided to participate. After that she was one of the young people selected to benefit from this project.

Thanks to the project, she received training in agriculture and traveled to

Tambacounda, Mali, Fimla, Dakar and Casamance. This allowed her to have a knowledge in agriculture because before the project she did not know much about agriculture. The financing obtained is a financing that is done according to the needs expressed. She put the equipment (well and fence) in the family field. But she had problems with this land (litigation) within the family and the town hall granted her a plot with deliberation on her behalf. But as the financing was already used in the family plot until now, the new plot has not been developed. This has delayed her activities compared to the other beneficiaries of the project. However, she still works on the family farm with her aunts and uncles and the income is shared after each campaign after setting aside the investments. The farm consists of market gardening (chilli pepper, tomato, sweet and bitter eggplant) and livestock (local chicken, goat, sheep, beef).

In perspective she wants to have her farm where she will do agroecology. Also she wants financial support to fence her plot and have a well to operate it.

(focus group Casamance, Senegal)

**S8**

**start your own farm when you leave your parents' family farm**

Young people who have the opportunity to start their own farm or business outside of their parents' will have more freedom to run it the way that suits them ("taking over their parents' farm as such is a source of failure" - intervention by a young Senegalese during a panel at the regional sharing workshop). This was already the case in the second variant of Scenario 6, but the youth kept one foot in the parental farm, whereas in the present scenario they leave it.

One of the reasons that may force him to opt for this scenario is the lack of family land to which he can gain sustainable access.

#### **{24} Land Issue as a Motive for Off-Farm Settlement**

According to TOSSA Yaovi: "If I have the means and buy arable land, I can settle down, but I have to forget my parents' land because I have to share the income with others". PELLA Kodjo Victor: "Our parents are selling their land and not all the children are engaged in farming. When you share the inheritance, you don't have much to farm. »

"I know that if I have to dedicate myself to agriculture, I have to do it in a big way to have enough profit to make my dreams come true... I will have to leave my locality to do the activity as I want because of the difficulty of access to land that all young people have at the moment."

(focus group Togo)

However, another reason may be the parents' disagreement with their child's project.

#### **{25} Story of Roland N. Vignonfodo (Benin), producer of oil palm trees against the will of his parents**

"I graduated from high school in 2002. I chose to go to the ground first because I received special training on self-employment. When I announced to my parents that after high school I would be setting up as a farmer, they didn't agree at all. It became a challenge for me to demonstrate to them that I could do it. They didn't give me a plot of land. So I moved to someone else's land. I started on the land I was renting. Today I own 13 hectares. I didn't throw myself into it like that, but I trusted in two ways. I had my head and physical strength.(...)"

One of his friends reported that Roland had refused to take a competition to enter the Public Service, which was very misunderstood at the time; Roland commented, "I see how my colleagues who have become public servants evolve. I'm sure that if I were a public servant, I would not have one-tenth of what I have today. Our situations are incomparable.

(from an interview conducted by Agrobusiness TV to which Roland Vignonfodo referred in his panel discussion during the regional sharing workshop<sup>9</sup>)

<sup>9</sup> In his agro-industrial farm that he has named "patience", Roland Vignonfodo produces 800 tons of palm nuts annually. He has created a processing unit that produces more than 128,000 liters of red oil each year. He employs more than 40 people, and has made emulators to whom he advises to know how to take risks. His younger brothers have overcome their parents' reluctance; they join his farm during their school vacations and go into farming. Roland Vignonfodo was President of the Association of Young Modern Farmers of Benin (AJAM). He is currently President of the Youth College of the PNOPPA/Benin after having been its Economic Affairs Officer.

Their path does not prevent them from supporting their families and communities.

**{26} Story of Afantchawo Koudasse (Togo), who benefits his community and rural youths of its success**

"I was born in Gbato in the prefecture of Yoto, Maritime Region of Togo. I am the third son of a family of 9 children. Indeed, since I was born, my mother has only known how to do one activity: the transformation of cassava into gari and tapioca. Unlike the other young people of my generation who followed and helped their fathers in the fields after school and on weekends, I assisted my mother, just like my other brothers and sisters, in this cassava processing work. After finishing processing the cassava from our own field, the mother is solicited by the cassava growers around us and even those who are a little far away from us to buy their plantations. Before the 2000s, we didn't have access to the cassava grater. So we used to grate the cassava by hand. With this activity, we were able to eat and take care of ourselves. The mother would pay us for school supplies. We received pocket money. In return, my brothers and I would help the mother in her activity of transforming cassava into gari and tapioca. I had all the support and guidance I needed to continue and finish my studies with a Master 2 degree in Human Resources Management in Lomé. Even after my father's death in 2004, I had no difficulty continuing my studies.

However, this event influenced the choice of my university career. At first, I wanted to go to law school and become a lawyer. Seeing that this would be a long curriculum, I returned to the History Department with the intention that I would become a teacher very early on and make up for the loss of my father by providing financial support to the family.

But after the bachelor's degree, I didn't want to go on with History because everything seems to me that I missed my vocation. It is following the advice of a friend that I finally accepted to continue in History to prepare first the master's degree, of course for the form. This friend even paid my tuition fees in fourth year to encourage me to continue.

Afterwards, my uncle called me and advised me to do a master's degree in human resources management to become a human resources manager in a company, which I accepted. But after finishing, I went back to the same uncle to tell him that I would feel pretty good about farming because, as I was finishing my last studies, a thought came into my head, that of being able to develop my mother's cassava processing activities into gari, of course with innovations. But this idea did not meet the approval of my mother and many other people around me simply because



they believe that it is inappropriate for a young graduate to engage in agriculture. In spite of this, I remained committed to my vision. So I moved to a different area from my home on a leased land. I first started producing cassava and yellow maize to sell to poultry farmers. After the first two seasons, I found that my area was not suitable for cassava production. But an opportunity also presented itself for me to convert to processing palm nuts into oil and then into soap, because these nuts are widely available in this area. So since 2016, I have been producing palm kernel oil and soap under the name SAVON EDEN.

At the end of 2016, I met a man who saw me on the outskirts of my field and after discussions; he asked me if I knew the Togolese Coordination of Farmer Organizations (CTOP). Not knowing anything about the latter institution, the man offered to take me there. Being young at the time, the CTOP technicians redirected me to a youth umbrella organization called Réseau des Jeunes Producteurs Professionnelles Agricoles du Togo (REJEPPAT). It is from these moments that, thanks also to my level of education, I was often associated with the various activities of CTOP and REJEPPAT, especially in the area of capacity building.

In the exercise of my activities, I have received funding that has enabled me to settle in well. My wife helps me in my activities.

In return, I pass on the trainings I receive from CTOP and REJEPPAT to other young people, I direct them to the financing institutions for youth and women's projects; I give my support to those who want to organize themselves into cooperatives.

To date, four young people work with me full time and seven women work with me on a part-time basis. I have taken my mother's hand in paying for my other brothers' school fees. I brought light from the solar panel in my mother's compound. I changed the human-powered pump in our village to a solar pump where water is finally available through a tap. My acquaintances and my entourage for assistance call upon me. It is from then on that people begin to see that my choice was not ill-considered. Some young people follow me in this way by setting up on agricultural estates and taking me as an example, even if they don't do the same things as me." (story written by Afantchawo Koudasse and told at the regional sharing workshop) <sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Afantchawo Koudasse was elected President of ROPPA's Regional Youth College at its constituent assembly in February 2020.

**S9****Consider returning to farming at a later date**

"With the agricultural equipment there will be a return to farming, predicts a participant in the adult focus group in Casamance (Senegal), those who leave to work elsewhere (e.g. civil servants), when they are retired they return to claim land from the one who stayed for a long time to farm".

The latter scenario, which is true today among some retirees and which some young people are considering for themselves in the long term, may then be a variant of Scenario 2. But it is not favorable to the current installation of rural youth on the family farm."

**{27} A future computer scientist who plans to invest in agriculture in the future**

"I did my elementary studies in Keur Socé, and I passed my high school diploma in Louga, and I got my bachelor's degree in computer networks and communication in Thies. We came back to cultivate during the rainy season. And after the master 2 I wanted to enter the professional world and at the same time complete my PhD. My brothers are taking over. When I'm rich, I plan to invest in agriculture" (focus group from the groundnut basin, Senegal).

## How can we support these favorable scenarios for the integration of young people into family farming to help them succeed?

The challenge here is **to help the youth succeed**. First, we must rely on these young people's creativity, who in all cases are very dynamic, and therefore encourage.

**{28} Story of Sekongo Zié Zoumana (Ivory Coast), an innovator who is pursuing his higher education while developing his family farm without external support.**

"I was born in December 1986 in Adzopé, 106 km from the economic capital of Côte d'Ivoire (Abidjan). My story began in 2013, when I received the information that my father was suffering from kidney cancer. As a result, he could no longer go to his farm. As the eldest of the family of 3 children, I had the obligation to watch his farm.

I used to go there every holiday. At one point, things started to get complicated for me, my grades at the faculty of (SHS) started to drop. I appealed to my father and said to him:

- Dad, what if I stopped studying to take care of your farm?

- My father refused: "My son, you are mistaken. This field is very difficult because

we are not supported by our States, the banks refuse to give us loans, on the pretext that agriculture is not a stable activity, that everything can change from one moment to another; those who accept to help us have a very high interest rate. He added, "it is ideal to continue your studies, to have a paid job, you can use the money to develop the family farm.

I had no choice but to work harder to continue my higher education.

Unfortunately, my father passed away in 2014, on the eve of my bachelor's degree exam. As the elder of my family, I had no choice but to continue my education and take over the family farm.

Cancer treatment had financially weakened the family, so I was forced to become the manager of the family farm, so I had no choice but to take on this challenge. The dilemma was whether I would continue my education or work on my father's farm. After some time to think about it, I decided to pursue both. I set to work.

I should point out that when I took over my father's poultry farm when he passed away; there were 4,000 hens that I took care of, which was not an easy thing to do. Through my courage, my ethics, and my vision, I now have 16,000 hens on my farm.

I would like to emphasize that I have never received a support fund from any structure or organization, nor from the State. Only my courage and my vision have made me what I am today, I continue in my vision to progress better in the years to come.

In 2 months, I listed some points that could help me to make gains, since it was difficult to get a loan.

1. My father used to do the setting up of the subjects once a year (month of June). I specify by saying that the chickens start production when they are 5 months old. After analysis, I decided to do two set-ups a year, once the first set up starts laying, I made the second wave come in laying 5 months later.
2. The cost of industrial feed being very high, I had the idea to make my own feed, I bought a second hand machine (mill). This is what gave me a gain of 2000 francs on the unit of bags; I specify that chickens consumed an average of 10 bags per day.
3. My ethics really helped me in my path; I worked to have the confidence of my raw material suppliers for the manufacture of my feed (small loans at the beginning, regular repayments).
4. The buildings were built in cement at a high price. Since we lived in a forest area, wood was cheaper. I decided to have the buildings made in wood (back to the rustic henhouse). After construction, I could have saved about CFA Francs 300,000.
5. 5-The water system was manual, which was painful for my employees, since the subjects consumed about 3000 liters of water per day. I had the idea to mechanize the water system. This really relieved my employees and made

the work easier. So in 6 years (2014-2020), from 4000 hens I have 16000.

I continue to look for innovative techniques to do better. My ambition is to industrialize the family farm, to create jobs and train my African brothers, and if possible to help them innovate.”

(Story written and presented at the regional sharing workshop by Sekongo Zié Zoumana)<sup>11</sup>.

It should then be remembered that these **young people** who are willing to invest in family farms will succeed if **conditions allow them to do so**, particularly in terms of access to land, equipment, financing and markets, as well as the provision of technology, information, training and advisory support. However, we will see that they strongly said in the focus groups that the assistance currently offered to them is far from satisfying them (see below, part 3, § 3.4.):

Shortcomings in the assistance).



<sup>11</sup> Sekongo Zié Zoumana is preparing a PhD in archaeology at the University FHB of Abidjan; he is now in his 2nd year of thesis. He is a member of ANOPACI (Ivory Coast).

## 2.3: The first lessons that can be drawn from the knowledge of these scenarios are as follows

Avant Before continuing to use the contributions of this research, it is useful to summarize the first achievements in terms of ROPPA's two main concerns in relation to the issue of youth<sup>12</sup>. Updating scenarios of possible evolution of rural youth in West Africa is indeed a pivotal step in understanding the current dynamics of youth. On the one hand, each one is determined by the happy or difficult events experienced by these young people in the pathways already traveled by them, as described in their exchanges and capitalized in the first booklet of this research, and they are more or less promising for the future of family farms. On the other hand, they are likely to evolve according to the factors that will continue to influence them. Finally, they leave open a nagging question for the future of the rural world: that of the young people left behind.

### There is a better understanding of how young people are approaching their future and that of family farms

This future is marked by **uncertainty** and **dissatisfaction**. It is clear that the majority of rural youth do not want to stay and can no longer evolve in an environment where they are exploited. They do not find themselves in the pattern of their parents who had agreed to be used for years before becoming more independent later on and no longer want to be "used" as mere "factors of production" by the family, by the Koranic master or by anyone else. Moreover, we see that an often-overwhelming responsibility can rest on these young people who must provide for themselves and their families, and that is what motivates them to seek money for what it is worth, even if it means making adventurous choices.

**They all expect change** but in different ways.

- Some expect little or nothing from farming and the family farm to build their future. As a result, as seen in the first four scenarios, they will seek to leave the family farm and the village. The challenge here will be to prevent this distance from becoming a rupture. It is a matter of retaining the young person's loyalty in relation to his

<sup>12</sup> These two concerns are, on the one hand to know how rural youth, who are the carriers of the future of family farming, are going to direct their lives in relation to it, and on the other hand, what needs to be done to encourage their involvement and commitment in the life and change of family farming.

family and community in order to keep the link, and if the break-up is complete, to try to reconcile the young person with his family.

- Others have found reason to believe that the rural world and the family farm have a future, if they are transformed. The other five scenarios reveal that, to varying degrees and in different ways, young men and women "cling" to the rural world

These forward-looking scenarios are likely to have a more or less favorable outcome in the future depending on the factors that will continue to influence them. Among these factors, the attitude of the families, the support that will be given to them and the political measures that will be taken may be decisive.

### {29} Each scenario may have positive or negative evolution

When young people rely little or nothing on agriculture

1	Leaving and severing all ties with the family
2	Succeeding elsewhere and helping the family from afar
3	Failing to succeed elsewhere, and returning to the FF as a last resort
4	Carrying out agricultural and non-agricultural activities simultaneously

Desirable Change

Reconciliation → scenario 3?
Keeping the ties → scenario 9?
Warmful welcome by the family, the youngster regains confidence → scenario 5 or 6?
Non-farming activities allow to invest in FF → scenario 6 or 7?

Change to be feared

The youngster gets lost
Reversal of fortune of the youngster → Passage scenario 1 or 3?
No confidence building, frustration → back to scénario 1?
The FF stagnates in a situation of survival → discouraging the young person.

When young people rely on agriculture

5	Continuing to progress in the parents' or husband's FF
6	Remaining in the FF and working toward its transformation.
7	Starting a rural women's business
8	Starting your own farm and leaving your parent's farm
9	Considering returning to farming at a later date

Desirable change

Openness of the parents or husband allows the young person to blossom → scénario 6 ?
Successful transformation of FF
Business success, link to ASPH value chain
Success: positive impact on local development
The homecoming is not to the detriment of the young people who have remained

Change to be feared

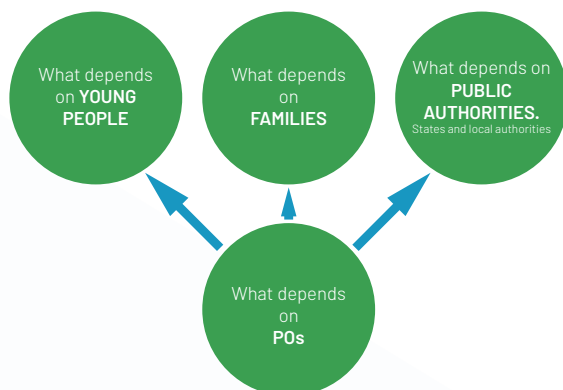
Rigidity of the operations manager blocks the young person → Risk of departure of the young person
Poor technical choices, unfavorable economic conditions → Family discouragement
Unfavorable environment, bad choice → Failure and frustration
Individualism → Forgetting solidarity
Land catchments → blockage of young people

This step back from the scenarios makes it possible to specify the **responsibilities of each person** in order to encourage desirable changes and avoid those to be feared.

- The responsibilities of **public authorities** are fundamental: Whatever the level of poverty of households, social mechanisms to guarantee education, food and health care for all must be implemented as a matter of urgency. The responsibility of States is first to ensure the foundations to enable young people to complete their education and take the time to get involved and build themselves up. Then it is to define and implement agricultural, land, commercial and territorial policies that promote family farming and the sustainable development of the rural world.
- **Families** are no less important because, even the adults are aware of this and say so, it is within them that the first unbearable obstacles for young people and their aspiration for more autonomy are located. It will be necessary to negotiate this autonomy with the elders, and for this, we need to open a dialogue. It is also at this level that the issue of early marriages of young girls must be addressed, as they most often respond to the ambitions of their parents rather than to their aspirations. Here we find the problem of the necessary change in mentalities. We will return to it at the end of Chapter 3.
- Those of the young people themselves, who must not give up in the face of the difficulties they encounter and be open to dialogue.
- The responsibilities of FOs are at the crossroads of the previous ones. They can, through farmer exchanges, support the families of their members as well as their children in reflection and intergenerational dialogue: ROPPA has begun to do so in the framework of this research. In the future, they will have to strengthen the consideration of the youth dimension in the policy dialogue and involve young people in it, notably by building on the results of the present research and by activating the Youth Colleges.



**WHO CAN ACT** to have each type of situation change?  
It should be determined



A detailed reflection should be carried out by FOs to determine which stakeholders they can interact with depending on the case.

This research highlights a number of assets that allow us to anticipate a strengthening of the exercise of these responsibilities<sup>12</sup>.

**We must not lose sight of the most discouraged young people.**

Youth involved in the scenarios aimed at modernizing FF or starting their own research (Scenarios 6, 7 and 8) are mainly targeted in the regional and national strategies to support the employability of rural youth, which rely on young "champions" or "agro-entrepreneurs" to modernize agriculture and build competitive enterprises.

However, the greatest number of rural youth are involved in scenarios 1, 3, 4, 5, which are most often survival scenarios: **if they are neglected, or exploited by those who succeed, the rural youth issue will be increasingly explosive<sup>14</sup>.**

In order to take into account all rural youth, a certain number of knots that were highlighted by the youth during their exchanges must be unraveled.

<sup>13</sup> Chapter 4 : Assets for the evolution of family farms

<sup>14</sup> See also Box [59]: Giving work also to rural youth who are not interested in family farming



### **3 WHAT NEEDS TO BE UNRAVELED TO RECONCILE RURAL YOUTH WITH FAMILY FARMING AND UNLEASH THEIR POTENTIAL**

By offering the opportunity to youth and adults to express themselves, the focus groups encouraged a free expression that allowed each of them to "get out what was in their hearts" and to often go very far in expressing their **frustrations** and **grievances**. This provides a dashboard to target what needs to be done to improve the lot of rural youth and their dynamic integration into family farms.

This clarification step is a necessary prelude to dialogue that can help rebuild new relationships.

**{30} What young people in the groundnut basin in Senegal refuse and want****WHAT THEY REFUSE:**

- That agriculture continues to be considered as a spare tire.
- We risk having a sad future even with extensive agriculture because if we have to weed everything, remove all the trees and shrubs to cultivate, we will end up with no wind breeze and no rain, which will surely lead to drought.
- The State continues to subsidize fertilizers, farmers also ask for more and more of them, and this impoverishes the land.
- Even when trees are cut down, shrubs must be left to regenerate, to avoid a deserted future. Avoid too much acacia too.
- Exploitation of young people by politicians
- Young people who have ambitions to work and who have no land should no longer be left unsupported.
- Agriculture is the key to development but presidents do not respect the young and decisions made for the young should not be made only by the elders.
- The lack of empowerment of young people on family farms.
- Older people use young people as staircases to be able to go up to a higher level. Sometimes there is exploitation of the youth on family farms because they are not given any wealth. There is nothing that belongs to the young and the young can say that this land belongs to me. On the contrary, the old man makes the young man cultivate it, uses this money to have another wife, and forces the young man to cultivate for the children of this other woman without even having an income.
- Forcing and grabbing of State land must not continue and must stop immediately because we want land that is secure and that our fathers help us.
- To always remain in the father's shadow so that we can't have access to the land.
- Stop renting out the land or offering it to marabouts.
- In rural areas, authorities have access to hectares of land unlike the villagers; if each authority grabs a piece of land and turns it into a land title, soon there will be no more land.

### {30} What young people in the groundnut basin in Senegal refuse and want

#### WHAT THEY WANT:

- We want productive agriculture but respecting trees and shrubs.
- We want to develop agriculture so that the drudgery can decrease. To move towards a more modern agriculture, with more advanced tools.
- We want family agriculture to be more profitable to help and finance all the activities of young people.
- Our farmers must be able to take agricultural technicians to support and coach them on certain points and with the income from sales, the farmers must pay these technicians.
- To have more agricultural universities like the Sine Saloum, with an opening to young rural people who have not been able to attend higher education.
- To have training to be able to do agriculture even on the table. The State must increase the number of solidarity training schools. Review the training offer for young people.
- To have subsidies for a better culture and to increase our profitability.
- That young people have jobs before even talking about employment and that the funds for young people be better used.
- To have systems that allow interaction between different actors in the ASPH trades so that the young farmer can give fodder to the young herders, and that the young fishermen receive rice from the young farmer and in exchange for something.
- An agriculture where the young farmer is richer than the operator (the middle-men who profit) with the support of the State.
- - In the future seeds should not depend on operators
- Projects and programs must go directly to the farmers, without going through the ministers who take money from the project fund; other intermediate authorities as well.
- In the future, decisions on agricultural policies should be decided with young people,
- We see a future without depending on donors.
- For the election of mayors, make selection criteria according to the competence and the number of time spent in the locality before election, and after election.
- The age limit for being mayor should be lowered to 55 years old; beyond that, one should no longer be able to be mayor.

- To have a youth representation in the different decision-making bodies, in the town halls to have a quota of young people.
- Mayors must also support youth who are engaged in profitable activities in the community so that they too can support and engage other youth in their businesses.
- To have municipalities a little more modern but respecting the standards of subdivisions as well as green spaces. Without forgetting to improve the living environment while respecting the environment and letting people cultivate the land. To have rural towns, places that have the structures that people need (hospitals, schools, tracks, ...) while keeping a rural touch, spacious roads, green areas, agricultural areas, ...
- Local authorities must support sport in villages and municipalities as a factor of social cohesion.

(focus group young people groundnut basin, Senegal)



### 3.1: Money Issue

Is money, as often said, the main motivating factor for young people? Reality revealed by the exchanges among young people in these focus groups is more subtle. It is not the search for money as such that is mainly emphasized, but rather the rejection of poverty and its economic and social consequences, or the yearning for more transparency and equitable sharing in the management of the farm.

It has been noted that many young people who leave to work outside the family farm, for example on gold sites, do so primarily to help their families (see youth booklet No. 1, § 2.4 - THE BURDEN OF POVERTY, and § 4.3 - REMOTENESS DUE TO ADVENTURE).

Their relationship to the family farm must be understood in this light. We can see that for rural youth who rely on the family farm to build their future, poverty is not inevitable and that the family farm can get out of it if it takes the means to do so. However, in the situation they are, their parents hold the key to the management of the family farm and to the relations between the different actors of this farm. Their great frustration stems from the fact that they think they are misusing this key. It is around this that there are knots to be untied.

### 3.2: Refusals That Frustrate Young People

#### Refusal to share the management and profits of the farm

When they mention in their exchanges this first refusal, which is very frequent, they express two feelings:

First that of being **exploited** by adults.

#### {31} Youth who feel exploited

"Young people do not find their place in FFs because after the harvest, they are far away from all sales and profits. This makes them frustrated. As a result, the young people in my village are not interested in agriculture but rather in studies, and farm managers are compelled to have employees to take care of their fields" (a young girl in the focus group in Northern Senegal).)

According to Seydou Sonko, "the real problem with FFs is that young people who are the ones who work and their parents are the ones who take the revenues from the harvests. For Souleymane Sagna, "we must focus on the fact that some parents refuse to give the young people their share of the harvest when it is rightfully theirs". (excerpt from the focus group in Casamance, Senegal)

"There's no sharing, so we'll look elsewhere" (Liberian youth during a panel at the regional sharing workshop).

"Older people use young people as stairs to get up to a higher level. Sometimes there is exploitation of young people on family farms because no wealth is allocated to them. From the point of view of young people, nothing belongs to them. The father of the family makes the young person work, uses the money and products of the farm to satisfy his needs, including marrying another woman." (focus group Groundnut Basin, Senegal). These burdensome factors create a desire among rural youth to migrate to find an additional activity to help cover unmet needs (research commentary CNCR, Senegal).

They essentially provide the family workforce. In addition, it appears that young people do not receive appropriate remuneration when they participate in the family's agricultural or pastoral activities, even though they may receive "gifts" in kind or in cash. However, young people increasingly need resources to cover the imperatives of their households, since at 30 years of age they have obvious family and societal responsibilities. This raises the question of governance within the FFs. (CNCR research, Senegal)

Then the feeling that **something is being hidden** from them.

### {32} Opaque management

"Most parents do not report the profits of the campaigns to their children. This discourages young people" (intervention by a young Burkinabe youth in a panel at the regional sharing workshop).

They are not involved in the management of the family farm. As a result, many young people feel that the income from the family farm is not sufficiently invested to the benefit of the members of the farm. (CTOP research, Togo)

"The young men have to talk to their parents to get what is due to them, because it is abnormal that after the campaign, instead of investing in the young man, the father prefers to look for another woman". (focus group North Senegal)

Young people do not participate in the distribution of income: opaque management characterizes exploitation (working group "helping young people to see their future in FF", regional sharing workshop).

### Lack of dialogue

In this regard, "some parents point to their own responsibilities, since they exchange very little with their children these days" (focus group Mali)



### **{33} Lack of communication**

#### ***A cultural barrier***

Participants in the youth focus group in the Southwest region stated, "African culture makes young people fear their elders and they are not free to express themselves. Intergenerational interaction is weak because the elders do not trust the youth. (Burkina Faso)

For Seydou Sonko: "Socio-cultural relations mean that young people don't even dare to give their opinion on how the family functions and the elders are always right in front of them and that's what makes them uncomfortable" (excerpt focus group Casamance, Senegal).

To escape the leaden blanket that is constantly hovering over their heads, they go where they can talk, where they can blossom, where they can judge. They go where words are no longer silenced. They go where, in front of them, they have the right to look at each other. (research CNOP/FENAJER, Mali)

#### ***a two-way communication to be generalized***

For Ibrahima S Djiba: "We must encourage more discussions within the FOs so that the heads of the farms improve their communication with the youth". For Lamine Sonko: "We must also improve communication between young people and make agriculture a matter for everyone" (excerpts from focus group Casamance).

Young people do not approach their parents to benefit from empirical knowledge and make the links with their modern knowledge. (panel regional sharing workshop).

In order to improve the relationship between parents and youth, communication between the two groups needs to be strengthened (CNCR research, Senegal).

### **Refusal to involve youth in decision-making**

Young people are weakly involved in decision making regarding farm running. They are not involved in the planning of activities and are often called upon to work as laborers on their parents' farms (working group "Helping youth see their future in FF", regional sharing workshop).

### **{34} Decisions taken without consultation**

Ibrahima Sorry Djiba: "There are also difficulties between decision-makers and young people: some decisions are often taken without the youth being involved, whether in the family or in governance.

Seydi Sonko: "Decisions are made by farm managers but their implementation depends on young people. Young people are essential for the survival of the farms,

so they feed the family. Therefore, we must listen to them when decisions are made.

(excerpt focus group Casamance, Senegal)

"At home, they only come to us for deliveries or small tasks, but never to consult us on any issue. Often they get us married in our absence or without consulting us" (a young girl, focus group Niger).

### 3.3: The Knot of Lack of Consideration

#### A great need for recognition

What the young people say shows a real suffering from the fact that they are not considered responsible and trustworthy people, and that people think and decide for them.

#### {35} "We are primarily responsible for our future".

"Our happiness and our future cannot be achieved without us, without our commitment, without consulting us. As a member of the community in general and of a family in particular, our opinions must be taken into account. Of course the elders are the custodians of our habits and customs, but the future belongs to us and we are accountable and responsible for what it will be" (Rahina Hama, focus group Niger).

#### {36} "We do not want to be considered as children."

"When it comes to work, when it comes to labor, we are considered as young, but when it comes to sharing the income, we are considered as children. Thus, young people think they are considered more like children, unable to manage, unable to contribute anything to their parents' farm other than labor force. They often have no idea how much income they generate from their efforts and what they actually earn from the farm" (intervention by a Liberian youth during a panel at the regional sharing workshop).

"If young people do not assert themselves, old people will never see them as mature people who can handle things". (focus group North Senegal)

## The main obstacle: the judgment that many adults have about youth.

One of the questions guiding this research was the adults' perception of youth<sup>15</sup>. The comments made in the focus groups of adults organized in each country show that young people are most often very severely judged by these adults and may therefore feel ostracized.

One of the comments made in the Intermediate summary of this research alerts on this subject: Adults' resentment of youth is a concern for social cohesion and the prospects of making young people the future of family farms. Is this resentment the result of a guilty subjectivity or a lack of analytical or social mediation skills? How did we arrive at this situation of "breaking the chain of transmission"? Is this situation reversible and under what conditions?

### {37} Parents' Resentment towards Youth (excerpts from adult focus group)

They blame their children for

- **being lazy and looking for the easy life:**

"Money has taken over, the land is no longer important and gold panning has made the situation worse" (focus group adults, Burkina Faso); "They don't want to suffer. They want to go to school but they forget that it is the field that pays their school fees. Today's young people don't know what to ask for. Working the land is the least of their worries. If you talk to them about rural activities, it is as if you were telling them a story" (adult focus group, Togo); "They prefer to show off in the village or animate the fadas, dress well, have a cell phone, go on exodus to the city or abroad, or work in gold panning sites, ride a motorcycle cab, beg outside the village, etc." (adult focus group, Togo). It is the complex, modernism and the search for easy money that prevent young people from working or helping their parents with their work" (adult focus group, Niger).

<sup>15</sup> **Ninth Research Question: WHAT IS ADULT MEMBERS' VIEW OF FAMILY FARMING ON YOUTH?** We know that young people's attitudes depend a great deal on the way adults (especially their fathers and mothers) look at them: they may feel understood or supported, or on the contrary misunderstood, underestimated, and suffer as a result. This adult perspective is built from the expectations that parents have of their children (which vary according to the age of the children, whether they are boys or girls, children they have sent to school and children they have not sent to school) and their understanding of social and cultural changes. It can be positive or negative, which is reflected in the types of judgments adults make about youth.

- **not respecting their parents, despising them**

"We have been educated to respect those who older than us, with our children we try to transmit this education to them but it is difficult" (Togo). "We have more and more young people who are very alert, nosier than before and in a hurry to move forward. Most of these young people have no respect for their elders. (Burkina Faso). "They no longer honor the right of the eldest" (Niger).

"Young people increasingly cultivate a complex about their parents' activities, which they think are demeaning, dirty, outdated, humiliating and not sufficiently remunerative. They are even ashamed of their parents' jobs" (Niger). "The children don't like the work, but they also refuse to learn my trade. They think that their father's job is not good. Today's children look outward, i.e. towards the rich, and refuse to follow their parents because of poverty" (Mali). "For adults, young people today are arrogant, think they know everything and think only of themselves" (Togo). ".... When you want to bring them back to order or reason, you risk being bothered or ridiculed. When you speak, they tell you that you are from ancient times, that today there is civilization, times have changed. They cited as an example "students who come back from university for the vacations and no longer consider their parents, who think they are grown up while being lazy. It is the same for apprentices and students" (Togo). Adults say of young people: "They think they are very intelligent" (panel regional sharing workshop).

- **Being unruly**

"It is very difficult today to educate young people because they are no longer submissive" (Togo). "Nowadays, you can't even tell your son or daughter to follow you to the fields, the garden or the river if you are a fisherman. Certainly, he will tell you that he will go, but he never goes. "I have to ask for help from other children in the village" (Niger); "...when back from work or school, cleaning or preparing food or even going to the fountain becomes a problem. "(Togo)"Often he refuses to eat your food if you are hard at work" (a mother, Burkina Faso). "When we were young, it is only once that our parents tell us to go to work in the field and that is enough for us to go every day, often without even eating. Nowadays, we have to give money, often up to five hundred (500) francs a day for a child to go to a modern school or a Koranic school. Otherwise, he hides somewhere and comes back as if he has been there. Children lie, steal, cheat and do everything that is forbidden, which would have cost us reprimands and even severe punishments. It's sad, everything has changed now" (Niger).

- **Being individualistic**

"They have become individualistic. They do not respond to the development activities of their communities. "(Togo); "Adults also think that young people no longer have the culture of community life. They only think about themselves. They no longer participate in community work and are not very involved in the

development activities of their communities: today when we ask people to come out, young people don't come out" (regional sharing workshop panel).

- **having lost traditional values:**

"According to them, they neither respect tradition and ancestral values to the benefit of Western civilization. Young people reject ancestral practices because of religion. They no longer respect the rules of society, they no longer know the prohibitions and they are not even afraid of their lives" (panel regional sharing workshop).

"I say that we have young people today, if we don't re-frame or recover them, they will be empty of culture and tradition, and agriculture is part of our culture." (focus group adults, Togo)

- **being deprived**

"Young people are not valued in their communities because for many, they are a threat to peace and security of their communities. The youth are accused of robberies, burglaries; they smoke and drink alcohol. They gamble. They have developed a relationship with music, films, soap operas that are now sex-oriented. In this way, the young people are noticed for their exaggerated clothing styles and hairstyles". "If there is no change, future generations will be like animals and will mate in the street" (focus group adults, Togo).

- **they blame society:**

- **school**

"This situation of disrespect for adults, for parents, started with school. For them, young people are taught Western civilization, which they feel is not working well. They accuse the African authorities who facilitate this situation and do nothing to protect African values" (adult focus group, Togo, Burkina Faso).

- **Religion**

influence of cults on youth (panel regional sharing workshop). "Western beliefs have made our beliefs and traditions disappear, they no longer respect norms and prohibitions, they say that Jesus died for all that. They say that they no longer have to make sacrifices" (adult focus group, Togo).

- **Children's Rights**

Many adults have pegged Children's Rights as the main cause of inappropriate youth behavior. Children's Rights would prevent them from properly educating their children. "If you want to hit a young person today, he tells you he will call you at 111 (a toll-free number for reporting child abuse). They say they have rights. The person who brought the rights has to talk to them about the duties too and make sure they respect them too! ». "If you want to punish your child,

he tells you that you don't have the right. If you don't watch out, he will have you locked up. This makes children rude and recalcitrant." They deplore the fact that children are no longer forced to go to the field with their parents today with the advent of Children's Rights and child labor which have made young people lazy. "Today, the young people themselves decide to accompany their parents to the farm. It is no longer an obligation." (focus group adults, Togo, Senegal)

- **social networks**

"With social networks, young people don't learn anymore, we don't know where they get the money to buy phones..." (Adult focus group, Togo). "Social networks are considered worse than drugs" (adult focus group, Burkina Faso).

Distrust of youth is strong, yet "we cannot trust those who do not trust us," commented one Liberian youth during a panel at the regional sharing workshop.



### 3.4: Shortcomings in the support of young people

One of the questions of this research was about the dynamics of youth support<sup>16</sup>. Unanimously, young people are dissatisfied with the support provided by families, FOs and public authorities, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

#### The low impact on rural youth of the actions of the State and local authorities

The lack of communication between State structures and rural youth is a real problem and most young people are not informed about the development policies initiated in their favor (focus group Casamance).

And yet their expectations with regard to this support are high.

#### {38} Expectations of young people in Liberia

They said there was a great need to provide programs that will provide skills, assets, and support for youth to obtain a stable source of income through self-employment in the informal sector. Youth place a high value on education and livelihoods as their main goals and priorities. Targeting rural areas and the agricultural sector is important to reach a wide range of disadvantaged youth. (FUN research, Liberia), Liberia)

They are seeking support in terms of access to modern technologies: ("There are no modern agricultural technologies introduced in this community to encourage young people to engage in agriculture" – (FUN research, Liberia), access to finance ("There is a need to identify ways to open up financing alternatives that support the livelihoods of young people, including : savings mobilization efforts and accounting training, the introduction of flexible loan products and/or value chain financing for youth start-ups and the extension of agricultural finance to create downstream effects for youth" – FUN research, Liberia), education ("the State has a share of responsibility

<sup>16</sup> **Eighth Research Question: WHAT ARE THEIR READINGS OF CURRENT SUPPORTING DYNAMICS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE?** Do they see the actions carried out by FOs, CSOs, States, FBOs etc... towards young people (have they heard about them, do they benefit from them themselves)? If so, how do they understand this recent interest in youth? How do they appreciate the support, targeting of youth etc. (do they think it meets their needs)?



because it has failed to prepare young people in the education system on the challenges of the agricultural sector and the place that this sector holds for our food security" - focus group Casamance, Senegal).

They also expect the State to put pressure on technical and financial partners to step in where young people really need funding ("stop being wrung out by donors"). In the same vein, they criticize the action of NGOs that tend to invest only in training ("If everyone finances training only, in the end we will have lots of young trainers and no young people to train at the grassroots level because everyone will become a trainer or facilitator") - focus group groundnut basin, Senegal.

They would like aid to be better planned ("Local elected officials must take young people into account in their local development plan because there is a relationship of interdependence between young people and their land") and better controlled ("The mode of governance of State agencies towards young people must be reviewed by setting up an effective control system because sometimes the results produced by these agencies in favor of young people are minimal compared to expectations"). Finally, they are waiting to be better considered ("To boost the FFs, more socio-political consideration must be given to young people" - focus group Casamance, Senegal).

However, these expectations are disappointed. When they hear about State's programs for youth, they benefit very little (Mali, Senegal): they do not feel this State support.

### {39} Promises that are not kept

The initiatives taken towards young people do not materialize concretely. They are verbal and on the ground, effective and efficient actions are not implemented. The government makes promises that are not kept. The support to agriculture through the implementation of fertilizers is a palpable example (3 bags of NPK for a whole village). The 30% quota is not respected for young girls and women. (CPF research, Burkina Faso)

"Most say that they do not receive support at their locations. They think that the interviewers come to the villages to collect information about them, but nothing concrete comes afterwards. (focus group Ségou, Mali)

**Grievances** of young people against public stakeholders focus on four main points:

**1. The support they provide is inadequate**

Most supports for youth are established without their involvement or a prior diagnosis of their real needs. As a result, today, many projects and programs fail. (Research CNOP/FENAJER, Mali)

For us young people, the government is not supporting and/or creating better conditions for rural youth. Working materials are expensive and therefore impossible to acquire because we lack resources. "(focus group Burkina Faso)

Local authorities spend all their time financing Sabar, dances, music, meetings and never the important things" (focus group groundnut basin, Senegal).al).

**2. When it exists, this support is insufficient and punctual.**

Some young people thanked the State through the Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment (APEJ) which acts in the field of fish farming, and others who appreciate the support of local NGOs such as "Farafasiso", a local NGO that gives inputs and seeds to producers. These few initiatives give a little hope to rural youth, but beyond that the horizon is very bleak for the youth because this support is insufficient; the supply provided by the government is very low compared to the demand". (focus group Ségou, Mali). "Even after funding, there is no support or sustainability. (focus group groundnut basin, Senegal). "There are also many delays in the process, so that when a project starts at time T and trains a young person, 4 years later at the time of funding the young person is 36 years old and so there is a problem of knowing if he is still young or not" (focus group North Senegal).

**3. their management is not transparent**

The assessment of support and targeting of young people is still a fuzzy question since they generally lack transparency (CNOP/FENAJER research, Mali).

Some funds for young people do not reach them, they are often intercepted by certain leaders and given the weak position that youth in particular occupy in society, they are often even afraid to claim what is rightfully theirs" (focus group Casamance, Senegal).

Involvement of young people is more than ever a necessity in the

establishment and implementation of the various actions concerning them. Any action decided in their place, without them, is an action doomed to failure (CNOP/FENAJER research, Mali).

**4. these supports are used for political purposes and are provided in a selective or even discriminatory manner.**

Support is only present and visible during political campaigns and other awareness programs for various causes" (focus group Ségou, Mali).

Young people in cities are the first to be targeted: "Senegal will never emerge if the emergence only takes into account young people in Dakar" - focus group groundnut basin, Senegal.

All activities are politicized to the point of affecting community relations. Those who are in the same political party are on the same side (power) and other young people are isolated. Even the support funds for them are used for political purposes or target only the youth in the communities of the people in charge of implementing the action. As a result, the real beneficiaries very rarely benefit; the few young people who do benefit are those close to the people in charge of the action. (CNOP/FENAJER research, Mali).

The State must stop giving quotas to ministers and people close to the government for project financing. The State finances young politicians and installs them in other localities. Politicized old ladies and their circles are financed instead of young active people and innovative project leaders" (focus group groundnut basin, Senegal).

« Il faut que l'État arrête de donner des quotas aux ministres et personnes proches du gouvernement pour les financements des projets. L'État finance les jeunes politiques et les installe dans d'autres localités. De vieilles dames politisées et leurs cercles sont financées en lieu et place de jeunes actifs et porteurs de projet innovants » (focus group bassin arachidier, Sénégal)

Youth are disadvantaged in relation to donor and government-funded programs ("about half of young women under 25 years of age are proportionately disadvantaged by government and donor-funded programs"). FUN research, Liberia

Young people are the lever of development, we have to stop making them just the preface of the book. Our FOs and States use us to get funding and then use it as they see fit". (a young girl in the focus group North Senegal)

## Weakness of farmers' organizations support

In many cases, young people **do not find their place in FOs**, either because they do not know them (for example, in southern Togo, very few of the young people we met are members and many do not know them in their locality), or because they think that they are not made for them (they think that they are adult organizations), or because they do not open their doors to them ("integration in the FOs is not often easy in some countries" - (contribution by a young Beninese man in one of the panels of the regional sharing workshop).

While acknowledging the positive action of large farmers' federations (Senegal) and some grassroots FOs (Northern Togo), they can be very critical of farmers' organizations.

### {40} A severe indictment against FOs

"Grassroots FOs use young people for their strengths only and when it comes to the benefits, the leaders put forward their own people or their entourage. The criticisms that our leaders make to the State and the President they have to start with themselves because they do not respect the youth. They also use us to solicit partners."

"It is also necessary that in the federations we stop the divisions between the elderly and against the young. Only a few organizations, even federations of the CNCR, have young people in their boards of directors."

The main criticism addressed to the farmers' organizations is to privilege a core of young people who each time benefit from the same training, the same trips, the same financing. A strong advocacy was made in favor of a better decentralization of activities and equal access of young people to information.

"Training courses benefit only a minority. But even when they train us, their trainings are never followed up. They train us but they don't support us to succeed. Only some young people out of thousands have been helped by the FOs".

However, some participants said that their interest in agriculture or animal husbandry was stimulated during a training offered by a farmers' or producers' organization.

Young people expect from the FOs capacity building, financial means to succeed in their activities. FOs should be able to trust and finance young people. To also provide material support and follow-up.

(excerpts from the focus group of young people from the Groundnut Basin, Senegal)"

Thus, these young people do not feel well supported by farmers' organizations that do not give enough importance to their daily lives and constraints (Niger, Guinea Bissau, Senegal).

When they do exist, the supports provided by the FOs does not go to those who are entitled to it but to the relatives of those in charge or is used for other purposes (Mali). In addition, youth do not have access to information and are not involved in the decisions that concern them.

#### [41] The low representation of youth within the FOs

Young people are poorly represented in farmers' organizations. As a result, they find very few positions of responsibility. This situation does not reflect their level of commitment and representativeness in certain sectors, particularly agriculture, livestock breeding and fishing. To improve this situation, young people must work for better representation to defend their expectations in mixed federative frameworks. Their greatest strength will come from their representativeness in grassroots organizations, in umbrella organizations and consultation frameworks. The aim is to strengthen the skills of young rural producers so that they can gradually rise to the rank of farmer leaders, capable of assuming union and political functions. This raises the issue of their involvement and accountability in all development actions. (FNFP research, Niger)

However, they have **expectations from farmers' organizations**. Thus, the young Togolese expressed the wish that "FOs be incubators for young people, that the support of FOs for young people, which is currently insufficient apart from the few rare cases where it works, be strengthened; FOs must help young people to have access to credit and advocate to lighten the process as well as the guarantees that the bank asks for: if necessary, FOs must commit to guaranteeing their young people so that they can have access to financing. They must encourage the State to support this process, and also develop the territory so that water and other productive resources are accessible to young people in all areas" (focus group Togo).

It is by responding to these expectations that FOs will gain the trust of young people<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> The YOUTH COLLEGES were instituted by the POs in this perspective (see below, chapter 5).

#### {42} In Senegal, greater trust in large FOs than in local FOs

Large organizations such as ASESCAW, FONGS and CNCR, which have helped the farming world a lot for a better adequacy of policies with the realities of the FFs and contributed to the regulation of relations between the FFs, the State and agricultural service providers, are still mobilizing in rural areas, and young people are open to their support. On the other hand, many rural youths are developing a kind of mistrust towards locally based FOs that are trying to sort themselves and some of which are running without members. Some young people regret having contributed to the establishment of an organization in their village, an organization that seems to have disappointed them because it is much more oriented towards the political support of personalities than towards the development of the village. These cases are at the origin of dissent from members of these organizations, which have created another structure that is in open conflict with the original one. (CNCR research)

##### *Unwelcoming women's group*

"After the death of my paternal aunt, who owned a dairy processing unit and was also a well-known development worker in the FOs, I tried to approach the women's group so that I could participate in the success of their activities, especially the dairy processing unit. But to my great surprise I was not welcome. The women in my village do not want to integrate young girls into their activities. They call them city girls because they are students." (Account from a 26-year-old master's student in the North Senegal focus group).

Is the current "disinterest" of young people in POs a cause or a consequence of the lack of support? In any case, the question challenges the farmer's movement in terms of contents and methodology of youth support. (Comments in the first summary of the research of the Farmers' Platforms).



### 3.5: Blocking the access to the earth

Access to land for young people is not effective. Parents and customary land rights possess land. Access is very limited and on limited areas as well. (CPF research, Burkina Faso).

#### {43} A debate among young people on land tenure in developed areas

Yokh Fall: "The land problem is that families are growing and land development is not keeping up. As a result, the elderly don't want to or can't give the land to one person. In addition, the little land that is available is given to property owners and not to young people. The solution lies in giving the land back to the youth under accessible conditions. Through advocacy and lobbying."

Bassirou Diaw: "The State develops the land, so it must ensure that young people can access the land. The 3PRD program is a clear example of poor land redistribution by the State (the contributions requested are too high in relation to the needs and capacities of young people). Young people need to review their involvement in the farmers' movement."

Oumar Ba: "Young people too have not been sufficiently involved in land tenure, because there are still resources available but young people do not claim them."

Moussa Ndiaye: "Land resources are still available but poorly distributed. Young people need to organize themselves within organizations and do the necessary advocacy. The law on the national domain must be enforced (land must be delivered to those who can use it). Alternatively, a fixed-term allocation system could be introduced and land could be reallocated on a commission basis."

Modou Fall: "Land tenure is very complex and requires a concerted effort by all the stakeholders in the agricultural sector. The law says that the land belongs to the person who uses it, so it cannot be rented out. Young people are passive; they must be present in the decision-making bodies." (focus group from Northern Senegal)

#### A major challenge for the future of family farming

The tendency of rural communities is to allocate large areas of land to political and religious figures who register them in order to lease them to farming families (CNCR Senegal research and CNOP/FENAJER Mali research).

With population growth, the shrinking of arable land is further exacerbated by urbanization and the sale of land by farmers: "Since family farms cannot cover needs, arable land is sold to companies, large firms and multinationals. Family farmers will become simple sharecroppers on the farms they used



to own: the family farm is even disappearing" - (CTOP research, Togo).

### A source of tension within families

The strong intra-family tensions can be explained by a social and agrarian context that can be particularly harmful. For example, in the northern zone of Senegal, land availability in many of the FFs hovers around an average of 0.15 ha to 0.2 ha, which is insufficient to meet the food and material needs of two or even three households at the same time. It should also be noted that redistribution (through inheritance, particularly in polygamous families) of land resources is not always done equitably; in these cases, the most disadvantaged are the young in general and women in particular. These situations essentially explain the disruptive behaviors in the FFs that cause young people to leave the FFs to go into exile in cities or neighboring countries. (Research CNCR Senegal)

Young people also feel that it is unfair that when the family allocates land to them, it is always marginal land, often the most remote and least fertile land in the village. When they have valorized it, it is taken away from them (FNFP research, Niger).

Young girls are often "downplayed" in the use of land because some believe that after marriage the land will belong to the in-laws. "(focus group Casamance, Senegal).

### Elders' mistrust of young people

Current customs tend to give control of the land to older men. However, older men do not trust young people to protect the family's assets.

**{44} Elders want to protect the capital of family farms**

"Just an anecdote: I have a friend, his father rented a hectare of land; my friend came to ask him to rent it at CFA F 100,000 and his father refused, yet his father rented it to another person at only CFA F 90,000. So the question I ask myself is how can we analyze this? Why refuse his son something and give it to another person who has nothing to do with the family? Sincerely, the way family farms operate must be reviewed if we want them to continue to exist". (focus group North Senegal)

For some adults, the allocation of land to young people is synonymous with the dislocation of the large family into nuclear families. If a young person has a personal field, he tends to focus on his personal field at the expense of the collective field (CNOP/FENAJER research, Mali).

They think about the risk of disappearance of family farms because according to them, "young people will sell the land at low prices to make a living and have adventures for the rest of their lives or become brigands or thieves" (focus group adults Togo).



## 3.6: Three insights provided by this research

### There is a family crisis

This crisis is felt by young people who aspire to start families different from the ones they have known. It is also perceived by adults.

#### {45} Families that lose their cohesion

Globally, all adults recognize the lack of union and agreement among parents in the communities to be able to counsel youth. If parents are not united, it will be very difficult for them to control their children.

Some men accuse the women of this: "Today, women no longer submit to their husbands and this has an influence on the education of the children, they also copy these bad habits".

They also recognize that today the whole family (parents, aunt, sister, grandfather, grandmother, etc.) is no longer involved in the education of children. They recognize the irresponsibility or the evasion of responsibility of some parents who do not provide birth certificates to their children, or who are responsible for the marginalization of some of their children, especially girls, child abuse, forced marriage for their personal benefit.

"Even some adults are in the same situation as young people," said one participant, addressing the issue of disrespect for others, for the rules of society and for tradition. "Some adults are not exemplary." (adult focus group, Togo)

"If I refuse to feed a child to punish him for bad behavior or disobedience, his mother hides to give him that food; which makes him feel better about his bad behavior," said one parent in Niger, echoing the accusation of women by men heard in Togo. These discrepancies between fathers and mothers indicate that mothers' relationship with their children is often more understanding than that of fathers, and therefore they can play a positive role in reconciling these children with the generations that preceded them.

The break between generations is indeed an important element of this family crisis whose causes, which families did not see coming, are societal: "In recent decades, societies have changed and so has the nature of mankind. Our society was not expecting such a change, which has totally disrupted everything in its path (culture, education, economy, health, community, etc.)." (CPF research, Burkina Faso).

**{46} A break between generations?**

"Young people and adults share the same space but live two different realities" (research CNOP/FENAFER, Mali).

A break between "young" and "old"? According to interviews with some parents, the first signs of a break between the younger generation and their parents' generation exist, but this break has deepened with the evolution of rural societies. Some parents point out that it is difficult to have a fruitful dialogue with young people because of the external influences of education. They also recognize that their difficult living conditions (lack of financial resources, persistent food insecurity, etc.) have a very negative impact on the lives of young people (poverty, lack of employment, unemployment, exodus, migration/emigration). (CPF research, Burkina Faso)

### The misunderstandings between the generations derives from two different conceptions of the family farm.

The working group "helping young people to envisage their future in EF" of the regional sharing workshop sought to better understand how misunderstandings between parents and children are built around two different conceptions of family farm. He suggested the following analysis:

- Young people **limit the family farm to agricultural production** (economic dimension) and ignore all the other dimensions that are of little interest to them and leave it to the parents. The latter think that young people are not interested enough in agriculture but are rather attracted by technology (Internet, television, etc.). As a result, there is a lack of parental confidence in children's involvement in the family farm.
- Parents **do not separate the responsibilities of the father from those of the farm manager**. For them, it is the duty of the head of the family to take care of all the family's expenses himself. Thus, just like civil servants who do not tell their wives and children about their salaries, it is difficult for heads of family farms (in order to keep the family fabric stable and to avoid the demands of women and children) to declare their assets to other family members. As well, in many circles, out of mistrust and to be safe from jealousy, no one likes to disclose their income, their "wealth". For parents, but they are not convinced that it is for young people.

Their priorities are very much tied to their respective conceptions of the family farm and society, and they are not always compatible.

**{47} Adults' priorities are different from their children's priorities.**

Adults point out that young people want to be paid while the family farm functions are not able to meet these needs (money has destroyed everything). "At a certain age of the boy, the father was saving rice and money for his son. When he got married he would give it to him as a starting fund. But now they want to have their money after the campaign, no saving. **The priority for the head of the farm is to regulate the family's food sovereignty.**" (adult focus group Casamance, Senegal).

The ban on child labor does not allow children to be forced to work in the fields. This constitutes an obstacle to the socialization of children on the dynamics of family farms (focus group Togo).

Without regular dialogue between parents and children about family farming and the decisions that need to be made about it, no mutual understanding and no adjustment of perceptions will be possible: misunderstandings will multiply and tensions will only increase, to the detriment of the future of this exploitation.

**Dialogue can be used to get out of the current blockages**

To promote this necessary change in mentalities, which has been mentioned several times<sup>18</sup>, it is necessary to get out of the current blockages and to do so, first of all, as this research has begun to do, **to set free the words of young people and adults so that they can get out what is in their hearts**, then **to facilitate the re-establishment of mutual listening and dialogue**, and finally **to enrich this dialogue** with contributions that open up perspectives and allow points of view to evolve.

This was the function of the palaver, which in a very subtle way purged conflicts and re-established social ties and harmony by establishing tolerance that allowed for dialogue and by bringing about changes in behavior; but the traditional palaver was often lost. This is also partly the function of farmers' exchanges today.

<sup>18</sup> See Box [14] above, and the recommendation of the regional sharing workshop to help young people see their future in family farming: "FF members and FOs must commit to a change of mentality in order to overcome current divisions and improve relations between young people and parents" (Box [60]).

New forms of exchange among young people, among adults and between adults and young people need to be sought and built, and it is at the local level, as close as possible to the families and their daily lives, that they can be effective.

The grassroots FOs can greatly facilitate this in-depth social work in the extensions to be given to this research. However, they must be made aware of it. Farmers' movement wants to run within itself a farmer reflection on the responsibilities that each person must take to improve intergenerational cooperation within family farms, notably by using existing exchange frameworks (educational talks, farmers' exchanges, Farmer University, Youth Colleges, etc.).

This research shows that there are a certain number of **assets** that help think that dialogue can be established and a positive evolution is possible.





# 4 *ASSETS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF FAMILY FARMS*

To untie the knots that prevent many rural youth from fully investing in the life and transformation of family farms, each actor must have the courage to make certain breaks and take full responsibility.

The areas of responsibility of each category of stakeholders<sup>19</sup> have been identified above. The present research allows us to identify the concrete assets that can be used by each type of actor to promote positive changes.

<sup>19</sup> Chapter 2: Nine scenarios for the possible evolution of rural youth in West Africa - § 2.3: the first lessons that can be drawn from the knowledge of these scenarios - "we understand that nothing is definitively decided".



## 4.1: First asset: the existence of a feeling of responsibility among young people.

An important contribution of this research has been to show that not all rural youth reject the family farm and that a certain number of them rely on it to build their future (see above, Chapter 2: When young people rely on FF to build their future: 5 scenarios). For these young people, building this future presupposes that changes will take place, and any change requires breaks.

Careful listening to the exchanges among young people shows that for them it is not a question of breaking all ties with previous generations (as can be seen through their life course), but that at least some of them feel that these breaks will not come spontaneously from their parents and that they must take their own responsibilities to make them. "The subsistence culture of FFs is not able to keep us alive. We have to try to **develop alternatives** and links between the different stakeholders in the different sectors," says one of them. We need to review the management policy of FFs. Either we adapt or we die. »

Behind the lines of break appear **lines of initiative**. The following can be identified:

### Do not remain passive

*"All young people have ideas," observes a young Senegalese, "but an idea that is not realized and for which no effort is made is useless"*

#### {48} Don't stand idly by

*"We young people **should no longer wait until we have all the means to start**. Until we have all the means to start. Young farmers must have conviction and determination. Without these qualities, young people are comparable to 90-year-olds. Young people must love the work. Young people, even if they don't have a lot of money, need to get started: that way when someone wants to help you, they will find you in something". (B. Diaw)*

*"Young people need to be entrepreneurs, even if they don't have their own land; they need to use the family's land until they have the strength to have their own land. They have to **take their own initiatives**; either they have to seek knowledge or money but either way they **have to be in search of something**. They must refuse to sit back and say that since they are not integrated into the processes they are not going to do anything. They must also refuse to be tools for politicians. (Mr. Ndiaye)*

*"It is also necessary that the young people stop going to Dakar to stay there, they **must return to take over the FF**. For that to happen, parents must also help the young people to have some of the conveniences of life. Such as nice clothes, good smartphones, a car... because society is currently developed and if we want young people to stay in FFs, they must not envy those who are in the cities"(T. Diop).*

*"The young people must refer to the functioning of society but also try to see how to change certain habits. For example, some young people work for months at a time, especially for young women, but waste all that money on a wedding, baptism ... **These habits must change if we want to live in better conditions than our ancestors did.**"(A. Diop)*

*(excerpt from the youth focus group, Northern Senegal)*

*Zaliatou and Benaou Batibié say: "**Change in our future begins today.** We must fight, not accept our situation and continue to seek gainful and sustainable employment."*

*(focus group in Tiano, Central West - Burkina Faso)*

## Overcoming old divides, building new relationships

"The young farmers, herders and fishermen have overcome the old quarrels that existed among parents active in the different sectors"(a young person in the focus group in Northern Senegal). Today it is a question of "improving communication among young people from different sectors and making agriculture a matter for everyone"(a young person in the focus group in Casamance, Senegal).

### {49} Initiatives for cooperation between young people from different sectors

#### **new relationships between young rice farmers and young pastoralists**

*In the discussions, sector-specific problems were raised and possible solutions proposed, such as the forage problem. Now young herders can build relationships with young rice farmers: for example, as soon as the rice is harvested, the bran is sold to them at a very affordable price instead of being given to traders who only want to line their pockets. (focus group North Senegal)*

#### **to bring back to life among young people old practices abandoned by their parents**

*"To have systems that allow interaction between different actors in the ASPH professions so that the young farmer can give fodder to the young herders, and so that the young fishermen receive rice from the young farmer and exchange something."(focus group in Casamance, Senegal).*

*"We also need to start developing new practices with young farmers. For example, leave open spaces for herders to come and graze their herds and then use these fertilized spaces for other production and let the herders use the area they have just harvested and the agricultural residues. The herders could also contribute financially for the farmer and even in milk. With this process also we could try to see another model that could allow the integration of fishermen." (focus group from Northern Senegal)*

So " when young people advocate to the authorities, they should not limit themselves to advocating for their sector, they should advocate for Agriculture as a whole." (a young person in the focus group in Northern Senegal).

This willingness to go beyond sectorial or individual interests is also found in relation to society.

#### {50} Serving the community

We are ready to take up the challenge of the search for knowledge, patriotism and civic-mindedness. We are ready to formulate clear projects to develop our localities (focus group groundnut basin, Senegal).

"Youth must develop a model of citizenship that benefits the community. Even if we don't earn enough money by doing community or social activities, **we will still have served community well**" (a young Senegalese - Casamance).

### Commitment, organization and support among rural youths

"The future of young people depends on **young people, so young people need to continue to see each other**, exchange ideas and try to resolve situations on their own. Because sometimes the solution to our problems is in the hands of another young person" (conclusion of the North Senegal focus group).

"Active youth will pool their strengths to support each other. They are committed to providing leadership at all levels." (focus group groundnut basin, Senegal).

"What worries me today is the fact that youth are excluded by the society in which we live. **I see myself as a leader in the farming world for the promotion of rural women** and this is very close to my heart" (focus group young girls Koulikoro, Mali).

### {51} Organizing among young people to have more strength

**"Young people don't want to be followers for life. That is to say, to always be behind the old people in the POs, without them leaving us any room".** (B. Fall, Northern Senegal)

"We young people **need to organize ourselves**, formalize ourselves to have more strength and access decision-making bodies. Because as long as we are not part of those who decide, they will always decide for us. We also need to go towards information. The problem of land also comes from the local authorities who allocate hectares to agribusinesses that live on the sweat of our young people, giving them 99-year leases. We need to organize ourselves as a union to fight against this."

"Young people will take their steps and take the lead to start claiming their rights from the FFs, FOs, LCs and the State". (focus group Casamance)

They want to help each other acquire skills and find jobs.

### {52} Young people who care about other young people

"In the exercise of my activities, I have received funding that allowed me to settle in properly. In return, I pass on the training that I receive from CTOP and REJEPPAT to other young people, I direct them to institutions that finance youth and women's projects; I support those who want to organize themselves into cooperatives. To date, 4 young people work with me on a full-time basis and 7 women on a part-time basis. I have taken over my mother regarding the education expenses of my other brothers."(excerpt from the story of Afantchawo Koudasse, Togo, told during the regional sharing workshop)

#### **Training other young people**

"What I fear most is that if nothing is done to enable young people to retrain and adapt to climate change, our farms will be abandoned. Despite my status as a teacher, I see myself in the coming days as a big farmer and I even plan to make my farm a school field to allow young people to learn from an early age." (focus group Koulikoro, Mali)

#### **Hiring other young people**

"I am a farmer by birth and I have fields. I have also done training on market gardening and I am an organic farmer. My future, since I have enough space, is to set up a village farm, so that I can hire young people from my locality who are unemployed." (focus group groundnut basin, Senegal)

"I would like to have the means and the information about my activity and in this case not only will I succeed, but I will create jobs for other young people who are going through the same situation that I experienced." (Aminata Diarra, already cited [21], focus group Koulikoro, Mali).

## Looking for solutions

When young people get together to talk about family farms, they can be very creative in imagining how they can be transformed. Often they come up with concrete solutions that are not beyond their reach and that in many cases they have already implemented.

### {53} Brainstorming among young people on alternatives to be developed to save family farms

- Make better use of **agricultural residues**. However, on this point there is an evolution, before we didn't sell rice straw, but now since 2 years it has evolved.
- Don't rely on the areas available for FF only, but **young people must look for other FFs**, that is to say other fertile lands where to settle, to cultivate.
- Change the current format of FFs to allow all members of FF to have their own income.
- FFs should not be based on agriculture alone, they **must diversify their sources of income** and for that, the young people are the ones who must be in charge of the portage.
- Young people should be able to specialize in **trades related** to agriculture as well as in services, such as mechanics, drivers, etc.
- The future of the FFs also depends on their ability to adapt, but above all on how they can do to promote one of their functions, which is **marketing** outside of consumption. Because even if the yield is not high, if the FF is able to sell some of its production, it can diversify the household basket, have a better consumption and nutrition.
- Family farms must be formalized and **have a status**. There needs to be a shift from family farms to family businesses.
- We could try **to organize ourselves into an MSE in the FFS, instead of dividing up the land once the head of the family disappears**. In this way, some family members will cultivate the fields, others will process the products and others will market the products. In this way, we could always continue to support the FFs and generate our own resources that would allow us to live for a year

without needing the help of others or of the State. In this way we could also solve the income problems that push young people to emigrate.  
(focus group North Senegal)

## Cooperating with alumni

The rural youths' break with tradition is rarely total.

### {54} Keeping the knowledge of the ancients

"We must also try to keep the knowledge of the elders, to have a legacy that can allow us to keep all this empirical knowledge. We need a library of the elders' knowledge. **This is the only way to keep the FFs alive**, even if the current format of FFs will surely change to adapt to the situation" (a young person in the North Senegal focus group).

"There are good practices that our ancestors used and that just need to be improved a little bit and get solutions to some of our current problems. I take the example of ensilage: it's a technique that my grandfather practiced many times, only now it's being improved according to climatic realities of our times. I invite young people to create things for their communities based on the empirical knowledge of our ancestors but also on new techniques, so that we can move towards development" (accounts by Oumar Bâ in the focus group North Senegal, already quoted {18})



Among the nine scenarios for the development of rural youth described in the first chapters of this booklet, four are based on cooperation between these young people and their parents<sup>20</sup>.

But the condition for these scenarios to take place is that these parents are themselves open enough to question the practices that keep their children away from family farms, and to enter into new relationships with their children.

## 4.2: Second Asset: Opening-up of some Adults

Two research questions focused specifically on adult attitudes<sup>21</sup>. It has already been seen that adults often make harsh judgments about youth (see Box {37}), but not all adults do.

### {55} Two adults from the Valley seeking to understand their children

***Mr. Diop: The realities are no longer the same, but young people hold the keys to the future.***

"In 1959 we were the young people of this village; at that time there were no facilities, there was no machine. As far as land is concerned, the realities are not the same: with the increase in population, young people have difficulty accessing land.

<sup>20</sup> **Scenario 2:** Succeeding elsewhere and helping one's family from afar; **Scenario 3:** Returning to FF after moving away from it; **Scenario 5:** Continuing to evolve within FF; **Scenario 6:** Remaining within FF to help it transform.

<sup>21</sup> **Tenth Research Question: WHAT ARE THE CONCERNS AND HOPE OF ADULT MEMBERS OF FAMILY FARMS IN RELATION TO THEIR CHILDREN AND CURRENT YOUTH?** Children have traditionally been the "life insurance" for elders and the family farm that they are supposed to keep going. This assumes that they are socially successful as well and if possible better than their parents and that they support the family farm. However, many things have changed over the last few decades that are all factors of new concern for parents (lack of after-school opportunities, new influences on young people and new behaviors at home, desertion from FF and the rural world, etc.). The aim here is to identify the concerns currently dominant among those in charge (men and women) of family farms, and the outcomes they foresee.

**Eleventh research question: WHAT RESPONSIBILITIES DO ADULTS SEE ABOUT CURRENT YOUTH?** Some of these responsibilities relate to the current situation: they are the responsibilities that adults themselves have in the current difficulties of youth. It is about finding out whether they are aware of this part of the adults' responsibility towards the youth's problems and how they analyze it. Others concern the future: it is about identifying if families refuse to "give up" and what they are ready to commit themselves to, without waiting for the intervention of external actors, in order to facilitate tomorrow the socio-economic integration of young people.

Currently, our young people are in charge of our farms in addition to our MSEs, so it is in our interest that they stay with us on our farms; moreover, they are the next generation. Personally, I have given my children the opportunity to farm by giving them each 1 hectare of land because it is essential to prepare the next generation of farmers for the survival of the family farm."

*M. Wade : **Mr. Wade: they don't have to do what we did, so they can get by.***

"We're afraid that young people will repeat our mistakes. Farming and animal husbandry must be practiced as a modern business. The majority of the people in the village have been farming since we were young, but we have not been able to achieve anything with it. So the young people have to take a different direction to avoid our mistakes. To master what we do so that it is a development.

In the Valley, young people like agriculture because they see examples of success in the community. If we train them and guide them, they will be able to do well."

(focus group of adults, Dagana, Senegal)

Many adults are now convinced that we must react to the current situation, and that hope is on the side of young people.

"What is certain is that if the situation of families, parents, and youth does not change for the better, the future of FT and the community will be increasingly bleak." (CPF research, Burkina Faso).

#### {56} Change will come from youth

Unanimously, the young people occupy a very important place in the farm, they are the important force for the implementation of works. They are the relays for the perpetuation of family farms. The young people help a lot in any task on the farm. In a word, young people are indispensable. (focus group adults of Batié, South-West - Burkina Faso)

Adults **keep hope** in youth. Today very good initiatives exist for youth and only the right people are missing for a good implementation. Although there are still many difficulties facing youth, they believe that **change can come from young people themselves** with the support of the right people (CNOP/FENAJER research, Mali).

"Young people also **have things to teach us**, for example on new communication techniques" (a Malian woman during a panel at the regional sharing workshop).



Many are aware of the need to make the family farm profitable and secure to make it more attractive.

#### {57} Improvements to be made on Farms

"To show young people that tilling the land is profitable, they hope to find a solution to the market problem, to be able to sell their products at the best prices. They seek the support of technical and financial partners to make their farm a family business. They would like family farmers to be encouraged in their efforts. The best producers could be rewarded in order to motivate young people to consider careers on the land" (CTOP research, Togo).

"We need to prepare young people for the next generation and interest them in family farming **by changing work tools** and facilitating access to credit for family farms" (women from Farakoba). "Land should be secured with **land ownership** certificates, make it easier to obtain them, and facilitate access to credit (Farakoba fathers)" - (focus group of adults from the Hauts Bassins, Burkina Faso).

"The first element that needs to be resolved is the mechanization of agriculture. Because the work is hard. Otherwise, young people will give up. We have to provide the RUs with agricultural equipment. The work with Kadiandou must stop" (adult focus group, Casamance, Senegal).

Parents believe that the future of family farms lies in modernization. Modern machinery for them can ease the drudgery of the work and therefore motivate young people to return to family farming - (FUN research, Liberia).

Some are deeply questioning their relationship with their children.

"We don't spend enough time with our children. We don't spend enough time to devote ourselves to our children. We live more outside of our families to the detriment of our families," admit the adults in the Imasgo focus group (Central West Burkina Faso). Those in the adult focus group in Koulikoro (Mali) advocate **"to stop ignoring young people**, at the risk of seeing the situation worsen, and **to establish intergenerational dialogue**," while the parents in the focus group in the groundnut basin (Senegal) believe that there is a need to communicate better with young people: "It is more than urgent to break down this generational barrier and to understand the logic of young people." We need to give them back their self-confidence" (a Malian mother during one of the panels of the regional sharing workshop).

For the CNCR, the situation today requires that each member of the family be involved in the search for means of subsistence, which gives **responsibilities and rights to all**. The head of the family must therefore necessarily share his responsibilities with others. He observes that more and more heads of families are thinking that the collective responsibility of family members is not bad in itself, especially since the young people who accept it assume their mission on the family farm well (CNCR research, Senegal). For the CPF, "salvation of our community will come from the progressive empowerment of young people and the development of an attentive ear to their requests". (CPF research, Burkina Faso).

Voices were vigorously raised in Togo, where adults' resentment of youth had been particularly strong (see § 3.3 above, the crux of the lack of consideration), to radically change relations with youth: we can see that the issue of relations between adults and rural youth is currently deeply affecting the elders, which suggests a positive evolution.

#### {58} "We must make young people our friends"

##### *letting the young people express themselves, listen to them*

They are committed to their own way of educating their children and **avoid going through the hard way** at the risk of pushing them to confide in other people to receive bad advice. For them, it is important to let young people express themselves, listen to them and allow them to give their opinion without seeking to condemn them.

##### *being a model oneself*

In short, parents will have to set a good example for their children and become role models for them, as this adult points it out: "For a successful youth, I think that we as parents have to be role models/examples for our children". To do so, they are ready to be patient with the children, learn the art of educating or to **put themselves in the shoes of the young person or their children in order to understand them**, review the tone used to talk to the children. According to one adult, "the kids are already revolted and it takes a soft tone to teach them certain lessons."

##### *rebuilding trust*

For the future, parents say they are ready to **support young people morally and financially** in their schooling and apprenticeship, to **fight against slavery and child exploitation**, to contribute to their settlement after their apprenticeship and to create jobs for the young people of their community.

They commit themselves to uniting for the education of children, to sensitizing young people on the traditions and rules of society, to involving their children in the management of the family's crops, to making cultivable land available to young people, etc. **"We must make our children, especially the young, our friends** so that they can confide in us and have confidence in us". With this approach, it is very likely that the situation we see can change.

(focus group adults Togo)

## They call on States

Four advocacy themes emerge in the exchanges between adults:

- Advocacy for the State to take **support measures to make the family farming attractive**: "The State must provide the means to help farmers improve the **fertility** of their land and also support measures so that sufficient production can be achieved and make the farming profession and the family farm attractive to young people". (CTOP research, Togo), Togo)
- **Reform of education system**: "Diakit  Daouda, Zaliatou, Alizeta and like Ido Kassoum think that education and training system for young people must be reviewed so that they leave school with a trade that will allow them to ensure a better future for their families, parents and community". (adult focus group Tiano, Central West Burkina Faso)
- So that it also takes measures to **encourage young people who will not make a living from agriculture to stay in rural areas**.

### {59} Give work to rural youth who are not interested in the family farm.

Adults believe that if we manage to raise the awareness of youth, if the government takes steps to create jobs for young people, if the State initiates projects to integrate young people into agriculture, young people who are not interested in FFS will have jobs.

This would reduce unemployment, theft, depravity, disease and insecurity because young people will be able to undertake, settle down and develop family farms. They will also be able to start homes to ensure the future of their children.

(CTOP research, Togo))

- Finally, they plead for the **involvement of parents in the reflection and development of laws that will apply to the family** such as women's rights or children's rights. They regret that this is not the case and that they and young people are confronted with legal provisions that are difficult to apply (CNCR research, Senegal).

### 4.3: Third asset: availability of vocational training programs and support for the integration of young people.

#### Use of existing programs

Although we heard a lot of criticism within the focus groups on the inadequacies of the State's action with regard to rural youth (see § 3.4: The shortcomings of youth support), we can note that several of them have been able to take advantage of existing programs (see boxes {15}, {20}, {22}, {23}, {25}, {26}, {52} above).

#### Awaiting new programs

The current rise in interest of national and regional governments as well as governmental and non-governmental development organizations in the issue of rural youth, and more particularly their employability, augurs well for an intensification of their action and the opportunities they will offer for rural youth.



## 4.4: Fourth asset: the renewed sensitivity of farmers' organizations to the issue of rural youth.

The adult focus groups did not provide direct answers to the last question of this research<sup>22</sup>. The farmers' organizations that took it in charge. These organizations, which for many of them were organizations of young farmers when they were born, are in fact doubly challenged by the lack of interest of many young rural people in them (see § 3.4 above: the inadequacy of support for young people: the inadequacy of support for farmers' organizations) and by the fact that the question of young people taking over family farms, whose defense is at the heart of their struggles, is crucially important today. For them, the rural youth working sites has become essential and inseparable from that of family farms.

Today, they are particularly attentive to several dimensions that are at the crossroads of these two working sites.

### Transformation of the family farm and its environment

These include:

- **Promoting a new model of agriculture to improve the living conditions of the rural youth by staying in the family**

In order to respond to young people's wish that family farming be more profitable to help and finance all the household activities they already have or will create, and that be less burdensome. It is therefore a question of moving towards a more modern agriculture, by introducing innovations. Several FOs have already started to establish partnerships with Research Institutes and Universities. They intend to strengthen them.

- **developing a sustainable agriculture**

The future of FF is also strongly linked to the natural environment, particularly to the issues of plant resources. After years of chained cultivation, the land for FF has a lower yield. This is a problem to be taken into account. However, we are in a dilemma, whether to use

<sup>22</sup> Twelfth research question: How do adults see the future of family farming and their communities? Based on their reading of the current situation and their responsibility for the future of young people, how do they analyze the future of family farming itself? Young people's responsibility in this future as well as their own. What future do they see for their community?

chemical fertilizers to increase the yield and survive at the present time, or to do agro-ecology with an average yield and give our young children a chance of survival. This situation is well understood by the FFS and more specifically by the young people. They are aware that their future depends on the good management of the agricultural space, of the forestry cultural resources which constitute a good protective screen for the plants against the hot winds in particular. Agricultural production must be done in a sustainable way, with good soil protection through the promotion of organic farming.

- **creating non-agricultural jobs**

With the evolution of new techniques, family farms will need less labor, so young people will turn to other activities such as trade and processing of products, etc. The development of local economies is thus a concern for the FOs.

- **Changing rural governance**

Improvement of the FFs requires that the municipalities be better organized, better equipped to help settle local populations with health, education and business needs, and that they know how to respond to the needs of young people. Generational alternation in rural governance institutions is necessary to offer new and inclusive perspectives to rural youth. The democratization of political life is necessary to move towards generational renewal, which will promote changes in relations between generations so that young people are no longer considered a "social problem". Therefore, FOs want to encourage young people to take responsibility for their own involvement and to pool their efforts to help their locality and the FFs move forward.

(based on the reflections of the farmers' platform of Senegal)

## Cooperation between generations

The farmers' movement wants to initiate a farmers' reflection within the movement on the responsibilities that everyone must take to improve cooperation between generations within family farms by using existing exchange frameworks (educational talks, farmers' exchanges, the Farmers' University, Women's Colleges, Youth Colleges, etc.) to initiate dialogue between adults and young people to bring them to a common understanding of family farms.

**{60} Commitments to be made to improve relations within family farms*****For all :***

- The members of the FFs and the FOs must commit to a change of mentality in order to overcome the current divisions and improve the relationship between the young people and the parents.

***By adults :***

- Adults must ensure that youth are involved in planning and implementing activities and that they benefit from the fruits of their efforts in the distribution of income;
- Members of the FFs have the obligation to transform the family farm by reinvesting surpluses for agricultural modernization.

***By young people***

- Young people need to reassure parents by showing them their interest in agriculture and their motivation to take over the family farm.
- Young people too must have obligations, specific tasks, within the exploitation and report to their parents. This is a way to empower and prepare them.
- Young people need to understand that they have an obligation to take care of their parents in their old age.

***By FOs***

- Carry out a participatory and in-depth diagnosis, according to their scale (local, national, regional, etc.) and their context in order to understand the problems related to cooperation between members of the family farm; this diagnosis can also lead to a plan for training/capacity building/awareness raising for youth and adults on various themes ;
- Use existing exchange frameworks (educational talks, farmers' university, etc.) to initiate dialogue between adults and young people by bringing them to a common understanding of the family farm; strengthen young people's understanding of all the dimensions of the family farm.
- Develop alliances (with local authorities, communes, CSOs, etc.) on the theme and get allies to integrate the theme into development/action plans.
- Use the knowledge generated about young people to develop communication or advocacy materials for use in exchanges and other reflections;



- Capitalize, valorize and disseminate the good practices of collaboration between young people and their parents within the FFs by initiating, for example, exchanges of experiences;
- Conduct advocacy to ensure young people's access to land, financing and markets;
- Strengthen youth leadership  
(regional sharing workshop – working group "helping youth see their future in the family farm")



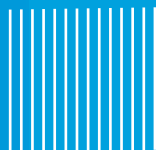






5

***CONCLUSION: THE  
INITIATIVES TAKEN  
BY ROPPA TO  
MOBILIZE AROUND  
RURAL YOUTH ISSUES***



## 5.1: Focus on youth in ROPPA's strategies since its 7th Convention in 2018

Following the guidelines already given during the 2004 and 2006 conventions, the 7th Convention of ROPPA (Banjul Convention, November 2018) gave guidelines that strongly emphasized the network's action towards youth with the adoption of a regional strategy dedicated to youth, the decision to finalize the establishment of a Regional Youth College crowning the already existing National Colleges<sup>23</sup>, the formulation by young people of a declaration for a massive and concerted action in favor of the insertion and installation of young people in the agro-sylvo-pastoral and fisheries sector in West Africa (Banjul declaration), the proposal of a "pact of responsibilities" calling on all the stakeholders concerned by the problem of young people, the launching of a new five-year plan including a specific program for young people and women. It was also during this convention that was decided to focus the third report of the Observatory of Family Farms on the place of young people on family farms.

### Proposal of a responsibility pact to support youth empowerment initiatives

Begun in 2017, this strategy was developed with the Youth Colleges and leaders of ROPPA based on the experiences of the FOs in supporting rural youth<sup>24</sup>. It was presented in November 2018 at the 7th ROPPA Convention which validated it.

#### {61} THE REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE INSERTION/INSTALLATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE in the agro-sylvo-pastoral and fisheries sector of ROPPA (2019/2023)

It is based on an **in-depth analysis** of the situation of rural youth in the current context (demographic weight of youth, exclusion of young people from the labor market and the precarious situation of rural youth seeking opportunities, discriminatory practices from which young girls and women suffer) and highlights the

<sup>23</sup> The constitutive assembly of ROPPA's REGIONAL COLLEGE OF YOUTH was held in Nyéléni (Mali) on February 28 and 29, 2020, as a direct follow-up to the regional workshop for sharing this research on rural youth.

<sup>24</sup> Capitalization of young people's settlement experiences by NPFs and federations (AFDI/ROPPA/PFN, 2014-2016)

abuses observable in families, local societies, socio-professional organizations, local and national governance that penalize rural youth.

**It links the issue of employment of young rural men and women to the transformation of family farms** and their survival and advocates for the sustainable empowerment of these young people through the rehabilitation of their social role in family farms and the achievement of decent incomes. To this end, it advocates a transformation of family farms to increase their attractiveness and promote a return to the land for young people currently forced to leave agriculture.

It describes a number of **innovative initiatives** already taken by ROPPA and its national platforms in the areas of communication and information, capacity building of young people, access to finance, resources and markets.

It defines **three strategic priorities** to contribute significantly to the controlled transformation of family farms through the sustainable empowerment of young rural men and women on these farms:

1. **to rehabilitate and enhance the status of young people** on family farms, FOs and in society in order to strengthen their self-confidence, to give them hope in agro-sylvo-pastoral and fishing activities and to enable them to integrate into the family and socio-professional group, to feel socially recognized and useful through citizen action.
2. **to make it easier for young people to access productive resources**: secure land allocation, facilitation of settlement through training and access to financing.
3. **Work for regional and national policies that are conducive to the integration and settlement of young people** so that these policies, which are currently strongly focused on limiting the consequences of emigration and the development of training leading to qualifications, take into account all the dimensions of the rural youth issue.

## Proposal of a responsibility pact to support youth empowerment initiatives

This proposal for the co-construction of a pact is in the context of the implementation of the ECOWAP (ECOWAS) objectives for the employability of young people. It aspires to mobilize the efforts, initiatives and commitment of the various stakeholders in agricultural and rural development policies to ensure decent employment and income for young people and their sustainable empowerment in West Africa.

**{62} ROPPA's proposed PACT OF RESPONSIBILITIES*****Commitment of the youth***

To train and contribute to the strengthening of mutual learning, to use resources efficiently, to produce (goods and services) in a healthy and sustainable way, to respect the principles and values of Family Farming and FF, to respect the principles and values of FOs, to be exemplary citizens and to be involved in the life of their communities and in the development of farmers' organizations, to defend the interests of the youth.

***Commitment of the family***

Supporting youth, providing land resources and production factors to youth for autonomous production, involving youth in decision making and collective income sharing, training and coaching youth

***FO's commitment***

Strengthen youth leadership, ensure the inclusion of young people in governance and in the life of the FOs, support the development of youth organizations or spaces for dialogue, support and help young people access productive resources.

***Commitment of civil society stakeholders***

Support and assist the initiatives of young people and their organizations, inclusion of young people in governance and in the life of civil society organizations.

***Commitment of private sector***

Provide goods and services for the development of youth integration initiatives

***Commitment of local authorities***

Set up youth-friendly local policies, make it easier and safer for young people to access land, to provide goods and services to young people in easy conditions, promote and support the development of youth initiatives, ensure the coordination of initiatives to support the integration of young people at the local level.

***Commitment of States and regional integration organizations***

To develop and implement policies favorable to the integration of young people, to guarantee structural facilities for the integration of young people, to ensure the coordination of initiatives at the national and regional levels.

***Partner commitment***

Support youth support initiatives

## Introduction of the “youth” dimension in ROPPA's new five-year plan

### {63} The place of young people in ROPPA's FIVE-YEAR PLAN 2019/2023

The five-year plan adopted in 2018 by ROPPA provides for 5 regional programs. **Program No. 3 (PR3) focuses on the promotion of economic activities carried out by women or young people within, downstream or alongside family farms.** It indicates four lines of action:

1. access of women and youth to responsibilities within family farms and within the FOs, notably through the Women's Colleges and Youth Colleges of the national platforms and ROPPA.
2. In conjunction with specialized public or private institutions, **the development of vocational training oriented** towards the creation of income-generating activities in agricultural production (market gardening, small livestock farming), food processing and trade or catering.
3. Support to **the emergence of economic activities specific to women and young people** and of which they can keep the benefits (freedom of enterprise, access to land, financing, equipment).
4. the design of **national programs of support for the creation of economic activities and support for entrepreneurship** to be proposed to the partners.

In addition, ROPPA was a stakeholder in the strategy to support youth employability in the agro-sylvo-pastoral and fisheries sector adopted in 2019 by ECOWAS. In the same year, it designed a **"YOUTH" MOBILIZER PROGRAMME** to operationalize this strategy.



## 5.2: Contribution of the Observatory of Family Farms of ROPPA

ROPPA's regional strategy for the integration/settlement of young people in the agro-sylvo-pastoral and fisheries sector advocated that the network provide itself with the means to have an updated knowledge and perceptions of youth at the level of the different countries in order to run farmers' debates on the issue as well as social dialogue with other actors. It is in response to this invitation that ROPPA's FAMILY FARMING OBSERVATORY mobilized its resources to enrich knowledge on the realities experienced by rural youth and their position on farms.

### The first lessons learned by ROPPA leaders from the knowledge produced by OFF

As a direct follow-up to the regional knowledge-sharing workshop produced in the framework of this research on West African rural youth and their relationship with the family farm, a group of ROPPA leaders met on March 3 and 4, 2020 in Bamako to draw first lessons from the rich "photographs" produced through this work. For them:

- They give portraits of rural youth, and the first message to remember is that of diversity: **"the profiles of rural youth are different"** and the management of the issue of youth should not be the same according to the profiles". In order to know the factors that determine the directions they take in their lives, it is not enough to distinguish young people according to the usual criteria (gender, education, etc.); it is necessary to go into their life stories in greater detail to identify, within each category, what will bring them closer to or away from the family farm, and to act accordingly. "Meeting young people's needs is not about money or projects, but about how to respond to the realities of their lives."
- These photographs highlight the importance of the issue of the **evolution of the rural family**. Currently, 80% of the farm managers are over 60 years old and belong to a generation very far removed from that of their children. Whatever the profile of these young people, families are always, positively or negatively, at the heart of their destiny. They are their foundation, including for directing them to school and often for organizing migration. "The confrontation of values and the fight of

the actors' game begins within them". New relationships of proximity must necessarily be invented. The challenge for the FOs is to "know how they can help families to improve their governance, introduce more transparency, knowledge and mutual recognition and dialogue so that they can be spaces for the integration of young people".

- They confirm that the **transformation of family farms** appears to be an unavoidable challenge to make them more attractive to young people. It is a question of "transforming production conditions, the sharing of costs and benefits, consumption patterns and lifestyles. The economic, technical and social dimensions are inseparable". We can see through these stories of young people all that they can bring to these transformations in terms of dynamism, innovation, resource management, modernization, conception of the family and overcoming old divides. But "accepting to transform oneself is a pain", because a change of culture is needed. The problem is not only technical, it is first and foremost human. The values rooted in the community culture that presided over the creation of the FOs must guide the way they support these transformations. The perspective is that the transformation of family farms will enable rural people to "feed themselves, increase their income and remain dignified. The search for "individual well-being requires the search for family well-being".
- They could have better shown that the assets and behaviors of both families and young people are strongly marked by the characteristics of the areas in which family farms are located (socio-cultural characteristics of local societies, rainfed or irrigated farming practices, land availability, market access, dynamism of the local economy, proximity to cross-border areas, roads and city traffic, density of public services, existence of projects and programs and involvement of young people in these projects/programs, etc.). This calls for "deepening the way in which the **local context, and in particular the type of agriculture practiced**, influences young people's behavior, and towards which types and modes of production their preferences go, what type of agriculture they like to practice."
- Finally, they confirm that in the current context, **the relationship between rural youth and the city**, whose suburbs are inhabited or visited by a significant proportion of them, strongly influences their perceptions, aspirations, behavioral patterns and their relationship to consumption. It is also towards the lucrative urban markets that



young people engaged in agriculture or animal husbandry seek to orient their production, which confronts them with new requirements in terms of adapting to consumer demands, quality, packaging and processing. "We must integrate this dimension into our analyses. But the city has not waited for the current generations to enter the rural world: since the 1980s, some farmers have been building houses in the city to enable their children to continue their studies there."

The message that farmer leaders would like to convey to today's rural youth is that by initiating this OFF research they have signaled their willingness to hear them and to make their voices heard by political decision-makers, but that they also wish to be heard by them, because, as a proverb says: "It is better to be attached to your time than to your father, but you must not leave your father".

### How can we keep up the momentum?

On the one hand, many questions remain at the end of this research. It must therefore be continued.

#### **{64} Some avenues for further research outlined by the regional sharing workshop**

Issues to be further explored suggested by the reflection group "being young in the rural world today".

- Youth and at-risk activities (gold panning, prostitution, terrorism...)
- Generational conflicts (communication problems, tension, incomprehension, exclusion, etc.)
- Assessment of policies/programs/projects for the installation and integration of young people in ROPPA member countries
- Impacts of the relational fabric on the paths of young people

Issues to be explored suggested by the group "to help young people see their future in family farms".

- How can we understand the attitude of some adults who push their children out of farms?
- How can we reassure young people about the profitability, viability and attractiveness of the family farm?
- How can social networks contribute to the dissemination of information, technologies and restore communication between young people and adults?

- What concrete measures are being taken with regard to adults' judgments about children?
- Why do young people lose interest in FOs?
- How can the specificities of the different types of young people (girls/boys, fishermen, herders, etc.) encountered be taken into account?

However, without waiting for these in-depth studies, ROPPA must ensure a wide dissemination of the results of this research within the FOs so that they organize farmers' debates on the issues raised, and among the other actors concerned in order to fuel social dialogue and enable everyone to make commitments in favor of rural youth.



## Table of boxes:

{1}	Questioning the first report of ROPPA's Observatory of Family Farming (OFF/ROPPA) on the issue of rural youth.....	12
{2}	Burkinabe youth share concerns about the future.....	20
{3}	Young people are concerned about changing morals .....	21
{4}	A situation exacerbated by the security problem in which some rural youth are involved .....	22
{5}	Lack of solid benchmarks to project oneself into the future .....	24
{6}	Loss of hope in the future of family farms.....	28
{7}	Husbands who are gone and forget their families .....	30
{8}	Hope of succeeding elsewhere.....	31
{9}	The comeback to the family farm .....	32
{10}	Favor non-agricultural activity to have an income that does not depend on FF.....	34
{11}	Engage in non-agricultural activity while remaining attached to agriculture.....	34
{12}	A desire for autonomy without breaking family ties .....	36
{13}	Staying on to ensure succession .....	36
{14}	Changing the farming techniques and changing the mentality .....	37
{15}	Staying on to ensure succession .....	38
{16}	A young woman who wants, as the eldest daughter, to take over the family .....	38
{17}	The case of Bassirou Diaw, who turns around a family business in difficulty .....	40
{18}	The case of Oumar Bâ who convinces his family to intensify his breeding .....	40
{19}	The account of Alioune Badara Dioungue (Senegal), who came back to transform his father's farm .....	41
{20}	Young girls who plan to start their own business .....	43
{21}	Aminata Diarra's motivation: to earn a living without living at the expense of others, to have pride in succeeding .....	44
{22}	From school to the setting up of her business: the struggle of a young Nigerien woman, Aminatou Garka Mahamadou .....	44
{23}	Mamy Aissatou Seydi wants to start her own organic farm .....	46
{24}	The Land Question as a Motive Settlement Outside the Family Farm .....	47

{25}	The story of Roland N. Vignonfodo (Benin), oil palm producer against the will of his parents .....	47
{26}	The story of Afantchawo Koudasse (Togo), who brings benefits to his community and rural youth .....	48
{27}	A future computer scientist who plans to invest in agriculture in the future .....	50
{28}	The story of Sekongo Zié Zoumana (Côte d'Ivoire), an innovator who is pursuing his higher education while developing his family farm without external support .....	50
{29}	Each scenario can have a positive or negative evolution .....	54
{30}	What young people in the groundnut basin in Senegal refusal and wants .....	58
{31}	Youth who feel exploited .....	61
{32}	Opaque management .....	62
{33}	A communication deficit .....	63
{34}	Decisions taken without consultation .....	63
{35}	«We are primarily responsible for our future» .....	64
{36}	«We don't want to be seen as children» .....	64
{37}	Parents' Resentment of Youth (excerpts from adult focus group) .....	65
{38}	The Expectations of Liberia's Youth .....	69
{39}	Promises that are not kept .....	70
{40}	A severe indictment against FOs.....	73
{41}	The low representation of youth in the FP .....	74
{42}	In Senegal, greater confidence in large FOs than in local FOs .....	75
{43}	A debate among young people on land tenure in developed areas .....	76
{44}	Elders want to preserve the capital of the family farm .....	77
{45}	Families losing their cohesion .....	79
{46}	A break between generations? .....	80
{47}	Adults' priorities are different from those of their children .....	81
{48}	Don't stand idle .....	84
{49}	Initiatives for cooperation between young people from different sectors .....	85
{50}	Serving society .....	86
{51}	Organizing among young people to have more strength .....	87
{52}	Youth who care about other youth .....	87

{53}	A brainstorming session among young people on the alternatives to be developed to save family farms .....	88
{54}	Keeping the knowledge of the elders .....	89
{55}	Two adults in the Valley seeking to understand their children .....	90
{56}	Change will come from youth .....	91
{57}	Improvements to be made to the operation .....	92
{58}	«We must make young people our friends» .....	93
{59}	Provide work for rural youth who are not interested in family farms .....	94
{60}	Commitments to improving relationships within family farms .....	98
{61}	THE REGIONAL STRATEGY FOR THE INSERTION/INSTALLATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE in the agro-sylvo-pastoral and fisheries sector of ROPPA (2019/2023) .....	102
{62}	ROPPA's proposed PACT OF RESPONSIBILITIES .....	104
{63}	The place of young people in ROPPA's FIVE-YEAR PLAN 2019/2023 .....	105
{64}	A few ideas outlined by the regional sharing workshop for further research .....	108









