Prosperity in place

Meaningful work for mobile youth that enhances forest landscapes

Duncan Macqueen and Jeffrey Campbell

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Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

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Acronyms and abbreviations

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFF	Forest and Farm Facility
FFPOs	Forest and Farm Producer Organizations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFW	Global Forest Watch
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IUCN	International Union for the Conservation of Nature
ODA	Official Development Assistance
SACCO	Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisation
SEWA	Self Employed Women's Association
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
WRI	World Resources Institute

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(ii) IIED's 'Forest roots and rhythms' initiative that was financed from institutional frame funds from the governments of Sweden and Ireland. The purpose of the initiative is to refocus forest governance and enterprise work to address the many different sorts of migration in forest lands for a multi-year action research agenda in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This report is one of several complementary papers within the initiative.

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Executive summary

The global youth population has reached 1.2 billion, accounting for 16 percent of the total population. **Youth** are here defined as those between 15 and 24 years of age. Tragically, youth make up close to half the world's unemployed. Rural rates of unemployment are particularly high. This is especially so for young women. United Nations figures class 75 percent of youth as underutilised. By this they mean: unemployed; in irregular (informal jobs); or outside of formal education and training. Underutilised youth are a missed opportunity. At the same time, most rural communities around the world are struggling with the question of how to provide opportunities that encourage youth to considering remaining and/or contributing to rural places. While government clearly has a key role to play in creating opportunity structures that govern how youth enter and progress in the rural labour market (e.g. investments in infrastructure, education, healthcare), in many settings government investment capacity is weak. How can local Forest and Farm Producer Organizations (FFPOs) step in to help? That is the subject of this report.

This report is written for the leaders of FFPOs. In rural areas, FFPOs are often the main employers. Set up to pursue the values of their members, FFPOs contribute to rural **prosperity**: namely 'a negotiated vision of that which people value and have reason to value in line with the common good'. Each FFPO member will have their own vision of what prosperity looks like – and that is why the negotiation of a collective vision is important – so that the perceptions of different groups, such as young men and young women, are taken into account.

How FFPOs engage with, listen and respond to youth's hopes for prosperity is important. It is likely to be a defining factor in whether youth stay in their **place** of origin, or whether they migrate out to seek prosperity elsewhere, and if they migrate – whether or not they send resources back to contribute to their place of origin. There are several advantages to youth involvement in rural areas. They bring energy, enthusiasm, social media connectedness, risk taking, long-term concern and resilience. But there may also be advantages in them leaving. If connection can be maintained, youth that have migrated can be sources of finance (through remittances), contacts and knowledge – though these in certain cases can exacerbate local inequalities. They may even return to invest directly new knowledge and finance in FFPOs. There are also gender differences and impacts in such decision making. Migration of women, although sometimes hampered by unhelpful social norms, gender discrimination and gender-specific vulnerabilities, can often advance more equitable social norms and women's rights and also enhance the autonomy, human capital and self-esteem of women, and their authority and worth in families and communities.

Youth **migration**, especially from rural to urban areas, is a long-established trend. From a total migrant population above 1.5 billion, internal migrants (within a state) outnumber international migrants 3:1, with the latest UNDESA estimates of international migration at 272 million in 2019. It is not just young men that migrate. Almost half (48 percent) of migrants are women which emphasises the need to look at gender-related outcomes. Often understood as a strategic choice to enhance prosperity, migration aims to improve livelihoods, resilience, and future prospects. While some move due to natural disasters, conflict and persecution, most migrants move to find employment – or education (30 percent of these are youth) as well as for fulfilment of their aspirations, curiosity and a thirst for new friends and experiences. With the internet and modern communication technologies it is much easier to see `what you are missing' and to feel the need to be connected in new and exciting ways to the wider external environment.

The **drivers of youth migration** are many and often interconnected. They span several of the value categories that make up prosperity, including issues of: sustained cultural and natural heritage (e.g. lack of access to and degradation of land), material wealth and health (e.g. poor healthcare and few economic opportunities), affirmative social relationships (e.g. lack of social networks), personal and collective security (e.g. poor social services and safety networks), personal and reproductive fulfilment (e.g. limited vocational education and interactions), and cognitive identity and purpose (e.g. a perceived rural poverty trap, or the need to escape cultural restrictions).

Attempting to offer more **decent and meaningful work** to youth in rural areas can be one strategy FFPOs use to address the adverse drivers of migration and create alternatives in rural areas. Work involves any expenditure of effort to achieve a result or deliver value. While 'decent' work has objective indicators at an international level, youth perceptions of whether work is 'meaningful' are subjective to them. FFPOs may strive to offer meaningful work (i.e. that meets more of what youth value within their vision of prosperity). But they may struggle due to different factors: limited opportunities to offer employment; trade-offs that youth find unacceptable; or divergent youth views on what matters. What we do know is that perceptions of what comprises meaningful work (beyond remuneration) are strengthened by: task identity (completing a whole piece of work from start to finish); skill variety and fit (using different capacities that one has); task significance (doing things with a high impact on others); autonomy (having discretion about when, how and where to complete tasks); and feedback (receiving information about one's performance).

In a recent **knowledge demand survey of FFPOs relating to youth needs**, it was found that 59 percent of the 41 FFPOs surveyed across six countries had active youth programmes, and a further 27 percent acknowledged the importance of youth engagement but without specific programmes in place. The most common features of active programmes were youth training covering both technical and business

production issues and targeting youth remaining within their place of origin. Many also had programmes to support youth sport and recreation. Business development was frequently mentioned as an attractive option to influence youth outmigration. In terms of specific demand for knowledge topics that were felt to be important to youth, the highest demand was for 'value addition technologies for business' (cited by 32 percent of FFPOs surveyed). Other knowledge topics for which there was demand also had a strong business flavour – with 'organisational management', 'market research and product development', 'nursery and quality seed production', and 'business management' all featuring in a number of responses.

In further knowledge demand survey questions regarding **issues relevant to gender**, the top demand for new knowledge was in how to install approaches to develop women's businesses, followed by how to increase women in leadership and decision making. A third priority was for how to improve women's access to land and natural resources. All these gender priorities add nuance to the broader youth priorities of improving value addition technologies for business. But there are ways of advancing women's particular priorities through gender-specific business incubation, peer-mentoring by women business champions, and building a critical mass of women (or women-only business groups) into FFPO businesses.

In assessing what can be done to anchor youth through prosperity to place, it is important for FFPOs to consider a **youth engagement strategy**. But there are no 'one-size-fits-all' options. So ideally such a strategy would separate out different approaches and options for remainers, movers and returners, and ensure to take into account the specific needs of various groups of youth within these three categories, such as young women, younger youth, or less-skilled youth. Finding ways to accommodate and maximise the contribution of each of those groups could offer substantial advantages to FFPOs' competitiveness. It will be also of crucial importance to conduct systematic youth surveys and qualitative assessments to gauge youth aspirations in different value categories; the challenges they face and their realistic options in terms of staying or leaving can provide a good foundation.

For youth **remainers,** thought must be given to strategic inclusion and recognition for the unique qualities and innovative ideas youth bring. Having a youth wing, young leader's group, or youth clubs are mechanisms that FFPOs have experimented with and that have retained youth engagement (albeit unsupported by evidence of their impact). Especially where productive land is scarce, or barriers to land access high (e.g. for women) there may be need for the FFPO to champion public or communal land access for young people with local authorities, or to advocate with local authorities for improved infrastructure, such as electricity, water and sanitation, telecommunications and road infrastructure. Meaningful work can be increased by giving the youth responsibility for piloting new climate-resilient farming techniques or tasking them with participation in locally offered

training with a view to training others. They can be involved in technological innovation and value addition, as agents for savings and credit cooperative organisations (SACCOs), in transport or as extensionists for the FFPOs. They can develop roles as quality agents (e.g. assuring similar quality standards across multiple FFPO producer members) or as marketing agents. Additionally, youth familiarity with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) could be engaged, for example to help: geospatial natural resource mapping to secure tenure and improving inventory of stock; setting up electronic savings and loans funds; developing websites or social media marketing; designing participatory certification systems; building capacity for smart contracts that link to official Development Assistance (ODA) and climate finance; and introducing mobile banking. While it may only be possible to fund one or two of such positions, engaging youth in this way can provide a major jump forward in FFPO competitiveness.

For youth **leavers**, FFPOs might consider some form of 'youth associate' which maintains cultural ties and family links for those migrating out on a seasonal or longer-term basis. The World Bank estimates that officially recorded annual remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries reached USD529 billion in 2018, an increase of 9.6 percent over the previous record high of USD483 billion in 2017. Global remittances, which include flows to high-income countries, reached USD689 billion in 2018, up from USD633 billion in 2017. Such remittances can on average double incomes for receiving households; there are clear gains to be made to strengthen the links between leavers and FFPO members. This is especially the case for women, who are known on average to send home higher levels of remittance, or if acting as the receiver, make more productive use of it. Building a sense of community attachment through migration planning and support would be one constructive option. Working to reduce the cost of sending remittances and increase financial inclusion, and finding ways for FFPOs to lay out investment opportunities to make productive use of members' remittances are priorities. But it is also vital to maintain dialogue with 'youth associates', especially if information can be gained on urban market opportunities, service provision options, new technologies, transport options and potential business partners. Such associates could provide a vital network for developing business incubation capability in rural areas, linking FFPOs with occasional specialist sources of information or technological know-how.

For youth **returners**, FFPOs could perhaps think in terms of a 'reintegration package' – countering the temptation to resist their inclusion (because of fears that it would complicate productive partnerships or organisational membership). Holding debriefing sessions to tap into a wealth of potentially useful knowledge and contacts could improve FFPO competitiveness when returners share their knowledge. For any returners who have developed urban business interests, thinking through possible partnership arrangements with those businesses in urban centres might be beneficial. More seasonal migration (e.g. going to work in cities or other rural areas during the off season) might need to be accommodated through services to protect and maintain their property while away, in

return for reciprocal commitment to the FFPO in the on season. Local communities often have such practices in place.

Once a youth engagement strategy is in place, **regular check-ups and feedback** to assess its effectiveness through annual youth surveys or events could help a positive trajectory. Building the FFPO culture such that youth are nurtured into productive full membership and can then in turn induct new youth into the FFPO will create a cycle of success. It is worth thinking in terms of an annual learning and development cycle for youth engagement with a conventional series of steps involving evaluation surveys, participatory planning, intervention activities, and reporting.

This report concludes with a series of **recommendations** on how the Forest and Farm Facility (FFF), together with apex FFPOs, can advance youth engagement strategies, to build stronger opportunities for future generations.

Youth presenting business plan in Belize © Duncan Macqueen

1 The importance of youth employment to prosperity in forest landscapes

1.1 The intended audience and purpose of this report

This report is written for the leaders of Forest and Farm Producer Organizations (FFPOs). It aims to provide guidance on how to optimise the contributions of youth to FFPOs' ambitions for prosperity in their places of origin. It explains why youth employment is an integral part of prosperity. It offers guidance on why and how to approach youth engagement. It points to some of the gender dimensions that need to be considered. It then discusses how best to handle youth aspirations for meaningful work, either in those places of origin, or through migration, or for those that wish to return to their place of origin. Developing an engagement strategy for young men and women that has a proactive approach to each category can provide a win-win for both FFPOs and youth.

By helping FFPOs to consider what is best for mobile youth, it is hoped that FFPOs can provide an increasingly attractive set of opportunities for male and female youth engagement – both for those who remain and those who chose to leave or return – and conversely that youth contributions to FFPOs in each of those youth categories will be optimised. The context of every FFPO will differ in terms of what they can offer youth, so this report aims not at prescription, but rather as a prompt for internal reflection and action.

Definitions of youth vary. Different agencies use different age brackets. For the purposes of this report we define 'youth' as people between 15 and 24 years of age – but of course we do not wish to impose rigid rules about this, as the same principles apply to people who might be slightly younger or older than this age category.

The importance of youth in the forest and farm landscapes of developing countries cannot be overstated. For example, from a total youth population of 1.2 billion globally (UN DESA, 2019), 85 percent live in developing countries. In many least developed countries, youth make up more than 60 percent of the population. Moreover, up to 70 percent of youth live in rural areas (UNDP, 2014).

Because of these statistics, FFPOs in developing countries must inevitably deal with youth in their membership. The simple fact is that what youth choose to do with their lives has a major impact on what FFPOs can achieve in rural areas – and on what can be done to restore and sustainably manage forest and farm landscapes more generally.

1.2 The severity of youth unemployment in forest landscapes

An estimated 172 million people worldwide were unemployed in 2018. Youth are overrepresented among the unemployed and the working poor. They made up almost 40 percent of the unemployed globally, and their unemployment rate is more than twice the adult one (11.8 percent compared to 5 percent for adults) (ILO, 2019a). Overall, some 75 percent of youth are underutilised – either unemployed, in irregular (informal) jobs, or outside of formal education and training systems (UNDP, 2014). As a result, across regions, young people are also disproportionately affected by working poverty. According to ILO data, worldwide, 14 percent of employed youth lived in extremely poor households in 2018, compared with 7 percent of adults (ILO, 2019b).

Especially in rural areas, high rates of youth unemployment, working poverty and underemployment present a challenge, not only for the demoralisation and social exclusion that can result (Freeman and Wise, 1982), nor just for the high association between youth unemployment and crime (Fougère *et al.*, 2009; Adebayo, 2013), nor for the outmigration that often ensues (FAO, 2016), but also for the waste of human potential in rural areas themselves. Also, when employed, youth typically have poor working conditions and with limited or no access to social protection. Gender gaps in employment status are particularly pronounced – young women in rural areas are more likely to be contributing family workers and have less opportunity than young men to obtain paid work. Training programmes mostly reach young men and do not cater to the needs of young women. Youth under 18 (but above the minimum age for employment) also face additional challenges in accessing productive resources and services or joining representative organisations due to their status as minors. Globally, there are still about 37 million youth aged 15 to 17 engaged in hazardous work (more than a half of all children in hazardous work). They account for 42 percent of all employed youth in this age group and 24 percent of all child labour. Some 71 percent of child labour worldwide takes place in agriculture (representing 108 million boys and girls (ILO, 2017). This stage in their life is typically decisive in how they will transition from school to work and for the likelihood of transitioning out of poverty. In dealing with such issues, White (2012) strongly asserts the need to treat youth unemployment as a structural issue, requiring structural solutions – not solely to emphasise youth 'entrepreneurship' in development discourse that he sees as a 'do-it-yourself' employment strategy for (often very young) youth.

The structural neglect in national policies of many governments of locally controlled land use – indigenous territories, smallholder farming and community forestry – is in part to blame for the youth unemployment situation (Quan, 2007). Public investments in rural infrastructure, communication technology and relevant education curricula rarely

keep pace with those of urban areas. But there are also structural problems at the local level as older generations lock youth out of opportunities to access land and forest and farm resources.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) commit signatories to pursuing SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth) alongside many other integrated goals. The challenge is that the economic growth on which decent work might be built has historically led to widespread deforestation and forest degradation to the detriment of SDG 15 (Life on land). Recent data show that the loss of tropical forest is hardly slowing at all. Indeed, the last three years saw the three highest rates of loss on record (Weisse and Goldman, 2019). Satellite data of Global Forest Watch (GFW) compiled by the World Resources Institute (WRI) estimate an annual rate of loss of 29.4 million hectares per year, which is probably an overestimate, due to the difficulty satellite systems have in capturing and calculating regrowth (Pearce, 2018).

When using the GFW data to assess the various annual drivers of deforestation, Curtis *et al.* (2018) estimate that the largest and most stable driver of forest loss since 2001 – accounting for 27 percent of the annual total – was long-term permanent conversion to commodity production. This was largely agricultural (e.g. mostly industrial-scale but also some smallholder palm oil, soy, mining, etc) followed by large-scale forestry operations occurring within managed forests and plantations (26 percent), then shifting agriculture (24 percent) and wildfires (23 percent). Although these latter drivers may not cause permanent land-use change and may be followed by forest regrowth that is difficult to pick up using the GFW data (Curtis *et al.*, 2018), it is clear that the way in which employment opportunities are provided matters hugely to the integrated ambitions of the SDGs.

Recent studies of the often-publicly supported corporate land rush suggest that large-scale corporate investments rarely fulfil their promises of employment creation for local people (Deininger *et al.*, 2010). Where such corporate models do try to be more inclusive (e.g. through contract farming), the outcomes have been found to depend heavily on the negotiating power or strength in numbers of smallholder FFPOs (Vermeulen and Cotula, 2010). Yet, it is not just in improving employment prospects and conditions in industrial outgrowing that FFPOs can play a role. FFPOs can run their own businesses based around the forest and farm landholdings of the numerous smallholder members. In recent Forest and Farm Facility (FFF) surveys of 41 FFPOs from Ecuador, Ghana, Kenya, Nepal, Vietnam and Zambia, more than 40 percent identified themselves with diverse baskets of products from mixed agroforestry systems – with the remainder structured around a wide range of timber, Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) and agricultural crops. This productive diversity offers livelihood opportunities across multiple different value chains – and important opportunities for youth.

The efficacy of supporting FFPOs to help improve employment opportunities has become increasingly clear, not least through the work of the FFF that commissioned this report and that channels support directly to those organisations (FAO and Agricord, 2012; 2016). It is not just that by working together that FFPOs can diversify and add to commodities and expand interesting business opportunities for youth. It is also that they are effective forces for negotiating greater structural support, i.e. more enabling policies and support services for rural areas in general. Perhaps even more important is that FFPOs can develop negotiated solutions to enhance youth access to land and farming possibilities.

In contrast with corporate models of business that frequently link to smallholders and provide employment opportunities for rural labour, FFPOs are by definition both cooperative and oriented towards the common good of their members. Being collectively owned by those living in forest and farm landscapes heightens the degree to which longer-term prosperity is considered alongside short-term profit. And this opens up space to consider how best to engage youth.

Assessing how FFPOs can best contribute to youth employment, and indeed to broader prosperity in forest landscapes that might prove attractive to youth, is the topic of this report. But before making that assessment, it is important to be clear about the elements that make up prosperity – and how youth employment fits within it.

1.3 The relationship between youth employment and prosperity in forest landscapes

Prospects for employment make up just one part of people's perception of prosperity in forest landscapes, albeit an important one. Prosperity in forest landscapes is defined here as: 'a negotiated vision of that which people value and have reason to value in line with the common good'. The definition is adapted from Alkire's (2010) definition of human development: 'the processes that direct people's freedoms to do and be what they value and have reason to value in line with the common good, and that empowers them in that pursuit'.

In 2014, 3.4 billion people (45 percent of the total global population) lived in rural areas (UN DESA, 2019), and 1.3 billion of those may be classed as forest-dependent (Mayers *et al.*, 2016) – so their visions of prosperity, and how important youth employment is within those visions, are significant because they significantly determine what happens in forest landscapes, including whether young people stay or leave. There are gender differences that need to be taken into account. For example, across all rural contexts, young women are more likely to be married and living with their spouses or in-laws, less

likely to be in school or employed, and less likely to own land solely (Doss *et al*., 2019). Women's views need to carry equal weight in discussions about what is valuable and what a vision for prosperity might be.

Categories of 'that which people value' have been debated in academic literature (see Alkire, 2002), and many now underpin the United Nations Declarations on Human Rights, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and principles of practice in the codes of private sector certification bodies. Definitive lists of what people value are impossible to define because in practice everyone has their own take – and consensus must be reached by negotiation at every level, from local to global.

While direct surveys of what people value in forest landscapes have rarely been undertaken, a previous review of the literature (see Macqueen *et al*., 2018a), commissioned by the FFF, led to the proposal of a framework that disaggregates **prosperity** into three clusters and six different types of value (NB which cannot easily be exchanged for other types of value), including:

Values based on familiarity

(i) **Sustained natural and cultural heritage** (i.e. appreciation and stewardship of the diversity and beauty embodied in forest landscapes and all the construction, art and craft derived from senses, thought and imagination).

(ii) **Material wealth and health** (i.e. appreciation of the means to secure material needs, such as food, clothing, housing, social protection, entertainment and so on, alongside the sustenance of life itself, such as maternity and childcare, bodily health and integrity).

Values based on common interest

(iii) **Affirmative social relationships** (i.e. appreciation and engagement in human or nature-based friendships and associations, including participation in social networks and systems that organise and govern society and the productive systems that sustain or protect it).

(iv) **Personal and collective security** (i.e. appreciation and securing of physical and psychological safety within domestic, work and recreational environments through systems that moderate natural, social and economic forces or powers).

Values based on passion

(v) **Personal and reproductive fulfilment** (i.e. appreciation and realisation of freedom of choice and action, and the educational support to develop self-expression, skills and creativity in work, leisure, fun, and familial love).

(vi) **Cognitive identity and purpose** (i.e. appreciation and determination of value, meaning, accomplishment and esteem through the application of emotions and practical reason).

How such values are pursued matters a lot. Pursuit of those values for selfish ends has one set of outcomes. Pursuit of the same values for the common good has another set of outcomes (see Schwartz, 1992; Bardi and Schwartz, 2003; and Crompton, 2010). Prosperity requires that people pursue each of these types of value primarily for the 'common good' (that which is shared and beneficial for all or most members of a given community). But while this rarely happens in practice, FFPOs almost always have to negotiate some sort of collective vision (i.e. towards the 'common good') and so offer a useful route towards prosperity.

Prosperity isn't something fixed or static, but rather something negotiated and flexible, since communities for whom the common good is pursued comprise multiple actors with mixed interests, at a range of scales from local to global (Agrawal and Gibson, 1999). How effectively different groups within a community (e.g. youth) can influence what values weigh in the decision-making process is critical in deciding what counts as the common good, and in defining what prosperity is.

The interests of youth, say for meaningful work in rural areas, have to be negotiated with competing interests from older generations – which as noted above can be a source of serious conflict (Kouamé, 2010). Interests of young men often also compete with the interests of young women.

Youth employment in rural areas is a central issue because it relates to many of the categories of value that make up prosperity – and affects whether youth stay in rural areas or not. For example, youth employment directly contributes to material wealth and health and to issues of security, personal fulfilment and identity; and employment is often contingent on youth's access to natural resources. Additionally, while the links between access to natural resources, gainful employment and material wealth are important considerations; for youth, prospects for personal development were also found to profoundly affect youth perceptions of whether to stay or leave rural areas (see for example, Chiang *et al*., 2013).

This report's particular focus on how meeting youth aspirations for prosperity in place (e.g. in the forest landscape in which they were raised) makes their perceptions of what is valuable an important consideration – to which we return in Chapter 3. But youth aspiration must compete with the aspirations of others – especially in rural organisations such as customary authorities and FFPOs that define who is allowed to do what. How youth aspirations for prosperity are treated in decision making is therefore an important consideration for any organisation concerned to retain youth in forest landscapes.

1.4 The importance of organisational decision making to youth involvement

Almost all of the 1.3 billion forest dependent people who exist globally (Mayers *et al*., 2016) are 'producers' of some sort – whether in subsistence hunting, gathering and cultivation systems typical of the world's 500 million indigenous peoples (Chao, 2012), or in commercial forest and farm systems. Many of these producers are organised into some form of FFPO. Retaining youth in forest landscapes by accommodating their aspirations for prosperity will require an accommodation between their interests and the interests of other people within FFPOs. This must also obviously balance those aspirations with what landscapes can provide. Infinite economic growth is not an option.

The financial value of the gross annual production of smallholder forest and farm producers is between USD 881 and USD1.505 trillion (Verdonne, 2018), making them collectively the world's largest private sector. But prosperity is not defined solely, or even mainly, by financial income. Indeed, many indigenous people give pre-eminence to cultural values other than more subservient financial transactions (e.g. Bunten, 2010). Indigenous spirituality is often at the heart of such pre-eminence and challenges utilitarian concepts – insisting that forest land is given as a sacred gift and a sacred stewardship. People do not own land but must care for the land as part of their sacred task within the purpose and direction of the cosmic order (Champagne, 2005). It should also be noted that prioritising values other than finance has also been prized by many other non-indigenous champions of limits to economic growth over past decades (Meadows *et al*., 1972; Hickel and Kallis, 2019).

As noted above, prosperity is always a negotiated vision of that which people value. What prosperity is, therefore, varies from place to place. These variations are especially pronounced when moving into indigenous territories where systems of consensual community governance have prevailed over substantial periods of time – and in which social prestige often lies in generosity and reciprocity rather than competition and accumulation (Fenelon and Hall, 2008). Indeed, it is because indigenous and other forest community visions of prosperity are so different from conventional neoliberal visions that they have proved so effective at conserving forest areas – even more effective than national protected areas (Bowler *et al*., 2010; Porter-Bolland *et al*., 2012; Seymour *et al*., 2014). The issue of territorial sovereignty has regularly been championed to defend indigenous people's vision of prosperity – and protect their communities from very different visions of prosperity and land use coming from corporate business models or the nation state (Wilmer, 1993).

Despite the differences between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples' worldview, they have in common the fact that some system of organisation and governance is essential to negotiate a vision of prosperity (although it might rarely be called that) and reach an

agreed compromise between different groups of people within self-defining communities about that which is of value.

Compromise may be required on at least two counts:

(i) In the weight afforded to perceptions of different groups of people. For example, the views of hereditary chiefs might be afforded more weight than say youth; or conversely, the views of marginalised groups such as the landless might be afforded more weight than the well-off on account of their more pressing need; or the views of men might be afforded more weight than women – despite their numerical equivalence.

(ii) In the degree to which different types of value are pursued. For example, people might agree collectively to sacrifice some natural beauty to increase their collective material wealth. Or they might sacrifice some collective material wealth to offer training opportunities to enhance opportunities for youth in achieving personal fulfilment, and so on. Also, additional compromises may be required as processes move to negotiated outcomes at regional or national or international level. These negotiated visions of prosperity are changeable and rarely written down. Particular groups within a community may feel included or excluded – and these patterns may be based on strong cultural traditions.

Deficiencies in the above-mentioned negotiation processes may result in a vision of prosperity that is not shared by all groups in a community. And where work is involved to sustain that vision, this may result in tensions that ultimately result in individuals leaving to pursue their own vision of prosperity elsewhere. For example, it may be that the continuance of cultural patterns of land allocation and subsistence agro-forestry use do not meet the aspirations of youth, as one group within a community (or indeed any other group such as women, ethnic minorities etc). Whether that matters or not is a question that can only be answered by those involved, but it is important to note for the purposes of this report, some of the advantages that youth bring to organisations in forest landscapes (below).

1.5 Why youth involvement matters to organisations in forest landscapes

Those living in forest landscapes face problems which go beyond widespread environmental degradation, biodiversity depletion, loss of habitats, and land abandonment. Rural marginalisation is also widespread, and trends include a decline in social capital (e.g. socio-economic and cultural declines), unemployment, brain drain, the closing down of farm enterprises, outmigration, over-aging, rural poverty and social exclusion, loss of infrastructure and services, loss of cultural tradition and local identities (Weisinger, 2007;

Adhikari and Hobley, 2012). But before considering that issue in more detail, it is worth introducing here why youth in forest landscapes are so important.

Youth bring energy to the FFPOs operating in forest landscapes – and improve labour productivity. They are spread across rich and poor households alike and so can provide important protection for vulnerable elders in poorer households. They are often more enthusiastic and willing to take risks to improve production – and have the advantage of better access to education and information than previous generations on account of the advances in information technology. With their lives ahead of them, they are often willing to invest in more ambitious projects that will have eventual payoffs, and they are less likely to be held back by opposition from customary authorities. Table 1 presents some of the main advantages of youth and their implications for rural organisations.

Table 1. Advantages of youth and implications for rural organisations

Advantage of youth	Forest landscape characteristic	Implications for organisation
Energetic – Youth are at their prime in terms of physical strength	Labour productivity in forest landscapes often require physical strength	Youth can make forest and farm organisations more efficient and productive.
Enthusiastic – Youth are less jaded and more willing to push onward in uncertainty	Rural transformation takes significant investments in time and energy	Youth can galvanise programmes of action to improve organisations.
Social media connectedness – Youth are better educationally linked and assimilate new things rapidly	Forest landscapes are remote and technological innovation is opening new possibilities	Youth can introduce organisational innovation, ideas and connectedness
Risk taking – Youth are less aware of risks and dream more expansively; willing to innovate	Rural production options are oversubscribed and jumps to new ideas can give advantage	Youth can make forest and farm organisations less risk averse
Long sighted – Youth have their lives before them and can take a long view	Forest landscape interventions require long-term thinking and management cycles	Youth are prepared to invest and build for the organisational long term.
Resilient – Youth bounce back and heal quicker, physically and emotionally	Forest landscapes face increasingly variable climatic and economic threats	Youth can help retain organisational flexibility and adapt to change.

It is immediately apparent from Table 1 that maintaining some youth involvement in rural organisations is likely to be an important thing. Of the several advantages to them staying, maintaining agricultural labour productivity is probably the most significant – although maintaining innovation through information technology is also a significant plus (Deotti and Estruch, 2016).

At the same time, it is important not to overlook the fact that there may also be advantages in youth leaving, either temporarily (to pursue education), or cyclically (to pursue seasonal employment), or permanently (to send back cash or ideas – known as remittances). The degree to which this is beneficial is likely to depend on the degree to which youth remain attached to, and want to invest in, their rural households (Theodori and Theodori, 2014). In the next section we examine some of the positive and negative impacts of migration in more detail – looking especially at these financial, knowledge and network remittances that complement other farming and non-farming activities (de Haas, 2010).

Before doing so, however, it is worth maintaining a focus on the different ways in which male and female youth encounter opportunities around staying or migrating. Recent reviews find five main areas of difference (see Doss *et al*., 2019). First, social norms define what work is appropriate for young men and women – and these shape the opportunities they have and contribution they can make. Second, care work and reproductive work shape youth choices, and these differ markedly for young men and young women. Third, linked to the above, young men and women may face different time constraints, both in terms of when work can be done and for how long. Fourth, the returns for labour often differ for young men and young women (irrespective of physical equivalence or not). Finally, young men and young women differ in their access to assets and resources, including both those useful for self-employment (i.e. land) and those needed to find and keep wage employment (Doss *et al*., 2019). These major differences can result in different choices about whether to stay or migrate that need to be considered when designing appropriate FFPO youth engagement processes.

Youth in Cameroon demonstrating agroforestry system © Duncan Macqueen

2 Why youth pursue prosperity outside forest landscapes

2.1 Patterns of migration that affect forest landscapes

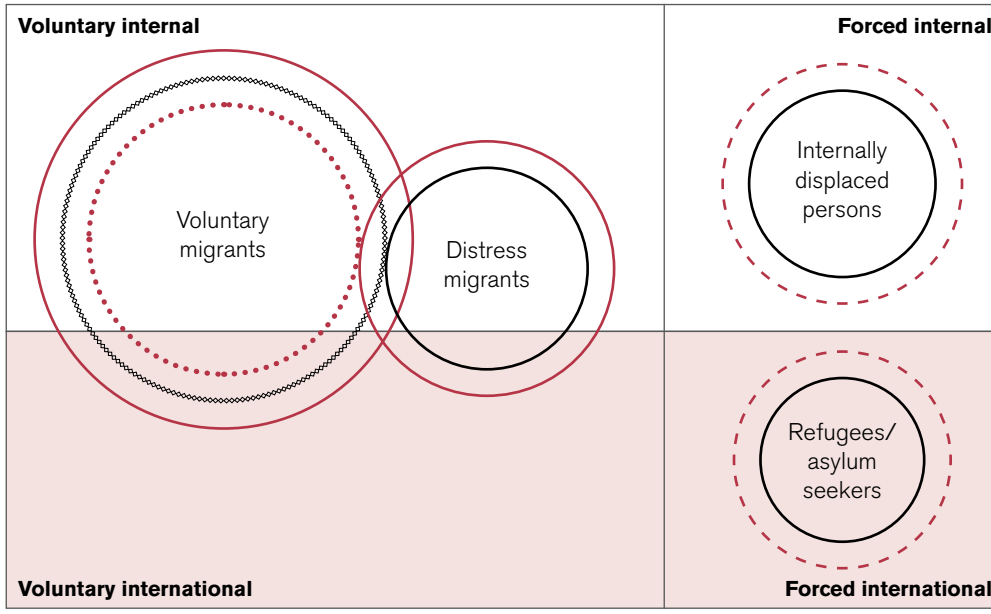
Migration has been defined both in terms of what it is – e.g. 'a process in which people cross the boundary of a political or administrative unit for a certain minimum period' (Boyle *et al.*, 1998), and in terms of why it happens – e.g. 'an adaptive response to socio-economic, cultural, political and environmental transformations, in most instances closely linked to the need to diversify income sources' (Tacoli, 2011).

Migration occurs both internally and internationally. International migration involves movement crossing an international border. Internal migration involves moving from administrative district to another within a country without crossing an international border. Internal migration is numerically the more significant of the two types (Bhagwati, 2003), which are in any case perhaps best treated as one interlinked system (Skeldon, 1997; FAO, 2018). Women's participation in international migration has been increasing, and they now represent almost half (48 percent) of the stock of international migrants. But regions vary, as males still constitute the majority of international migrants in sub-Saharan Africa – up to 60 percent in Eastern Africa (FAO, 2018). There has long been a trend in female migration away from movement as family dependents, to independent movements as the head of households for more economic reasons (Zlotnik, 1999).

Overall, migration is typically viewed as a livelihood, investment and resilience strategy (Hecht *et al*., 2015). So, what are the main reasons for migrating? Migrants have historically been divided into different categories – such as voluntary labour migrants (short and longer term – legal and illegal); voluntary education migrants; voluntary family or distress migrants; forced internally displaced persons; forced refugees or asylum seekers; and voluntary or forced return migrants (Castles, 2000). Categories of migrant can be depicted graphically to show the dominant drivers of migration both internally and internationally (Figure 1). However, more recent frameworks have cautioned against the use of such categories because migration categories are not static, but rather they are dynamic and can easily evolve from one category into another. FAO (2019) notes that there is not a clear dichotomy between 'forced' migration, on the one hand, and 'voluntary' migration, on the other hand. For instance, when livelihoods are threatened by an economic and financial crisis, or slow-onset events such as environmental degradation, the distinction between forced and voluntary migration may not be clear-cut. Migration decisions are complex, depend on multiple factors, and can be better viewed as lying along a spectrum where elements of choice and coercion co-exist and may be more or less predominant (FAO, 2019).

By 2019, there were estimates of 272 million **international migrants** (the shaded area in Figure 1 – UN DESA, 2019). Of the international migrants, more than 50 percent (150 million) were migrant workers and one third of these were youth – with a high proportion from rural areas (FAO, 2018). A small number of labour migrants 1 – 6.7 million – moved to take on agricultural jobs with the rest moving for urban opportunities (IOM, 2018). These aggregate statistics indicate that a critical concern of youth is for meaningful work – which current rural environments are perceived not to offer.

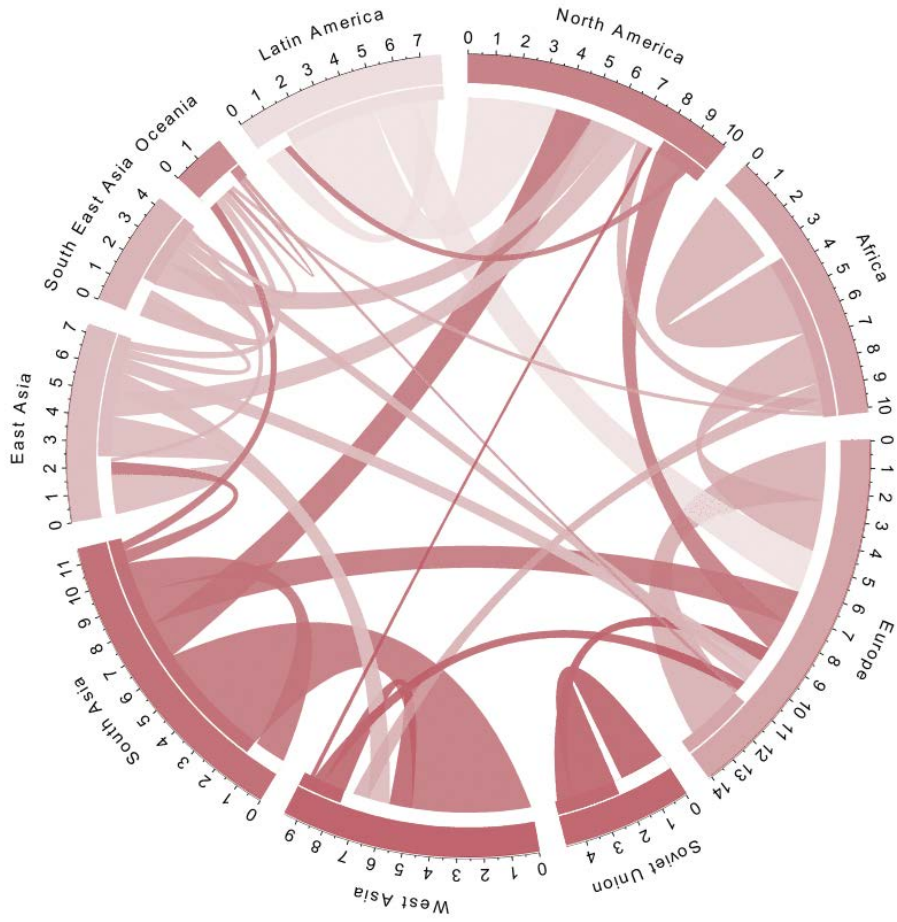
Figure 1. Traditional categories of migrants and the dominant driving forces behind them which have more recently been replaced by more fluid frameworks



Key: — Economic motives ◇◇◇◇ Family • • • Education — Natural disasters - - Conflict and crises
(N.B. circles not to scale)
Source: FAO, 2016

Of the 150 million international labour migrants, an estimated 112.3 million (75 percent) were destined for high-income countries, with another 34.4 million (23 percent) going to middle-income countries, and just 2 percent to low-income destination countries (IOM, 2018). There is an increasing rate of international migration with the percentage of international migrants in the total population rising from 2.3 percent in 1970 to 3.3 percent in 2015 (244 million out of 7.3 billion or one in every 30 people) (Ibid.). As noted above, most international migration is for labour, but there were also 70.8 million individuals forcibly displaced worldwide as a result of persecution, conflict, violence, or human rights violations (UNHCR, 2019). The pattern of international migrant flows between 2010 and 2015 is shown in Figure 2 (Ibid.):

Figure 2. Migrant flows between regions of the world 2010-2015



Source: Abel and Sander, 2014, based on estimates

Complementing the concerns over international migration, there were estimates of a substantially larger number of **internal migrants** which may be as high as 1.3 billion (FAO, 2018). Internal migrants outnumber international migrants by 3:1. While a major factor in internal social and demographic change, internal migration is difficult to study, relying on national census data, and these patterns do not necessarily bring about significant changes in population distribution because of reverse flows (Bell and Charles-Edwards, 2013). Seasonal circular movements are also often overlooked, such as the estimated 20 million people who move temporarily within any given year (Deshingkar, 2006)

People have always been mobile in search of land, food, water, income, knowledge or adventure – or to escape natural and economic calamities or war (Massey et al., 1998). It is the social media visibility of better prospects, the ease of transport and the globalised nature of natural and economic failures that has swollen migration to more than 1.5 billion worldwide (FAO, 2018). Climate change is exacerbating the existing drivers of migration and estimates suggest that over 143 million people – or around 2.8 percent of the population of sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia and Latin America – could be tipped towards moving within their own countries as a result of slow-onset impacts of climate change by 2050 (Rigaud *et al.*, 2018). Where forests and farms are called upon to deliver job security as well as food security, vulnerability to climate change presents major risks for the large numbers of young job-seekers. Nevertheless, recent analyses suggest that adaptation to climate change is feasible, and options will increase as new technologies and management approaches come onstream that emphasise diversification, infrastructure development and value addition – areas in which youth can play important roles (Brooks *et al.*, 2019).

There is a growing gap in infrastructure, investment and services between developed and developing countries or regions within countries, and between rural and urban areas, contributing often to rural-urban migration (Tiwari and Bhattarai, 2011). As noted above, migration flows are largely rural-urban, they are by no means all one way – with urban-rural migration happening to take advantage of seasonal or clandestine resource extraction (Padoch *et al.*, 2008), and increasing evidence of rural-rural migration also (see FAO, 2018). There is also a growing diversification of rural income generation that is assisted by infrastructure and communication technology and serves to reduce livelihood risks (Reardon *et al.*, 2001). This is having profound effects on forest landscapes – which can no longer be considered as static or spatially bounded (Rigg *et al.*, 2012). Instead, forest landscapes have become much more diverse and mobile with 'stretched' households that span rural and urban areas and offer more diversified mosaic livelihoods (Hecht *et al.*, 2015).

Within rural forest landscapes, households have been found to derive approximately 21.1 percent of their income from natural forests – sometimes as safety nets in times of hardship, sometimes as additional sources of income, and sometimes as commercial stepping stones out of poverty (Wunder *et al.*, 2014). In more enabling policy contexts, the combination of entrepreneurial exposure within migration networks and remittances has been shown to drive entrepreneurship in forest landscapes towards poverty reduction (Woodruff and Zenteno, 2007). Some studies suggest that rural depopulation and increasing remittances have had an overall positive impact on forests (Tiwari and Bhattarai, 2011).

2.2 Interconnected drivers for youth outmigration from forest landscapes

Young people are increasingly reluctant to pursue agriculture-based livelihoods (FAC, 2010). There is an early to mid-20s peak in the age profile of internal migration for most countries – and country differences tend to reflect (especially for women) the difference in the ages at which youth make four major life transitions, such as: education completion; labour force entry; union formation; and first childbirth (Bernard *et al*., 2014). So, for example, where these transitions happen early (e.g. in China or Nepal), the migration profile is younger, compared with countries in which these transitions happen later (e.g. in Europe or North America). Similarly, different contexts see different levels of government investment into opportunity structures that govern how youth enter and progress in the rural labour market (e.g. investments in infrastructure, education, healthcare) (Sumberg *et al*., 2019).

Migration is a complex phenomenon and a key component of livelihood strategies in rural households which focus on minimising risks and diversifying household income. However, recent research finds that individual characteristics such as gender, age and educational attainment are more important than household characteristics in determining migration (de Brauw, 2019). Notwithstanding that general point, individuals have many reasons for migration and they are interrelated at various levels (national, local, household and individual) (see Deotti and Estruch, 2016). Youth in particular often leave for the positive benefits of education and economic opportunities. This often results in an increasingly old age profile in forest landscapes (Rigg *et al*., 2012). An estimated 93 percent of the jobs available to youth in developing countries are in the informal economy, where earnings are low, working conditions are unsafe, and there is little or no social protection. Some 75 percent of youth are underutilised, either unemployed, in irregular (informal) jobs, or outside of formal education and training systems (UNDP, 2014).

In many cases, migrants decide to leave their community for economic and sociocultural reasons to seek work elsewhere. The situation is compounded by increasing population pressure and a deteriorating natural environment that drives youth outmigration to cities as part of this picture – where there is also a positive pull from urban modernity with its enticements of diverse education, career and recreational opportunities (Eversole, 2001), but also driven by the inevitable outcome of competitive pressures towards aggregation and mechanisation in agriculture to find economic scale-efficiencies (Barr, 2003).

There can also be strong youth outmigration gender biases unleashed by education. Young women have disproportionately better career prospects in urban environments than in more traditional rural environments (Corbett, 2009), and in some regions this can lead to a decrease of women in agriculture (e.g. in Europe), but in different cultural contexts

there is actually a 'feminisation' of agriculture (e.g. in Africa, Asia and Latin America – Agrawal, 2011).

Youth outmigration is driven by a number of factors – of which land and resource constraints, and lack of economic employment opportunities are increasingly prominent factors (Bezu and Holden, 2017). But it is not generally the poorest that tend to migrate, as migration also requires some means of transport and some aspiration based on social media connectedness. Youth migrants are squeezed by perceived constraints on the one hand and enticed by perceived opportunities on the other.

The main causes of youth outmigration from forest landscapes have been widely described (see FAO, 2016) and many overlap with the categories of prosperity introduced in Chapter 1 of this report, for example:

- Unsustainable natural or cultural heritage – i.e. lack of access to land and degradation of the natural and cultural resources around which subsistence or market-led work might be built. A strong predictor of migration has been found to be long-term water scarcity expressed, namely, through droughts and dry spells, as well as changing rainfall and temperature patterns and extremes, which are increasing in frequency and severity through climate change (FAO, 2019).
- Low material wealth and health – i.e. few economic opportunities due to high transaction costs of understanding and meeting market demand from remote landscapes, and few health support structures.
- Degrading social relationships – i.e. lack of representation within social organisations that govern local productive and social activities.
- Lack of personal and collective security – little access to social protection services and other safety networks.
- Poor options for personal fulfilment – perceptions of better opportunities in urban areas rather than in under-remunerated or undignified rural jobs.
- Lack of identity and purpose – the trap of rural poverty and food insecurity without apparent means for betterment (75 percent of the world's food insecure are in rural areas).

The triggers or decision points for migration may to some extent be relative – in the sense of depending on the perception of potential migrants. This relativity is introduced by the degree of perceived rural-urban disparities in opportunities and services (inequality between particular rural and urban environments), the degree of repetition of those perceptions (spread of social media), the perceived possibilities for migration (transport and infrastructure), and regional precedents (already existing migrant communities). Gender segregation is common in the labour opportunities which draw in migrants. For example, male migrants form a higher percentage in production and construction jobs,

whereas female migrants form a higher percentage in the service sectors and domestic positions (Fleury, 2016).

Investment programmes that build rural transport infrastructure, irrigation and electricity, upgrade rural education, provide rural social protection services, and offer accessible credit can help in creating alternatives to migration (Elder *et al*., 2015). But it has been strongly argued that it is useless to think that migration can be halted or that aid and trade can provide short-cut solutions to migration (de Haas, 2005). Hugely significant livelihood advantages are offered by migration in many instances, and by the vast financial flows of remittances that exceed flows of ODA.

2.3 Negative and positive impacts of youth outmigration – including remittances

We noted in Section 1.4 that youth retention in forest landscapes offers a number of advantages to FFPOs – such as the energy, enthusiasm and innovative risk-taking that they can bring to operations. Outmigration can reduce the labour quality available in forest landscapes if youth leave. Outmigration of youth might therefore have negative impacts if those migrants are viewed as individuals. But migration literature has affirmed the obvious point that youth migrants are rarely isolated individuals – they almost always remain part of larger units of related people, typically households or families (Stark, 1984), a fact underlined in the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) model (Shields and Shields, 1993).

Considering migration within the context of these larger units of related people is important because it highlights the possibilities of counterflows of goods – if links can be maintained with the source of outmigration. For example, recent research suggests that it is wrong to assume that outmigration constitutes a brain drain at least in the long run (de Haas, 2005). In the medium to long run, any brain drain can be accompanied by a significant brain gain in the form of a counterflow of financial, social and collective 'remittances' (or things sent back), including new knowledge and a network of useful new contacts and trade partners (Lowell and Finlay, 2002).

In terms of the balance of positive and negative impacts of youth outmigration, Deotti and Estruch (2016) provide a useful tabulated summary of the evidence of impact at the places of origin for those migrants (see Table 2 below). What this shows is a context-specific balance between potentially positive and negative impacts.

Table 2. Impact of youth outmigration on rural development in place of origin

Factor	Potential positive impacts	Potential negative impacts
Household income and resilience to shocks	More stable income and resilience via cash remittances	Remittance dependency and vulnerability of receivers
Skills and technology transfer	Increased awareness of new technology from migrants	Brain drain, decrease in human capital and slower innovation
Protection of most vulnerable household members	Use of remittances for education and social services	Increased work burden of remainers reduces care
Labour productivity	More efficient labour allocation and productivity	Loss of labour productivity and lower agricultural yields
Income inequality	Less inequality when poorest households get remittances	Greater inequality when richer households get remittances
Environmental impacts	Reduced person: land ratio allows rewilding/restoration	Remittances used for non-essential high-energy items

Source: Deotti and Estruch, 2016. ■ = high evidence; ■ = medium evidence; ■ = low evidence

The counterflow of remittances from outmigration are highly significant in absolute terms – both in terms of cash and other goods (Ghoussen et al., 2013). The World Bank estimates that officially recorded annual remittance flows to low- and middle-income countries reached USD529 billion in 2018, an increase of 9.6 percent over the previous record high of USD483 billion in 2017. Global remittances, which include flows to high-income countries, reached USD689 billion in 2018, up from USD633 billion in 2017 (World Bank, 2019), which translates into a doubling of household income for those that receive remittances from an urban migrant (Hecht *et al.*, 2012). Such funds sent by migrants globally are triple the funds received by official development assistance (ODA) (World Bank, 2013). For many households in which there has been outmigration, remittances can contribute a third to a half of household income (Hecht *et al.*, 2012). Research shows that women are more likely to receive remittances regardless of the sex of the remitter (Petrozziello, 2013). Women also send home significant remittances and are likely to remit a higher percentage of their salary than men. They are also more likely to be in temporary jobs which are known to result in higher remittance flows (Fleury, 2016).

Remittances are particularly strong in populations showing cyclical migration based around strong household units – where there is ongoing interest in investing in the place of origin (Dustmann and Mestres, 2010). But as noted above, there may be large inequalities between those receiving remittances, including big differences between those receiving remittances from abroad or from within a country. It is here that the role of FFPOs might play a pivotal role – in joining together those receiving remittances (and thereby with the capacity to invest) and those remaining in rural areas but without remittances.

As noted above, cash is not the only thing that comes back to households. Where there are international dimensions to migration, remittances often also introduce more cosmopolitan outlooks and new skills alongside the money (Posel and Marx, 2013). The transfers of non-monetary ideas, contacts, networks and behaviours are often referred to as 'social remittances' (Massey *et al*., 1993). Such social remittances may take place on return to their place of origin, or through contact with relatives, or indirectly through networks of diaspora (Beine *et al*., 2011). Again, FFPOs can help to spread the benefits of such 'social remittances' through the spread of productive knowledge in the receiving rural areas – especially in the area of entrepreneurship.

Finally, there are also national level remittances, often called domestic remittances, which accompany internal migration (often rural to urban) within countries. While these may be substantial, they are much harder to track (Esipova *et al*., 2012). Many of these internal remittances may be in the form of in-kind payments – such as sending food from rural to urban locations or vice versa (e.g. maize in Malawi or Kenya – Andersson, 2011; Djurfeldt and Wambugu, 2011). Internal remittances often seem to have the highest impact on the poorest households (Housen *et al*., 2013).

Remittances sent by men and women migrants can have significant gender aspects, for example, transforming the way spouses, children and communities left behind interact. This can include changing culturally accepted roles and opportunities for men, women, boys, and girls – with some evidence the women recipients of remittances tend to make more productive use of them for the household (Shrestha *et al*., 2019). For women senders of remittances, for example, 'rising' to become a recognised economic provider can also have positive outcomes in terms of empowerment (Lopez-Ekra *et al*., 2011). When such women return, they can transform the way women are treated in the household and community context.

In summary, youth outmigration may have some significant benefits over the medium to long term – that include not only higher household incomes (Shen *et al*., 2010), but also a substantial 'brain gain' that feeds into better educational attainment and indirect benefits such as improved sanitation and better healthcare (Amuedo-Dorantes, 2014). Cash and new knowledge are often combined to invest in technological and entrepreneurial upgrades to household livelihoods (Ratha, 2013), with options to pilot risky but higher

return activities that diversify livelihoods (Veljanoska, 2014). This may remove barriers to the start-up of new businesses (Marchetta, 2012). The impacts may also extend to changing attitudes towards the role of women in work, resulting in greater gender equity (Ghosh, 2009).

What is clear is that an approach to youth development must not be based around preventing youth who want to leave from leaving – but around building opportunities for youth engagement with FFPOs at the origin of outmigration, both for those who leave and for those who chose to stay. In other words, an approach to youth development should ideally be negotiated and incentivised to optimise the benefits from youth engagement in FFPOs or the benefits of migration to FFPOs, as described below in Section 3.

Youth nursery workers in Guatemala © Duncan Macqueen

3 How 'decent' or 'meaningful' work might enhance the contribution of youth

3.1 The importance of decent or meaningful work for youth

FFPOs are collectively the world's biggest private sector and source of work (Verdonne, 2018). Work can be defined as 'the expenditure of physical or mental effort to achieve a result'. Most adults spend the majority of their waking hours 'at work' (although notably not among indigenous hunter-gatherer societies who enjoy distinctly more leisure time – see Wolff, 2001). Because of this, work often serves as a primary sense of purpose, belonging and identity (Michaelson *et al.*, 2014). As noted above, when it is not possible to find decent or meaningful work in one place, people look for it elsewhere – and this is therefore one important (but by no means the only) driver of migration.

Work, whether inside or outside FFPOs, is about achieving 'results'. These results are typically 'things to which human's attribute value' – but work can also follow a number of futile ends. Whether or not work does result in things that humans value is one factor in deciding whether it is objectively 'decent' and subjectively also 'meaningful' (see Section 3.3 where these definitions are given). And whether work is decent or meaningful has a lot to do with whether the provision or pursuit of decent or meaningful work should be morally obligatory in some sense.

We have already noted in Section 1.2 some of the results or values towards which people might work: sustained natural and cultural heritage; material wealth and health; affirmative social relationships; personal and collective security; personal and reproductive fulfilment; and cognitive identity and purpose. We also noted how different people value different things – such that prosperity must always be a negotiated consensus between all members of a community.

Four important points must be made here. First, as noted in Chapter 1, **opportunities** for paid work towards particular ends (particular value categories) are not always available. In many rural settings, most work involves unpaid subsistence farming and the opportunities to access a paid job are scarce. But the idea that self-employment is a ready alternative (i.e. by helping rural people to become entrepreneurs) is often misplaced, especially when the plan is only to promote a new generation of individual micro-entrepreneurs. To gain market access it is often necessary to work with others in some form of FFPO. FFPOs are vital to the creation of self-employment options as they allow groups of producers to aggregate production (i.e. improving the offer to markets), share production costs (i.e. sharing inputs, storage, processing and packaging technologies, transport, etc), share knowledge (i.e. around quality through best practice production techniques, marketing and IT, potential support services, and buyers), and share skills (i.e. giving particular jobs to those most suited to them – a critical area for youth involvement in say newer IT options).

Second, **trade-offs** exist in choosing what work to do because different types of work contribute to different value categories to very different extents. For example, a job as a farm labourer in an FFPO business might offer high returns in terms of sustaining natural and cultural heritage and affirmative social relationships, but offer less in terms of material wealth and health, personal and collective security, personal fulfilment, cognitive identity and purpose. A job in accounts for an urban financial firm might offer a high return in categories of material wealth and health, personal and collective security, personal and reproductive fulfilment, but contribute less to natural and cultural heritage, affirmative social relationships, or cognitive identity and purpose. Youth must assess value trade-offs in deciding on what to work on and where – and FFPOs must take into consideration how potentially risky investments in new technologies and upgrading may also improve opportunities for youth that might have longer-term benefits that outweigh those risks.

Third, **comparisons** between the returns of particular work to different value categories are fraught with difficulty. It is difficult to compare returns in one value category (e.g. material wealth and health) with returns in another (e.g. affirmative social relationships). These value categories are largely non-commensurate (i.e. they cannot be measured on the others' scale). Moreover, personal returns in one value category may not equate with public returns in that same value category, and individuals vary in the degree to which they weight their own selfish ends as opposed to the public good. The result is that it is hard to predict how youth will assess the trade-offs between returns to different value categories associated with different work opportunities. It is therefore vital that FFPOs have a serious strategy of youth engagement in decision making to understand how different strategies for the FFPO might affect the willingness of youth to engage.

Fourth, **thresholds** exist beyond below which work is intolerable. No matter how much youth might want to work to achieve a result – this is only possible if that work offers returns that meet some minimum thresholds in each category. This is most obvious in the value category of material wealth and health (e.g. enough income to keep a family alive), but is equally true in the other value categories (e.g. work that does not cut off vital social relationships). In many ways the International Labour Organisation's promotion of 'decent work' is exactly to try and ensure that all work meets internationally agreed thresholds. But in non-ideal situations, there are choices to be made, and different youth will have different thresholds for each category – with gender differences in what might or might not be acceptable due to gender-specific vulnerabilities. When it is impossible for FFPOs to offer youth employment that meets these minimum thresholds for survival – an alternative strategy might need to be adopted, such as creating 'youth associates' of the FFPO for those who have no option but to emigrate (see Chapter 4 for more discussion), but who nevertheless wish to maintain ties with the remaining members of the FFPO (often members of their own family or friendship groups).

All four points make it difficult to assess the objective value of different types of work that might be offered to youth. For this reason, any objectivity to the 'value of work' for youth would have to rely to some extent on the FFPO youth engagement strategy to reach a democratic consensus about how to move forward – and in which youth feel part of that strategy. It is for this reason that we use for work the more subjective term 'meaningful' in preference to the more objective term 'decent' (see Section 3.3). But just because there is democratic consensus on the value of a particular type of work, does not mean that that value will be accepted by an individual youth. The value of work is also assessed subjectively by the youth. It is these subjective assessments on the value to be derived from work that have an important place in decisions regarding migration (although of course the drivers of migration may fall outside of the sphere of work, as we have discussed in Chapters 1 and 2).

3.2 The escalating challenges of providing meaningful or decent work in forest landscapes

The changing nature of forest landscapes and work options affects the provision of decent or meaningful work and youth perceptions about it. As noted by Poschen (2015), most of the 1.4 billion people living on less than USD1.25 per day (notably 829 million girls and women, and only 522 million boys and men) are employed in sectors threatened by the overuse of natural resources – agriculture, forestry and fisheries. But if climate change, resource degradation, and biodiversity loss continue, rural employment will be compromised with or without remittances from urban areas, and migration may exceed the capacity of urban systems to cope (Tacoli *et al.*, 2015).

Avoiding that outcome will be a challenge. Dobbs *et al.* (2011) note that with a growing middle class, rapidly increasing demands across almost all resource types over the next 20 years would require the supply of water to increase by 140 percent and land up to 250 percent, compared with the rate at which supply has expanded over the past two decades. Given that the existing rates of expansion have underpinned widespread climate change, resource degradation and biodiversity loss, this further expansion of supply could have a wide range of potentially negative effects on the environment.

Different political perspectives abound. From their liberal business-as-usual perspective, Dobbs *et al.* (2011) advocate removing the remaining subsidies (e.g. increasing prices and thereby attract investment into more efficient production) and removing market barriers for large industry (e.g. improving property rights, freeing up resource extraction, etc). They also note the need for substantial investment in a social safety net that will be required for the 5.1 billion people (75 percent of the world's population) who are not

adequately covered by social security and who would face being priced out of basic needs. This approach, that Poschen (2015) calls 'grow first and clean up later', sounds ludicrous. While arguable one route to achieving SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), it offers little to many of the other SDGs, such as SDG 1 (No poverty), SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities), SDG 12 (Responsible production and consumption), and only marginalisation to the existing smallholder-dominated economies in rural areas.

An alternative political perspective embracing the different challenge of building an inclusive forest and farm economy that sustains forest landscapes must be embraced if the integrated nature of the SDGs is to be achieved. Indeed, it not only needs to be done, but may generate better quality jobs and increasing employment of 0.5-2 percent of the global workforce (Poschen, 2015). Smallholder FFPO businesses need to be a particular focus as they generate two thirds of global employment, create many new jobs and are a great source of innovation. Skills development, diversification (especially in areas of declining unsustainable industries) and social protection for those most affected by any increases in pricing of environmentally sustainable goods are also needed. The organisation of smallholders into effective knowledge-sharing associations, cooperatives and federations will be a particularly important strategy for increasing productive efficiencies. And as noted below in Chapter 4, women need to be empowered – such that situations where 60-80 percent of food production in developing countries comes from women, but they own 2 percent of the land, become a thing of the past.

3.3 What decent and meaningful work mean

The terms 'decent' and 'meaningful' when referring to work are largely interchangeable and we use them as such – the latter adding more subjective elements to the former as described below. Decent work is perhaps the more widely accepted term. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has developed negotiated and used indicators of decent work based on widespread consensus of the aspirations of people for their working lives. Decent work has been defined by ILO as 'opportunities for work that are productive and deliver a fair income, with security in the workplace and social protection for families, better prospects for personal development and social integration, freedom for people to express their concerns, organise and participate in the decisions that affect their lives and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men' (ILO, 2019c).

We also use here the term meaningful work because, although international indicators of decent work are vital, the local processes of deciding for youth what matters or has 'meaning' in work are also critical to improving local outcomes. And this report is directed towards FFPOs and their local processes of striving to engage and deliver attractive options for youth. Meaningful work has been classed by Yeoman (2014) as a fundamental human need. She rejects liberal political theorists who downgrade meaningful work to a

'preference' and social theorists who demand moral neutrality in how different types of work are categorised (i.e. those treating work as so dominated by technical requirements that it is degraded to the point of being a norm-free zone).

Meaningful work is defined as involving three elements spanning both objective and subjective dimensions (Ciulla, 2000; Wolf, 2010). Meaningful work involves: (i) the objective value or worthiness of what is being done (i.e. in line with that to which humans ascribe value – prosperity); (ii) the objective value of how it is being done (i.e. in line with ethical principles of autonomy, freedom and social recognition); and (iii) the subjective engagement with the 'meaning-making' process (i.e. attachment to it, fulfilment through it and social recognition for it). It is this latter 'meaning-making' process that we feel FFPOs need to engage further with – across both young men and young women.

In terms of what is being done – things to which human's attribute value can be categorised in various different ways, there is no 'perfect' framework. One broad set includes six categories of things to which human's attribute value has already been introduced above: natural and cultural heritage; material health and wellbeing; affirmative social relationship; physical and reproductive security; creative fulfilment of potential; and a sense of identity or purpose (Macqueen, 2016). Work involves effort to achieve any or all of the above. It is a broad concept covering a wide range of activities – both paid and unpaid.

In terms of how things are being done, many authors refer to Adam Smith's warning that 'The man whose whole life is spent performing a few simple operations has no occasion to exert his understanding, or to exercise his invention…and generally becomes as stupid and ignorant as it is possible for a human creature to become' (Smith, 1776). Bowie (1998) identifies six characteristics of meaningful work – work that is: freely entered into; allows the worker to exercise her autonomy; enables the worker to develop her rational capacities; provides remuneration sufficient for her welfare; supports her moral development (by being in line with the pursuit of widely-accepted values); and is non-authoritarian.

In terms of subjective engagement with meaning, various factors seem to increase the sense of meaning including: task identity (completing a whole piece of work from start to finish); skill variety (using different capacities); task significance (doing things with a high impact on others); autonomy (having discretion about when, how and where to complete tasks); and feedback (receiving information about one's performance) (Fried and Ferris (1987). One peculiarly significant factor seems to be to avoid work that involves blindly pursuing ends others have chosen (Schwartz, 1982). Another important factor seems to be the 'fit' or alignment between the values and capabilities of the individual and the work at hand (Michaelson *et al*., 2014). These are key elements for FFPOs to consider in designing strategies for youth engagement, i.e. allowing youth some degree of

responsibility and autonomy for significant elements of FFPO work from start to finish – with regular feedback about how it is progressing.

It stands to reason that the more often meaningful aspects of work are concentrated into particular subsets of jobs, the more likely it is that some people will be denied meaningful work (hence its relegation to a preference in liberal political theory). However, the potential injustice in that outcome has led authors not only to call for distributive justice (in terms of fair competition to access particular jobs), it has also led some to call for contributive justice (in terms of sharing out elements of meaning-making across a broader spectrum of jobs – Sayer, 2009). The notion of contributive justice has emerged in seeking greater equality between genders (e.g. in the household economy sharing domestic duties more fairly – Folbre, 1982) and between races (e.g. sharing out menial tasks more fairly across society at large – Gomberg, 2007).

Considerations such as these are pertinent to FFPO youth engagement strategies – to ensure that youth skillsets are actively included. Clearly, this could go too far, and it is not necessarily ideal for all jobs to be the same (which would obviously diminish productivity since the most skilled job tasks would be undertaken by people not competent to perform them) – but to ensure that jobs do not separate the conception of the task from its execution (Murphy, 1993). In avoiding the separation of conception from execution, all workers can become 'crafters of their work', which improves the perceived identity fit of those workers (Wrzesniewski and Dutton, 2001).

Yeoman (2014) argues that cultivating subjective elements of meaning-making can be enhanced by democratic decision making over what is worth doing and who should do it. Democratic decision-making processes in the workplace increase subjective perceptions of attachment, fulfilment and equal status in relation to others – by linking the work each does to the meaning of the greater whole. Such democracy in work institutions (at whatever governance level) also helps to reach a negotiated basis for value (a solid base for rejecting liberal neutrality about work). It brings into public view interpretive differences over value or meaning. It affirms workers as having equal status as co-authorities in the realm of value, worthy of the entitlement to speak and be heard. As such, meaningful work becomes an inter-subjective and institutional achievement – not something pertaining to an individual alone.

Youth nursery producer in Kenya © Duncan Macqueen

4 What can be done to anchor youth through prosperity in place

4.1 Recognising that different strategies are needed for different types of youth

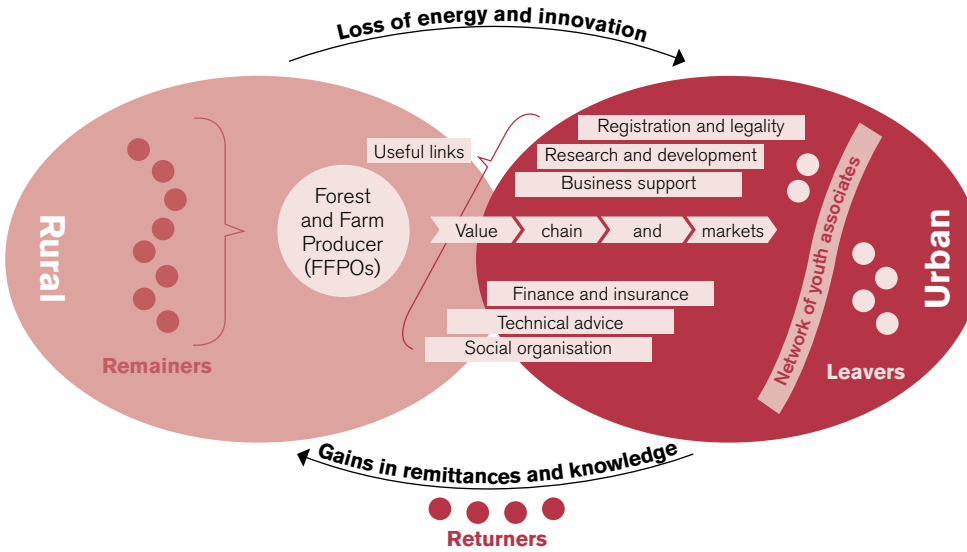
The challenge of providing meaningful work options for youth is not something for which there is a 'one-size-fits-all' solution. Different FFPOs operate around different value chains. Indeed, as noted above, a

significant proportion of FFPOs operate across multiple value chains – producing diverse baskets of products from diverse agroforestry systems. There are gender differences in the opportunities afforded by different productive options (i.e. women may see better opportunities in market gardening adjacent to the home than the distant collection of wood for charcoal). Perhaps the most straightforward route for FFPOs to create opportunities for youth is to move from the production of raw materials towards processing and value addition. Processing and value addition options are often less gender-differentiated. Within the value chain, the more stages of product transformation an FFPO can undertake, the more employment opportunities it can offer to youth. Moreover, the types of jobs that can be made available in product transformation, packaging, transport and retail often have greater youth appeal than agricultural production of raw materials.

Despite increasing employment opportunities through processing and value addition, FFPOs still have limited production processes in hand for which there are limited numbers of employment options. For example, within an FFPO, the production side requires access to land and in land-constrained contexts, youth may be unable to find a foothold in the rural landscape. This may be a particular issue for young women as mentioned above. Similarly, there are only so many jobs that can be made available in areas that require new technology that may be suited to youth aspirations. As a result, it is clearly sensible to ensure that any FFPO youth engagement strategy considers together the different potential options for youth who can be employed by the FFPO as 'remainers', who may have to seek employment elsewhere as 'movers', or who may return with new skills and market links as 'returners' (Figure 3). Considering each category is important because each offers different options to enhance the functionality of FFPOs and their businesses.

Remaining youth, where productive land allows, can help provide some of the energy, enthusiasm and risk taking in piloting new production techniques that might help the FFPO advance or diversify its productive base. Some of the most significant opportunities may therefore be in moving into primary or secondary processing of products or in related service roles. For example, there may be opportunities for both young men and women, not only in value addition and transformation (at least their initial stages in rural areas), but also opportunities for involvement as agents for savings and credit cooperative organisations (SACCOs), in transport or as extensionists for the FFPOs. They can develop roles as quality agents (e.g. assuring similar quality standards across multiple FFPO producer members) or as marketing agents. Rural realities are showing many ways in which FFPOs can innovate to create roles for young men and women (Haddad and Goemans, 2012).

Figure 3. Elements within a youth engagement strategy



Additionally, youth are often suited to spurring innovation and could help FFPOs to engage with a range of modern IT options – such as geospatial natural resource mapping to secure tenure and improving inventory of stock (McCall and Minang, 2005), setting up electronic savings and loans funds with strong financial accounting to improve FFPO credit ratings (F3Life, 2019), developing websites or social media marketing (Macqueen and Bolin, 2017), agreeing and running participatory certification systems (Leconto and Hatanaka, 2018), working towards smart contracts for climate finance (Howson *et al*., 2019), introducing mobile banking (Mbora *et al*., 2018), financial management for functional business plans, and so on.

Moving youth, who might be out-migrating either seasonally or longer term, can perhaps be linked to remaining FFPOs through some form of 'youth associate' status which builds on their family ties and other cultural roots to the place of origin. There are obvious benefits that can be tapped from the remittances sent home to family members remaining as members of the FFPO. But there may also be ways of harnessing the exposure of such youth to urban markets where the FFPO may wish to increase its sales. Intelligence about potential buyers, or indeed other input and service suppliers, including sources of investment and finance would be highly beneficial to FFPOs, as would political contacts that might help unblock administrative processes for FFPO production and trade. Similarly, new knowledge about alternative market niches for FFPO products, new production and processing technologies that might enhance profitability, transport options, business partnerships and so on could play to the advantage of FFPOs if strong links can be maintained with out-migrating youth.

Returning youth require yet further consideration. If it has been possible to maintain some form of FFPO link between those youth during the period of seasonal or longer-term migration, some thought must be given as how best to accommodate their return. This could involve quite a flexible and organic approach. If the persons in question have played a key role in opening up new market options around a particular product line, consideration should obviously be given to assigning them responsibility for further developing those options upon their return. More seasonal migration might require some form of integration planning such that their energy and skills can be harnessed into the production cycle (especially if migration has taken place in the off season).

While the specific consideration will vary with the context and nature of the FFPO in question, it is worth emphasising here the fact that some form of youth engagement strategy should be more than an afterthought in the regular management meetings of the FFPO. At some stage, it is advisable to undertake a deliberate initiative to develop such a youth strategy with regular stocktakes of how that strategy is functioning, and what the perceptions of FFPO youth members are about it. Finding space to discuss the issues of youth involvement in productive activities, employment opportunities and challenges, links to people who are forced or chose to migrate could open up whole new areas of opportunity for an FFPO. It should be noted that women often face additional constraints in engaging in such processes (and in organisational management in general) due to social norms, confidence, literacy levels and limited time and mobility due to household duties (FAO, 2014) – so a deliberate effort to reach and involve women is vital in formats, time and spaces that work for them.

In initial demand surveys of the knowledge needs of 41 FFPOs that have been undertaken in 6 FFF countries (Ecuador, Ghana, Kenya, Nepal, Vietnam and Zambia), specific questions were asked to FFPOs regarding: (i) the importance of youth and the process with which they were engaged; (ii) the nature of youth programmes; and (iii) the main barriers faced by youth and vocational education needs to overcome those barriers. The results of the surveys are shown below in Figures 4-6. As can be seen from Figure 4, the vast majority of FFPOs consider youth engagement to be a high priority, and 59 percent of all FFPOs surveyed had some active programme of youth engagement.

For those FFPOs that did have some form of active programme directed at youth, almost a third involved youth training programmes that covered both technical issues (to do with production), but also business development and organisational management (See Figure 5). A quarter had specific youth employment schemes. Many also had programmes to support youth sport and recreation outside the FFPO businesses. Business development was frequently mentioned as an attractive option to stem youth outmigration. Several FFPOs had specific forums within which youth were actually given responsibility for design or production innovations, or simply to make suggestions for ideas relevant to the FFPO. Some more specific FFPO actions in slightly better established FFPOs

Figure 4. Percentage of FFPOs with youth programmes from 41 organisations in 5 countries

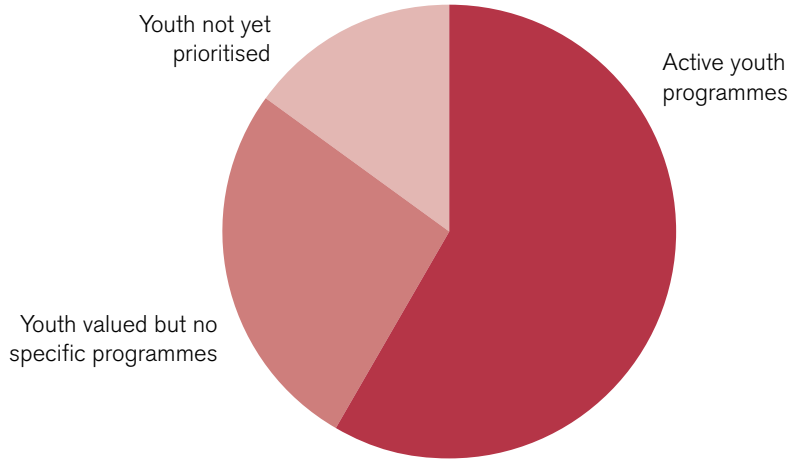
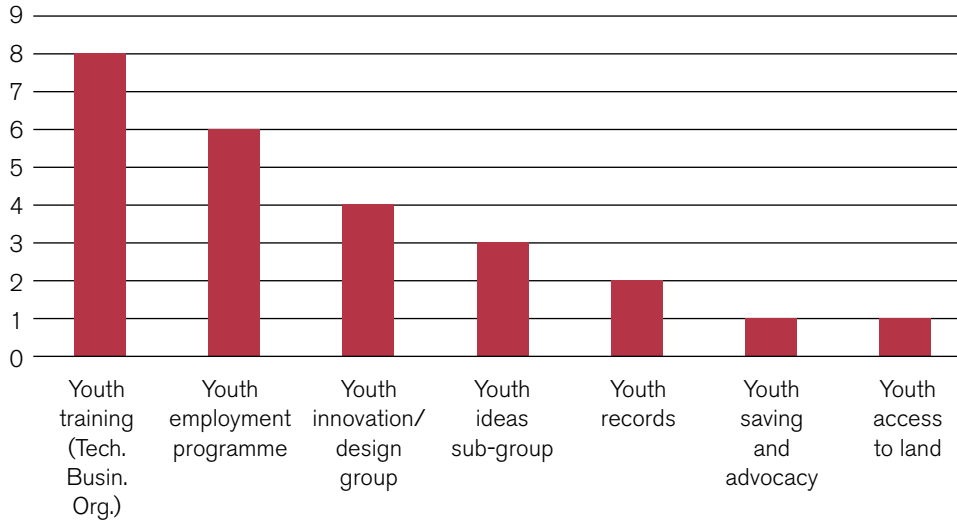


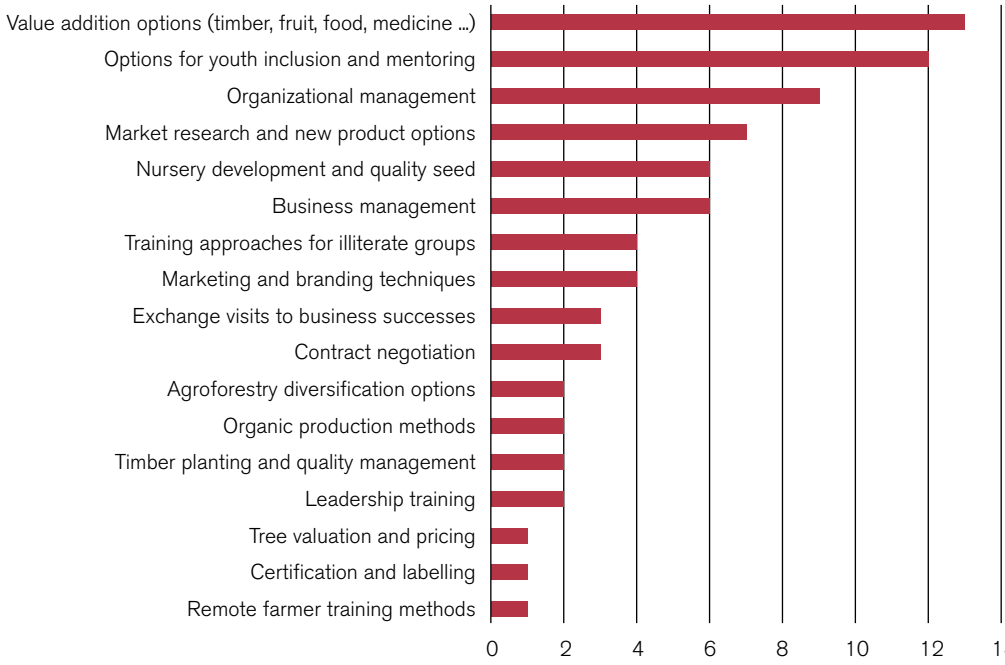
Figure 5. Nature of youth programmes in 24 FFPOs with active youth programmes



included programmes to secure land for young women, advocacy programmes led by youth, and basic record keeping about youth participation and their priorities.

On asking FFPO leaders what barriers affected youth and what programmes of vocational education might be necessary to address those barriers, the following responses were given (noting that FFPOs often mentioned several barriers and vocational education options – see Figure 6).

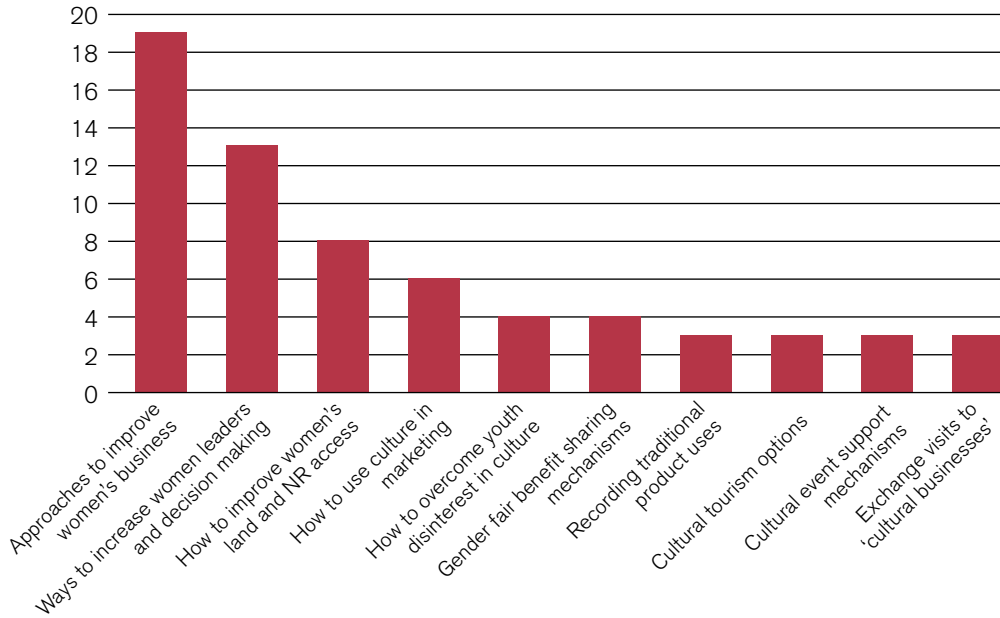
Figure 6. Requested vocational training linked to youth development from 41 FFPOs in 6 countries



It can be seen that training in value addition technologies for business (cited by 32 percent of FFPOs surveyed) was the top priority. Indeed, general training on how to attract and mentor youth within FFPOs was highly demanded. Subsequent options also have a strong business flavour – with organisational management, market research and product development, nursery and quality seed production and business management all featuring in a number of responses. The full range of suggestions is given in Figure 6 – noting further business-linked vocational education requests such as marketing and branding, exchange visits to successful businesses, contract negotiation, and so on.

Within the survey, additional questions relating to gender and culture again demonstrated the importance of providing income-generating opportunities in forest landscapes. For example, the top demand for new knowledge relevant to gender and culture was in how to install approaches to develop women's businesses, followed by how to increase women in leadership and decision making (see Figure 7). A third priority was for how to improve women's access to land and natural resources. All of these gender priorities add nuance to the broader youth priorities of improving value addition technologies for business.

Figure 7. Top priorities for additional knowledge needs relating to gender and culture



4.2 Involving youth in defining and developing meaningful FFPO work

As noted above, the first and perhaps most meaningful step that an FFPO can undertake is to develop a youth engagement strategy with space to discuss and develop policies for youth inclusion in FFPOs – but that such inclusion should seek to involve both **'remainers'** who will stay and work within the FFPO, **'leavers'** for whom the FFPO may wish to develop some 'youth associate' status or even sponsor youth outmigration for education if there are youth who wish to gain an education before returning to work, and **'returners'** who for a variety of reasons may seek to return to the FFPO either seasonally or following a longer period away. Evidence shows that participation mechanisms aimed at youth improve young people's livelihoods and developmental opportunities – across a wide range of options from better use of social media platforms, consultative workshops and assemblies, intergenerational work platforms, or even youth-led institutions within the FFPO (Trivelli and Morel, 2019).

Also, it would be critical to give space to the voices and needs of younger youth and young women. Younger youth (eg youth below 18) are often less involved because of their young age, yet active participation will be powerful in shaping successful school-to-work transitions for them. As for young women, they tend to face particular

constraints to participating in the management of rural organisations for a variety of reasons: they generally have lower literacy levels than men; they often lack the confidence to defend their interests; and they have limited mobility and time availability due to the need to combine household duties with a heavy workload. Actively promoting their participation in the definition of a youth engagement strategy will be of crucial importance for its success.

As part of those discussions within the framework of a youth engagement strategy, the FFPO will inevitably check on opportunities and constraints to meaningful work. Among the more common barriers for youth in rural landscapes is the availability of land. Especially in areas of rapid population growth, there simply may not be enough land for families to divide farm holdings in favour of youth. But there are often alternatives that can be found, for example in communal land, or public land belonging to the state. In such areas, it has often proven effective for FFPOs to work with local authorities to develop local programmes to make agricultural land available for youth groups conditional on performance (Holden and Tilahun, 2016). In that way there is an incentive for youth to remain and to contribute actively to the production systems of the FFPO.

Another area in which more meaningful options for youth can be developed among those remaining in the areas is to increase their level of responsibility. For example, FFPOs could involve youth in designing more green and sustainable agroforestry businesses (Herren *et al*., 2012). As noted above, youth are often enthusiastic about new options and prepared to take risks in order to see higher returns. This can make them an important part of piloting new potentially more productive agricultural systems, for example experimenting with planting diverse crops or trees on farm, adopting new agroforestry and soil conservation measures, trialling new processing techniques, and so on. Creating a category of young innovators could be useful as well as improved recognition of intergenerational relationships – within the family but also with other mentors. Indigenous peoples are particularly good at recognising the importance of building on the links between the young and old, giving elders a responsibility to prioritise youth.

With or without any innovations in production systems, it can be very beneficial to extend vocational education programmes to youth who are often quick adopters of new practice. One area in which this can be of particular relevance is if education programmes are offered in areas such as technological innovation or information and communication technology (ICTs), both for on-farm and off farm applications. Many FFPOs are now making use of market information systems based on mobile phones, social media platforms for advertising products and arranging contracts, mobile banking which is gradually emerging in many countries – including for group businesses such as those run by FFPOs. It is not always possible to plan such vocational education inputs, because many depend on ad hoc projects from local NGOs – but maintaining a proactive stance in pursuing such opportunities is one way to maintain youth involvement.

As FFPOs develop over time it may be possible to turn some of these ad hoc vocational trainings into a more structured and concerted youth programme, For example, in Guatemala, the umbrella cooperative FEDECOVERA (founded in 1976) now runs a permanent rural agroforestry business school that has emerged out of a large number of services that the cooperative provides for its 37 member cooperatives and more than 100 producer groups that are not formal cooperatives – services such as needs identification, project formulation, technical training, bookkeeping support and credit facilities, legal advice, plant nursery, supplies and equipment maintenance services, product processing and storage (Moran, 2018). In India, the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) which registered as a trade union in 1926 now runs the SEWA Manager Ni School for youth and other new managers in the areas of entrepreneurship, business development, market access, strengthening operations, new technology, product quality and standards certification, legal and financial issues and business management (Nanavaty *et al*., 2018).

One of the key areas that FFF has been investing in recent years is in the mainstreaming of business incubation within FFPOs (Macqueen and Bolin, 2018). In part this follows international evidence that entrepreneurship promotion interventions appear to yield positive results on average for youth employment – and is perhaps the best way to achieve that (Kluve *et al*., 2017). As experience of business within an FFPOs grows, they are both well placed (i.e. can reach local entrepreneurial groups) and contextually experienced (i.e. in local markets and production systems), and also locally financed (i.e. not reliant on time-limited project income) to provide business incubation support. This can be a crucial service to young entrepreneurs, especially if the FFPO business incubation team develops a good network of contacts with service providers in areas such as business development, finance, technical advice, technology research and development, administrative registration procedures, and so on.

Specific efforts in business incubation can be made to improve women's entrepreneurship (see Bolin, 2018). For example, it is possible to design gender-differentiated training programmes that fit with the available study hours of women and focus on the types of business that fit with their household situations. Similarly, it is possible to improve peer-to-peer mentoring on business by women. Furthermore, women are often more confident with critical mass in FFPOs and so efforts can be taken to increase women's membership or indeed form women-only business groups.

Notwithstanding the general effectiveness of entrepreneurship training, overall statistics show that employment opportunities in low-income countries reflect the pace of economic and structural transformation (Fox and Kaul, 2017). In many rural areas there is an urgent need for basic infrastructure development to facilitate (or indeed attract from outside) middle-size production units to more rural areas – including high voltage electricity, roads and transportation. FFPOs can play a key role in negotiating with local, provincial and national government to hasten such developments. For example, the Viet

Nam Farmers Union (VNFU) helped to establish round tables at different levels with government. At commune level, the VNFU work led to the Dao Thinh People's Committee helping a local cinnamon production cooperative by building a new road to improve harvesting access to the forest area – while the Tan Khanh People's Committee agreed to lend another FFPO 2,000 square meters of land to build a forest chicken processing plant (FFF, 2018).

In trying to encourage youth to remain, these non-business support services and amenities can also play an important role. For example, while not an FFPO, Health-in-Harmony recognised the importance of healthcare provision and training in alternative sustainable livelihoods as keys to involving people in local forest protection (Webb *et al*., 2018). Similarly, investment in sport is another way of improving youth satisfaction in rural environments including investments in sports clubs, cooperatives to produce sports clothing lines, i.e. business support for off-farm enterprises as well. With infrastructure developments can come amenities like internet cafes and recreational clubs that can help retain youth interest.

For youth who do indicate an intention to migrate for education, seasonal or longer-term employment, FFPOs can again act proactively by developing some form of 'migration planning', exploring and finding ways of accommodating safe and easy remittances (Ambler *et al*., 2014). Being proactive in recognising the attraction of migration and the potential benefits that this can bring the FFPO is one way of strengthening the ties with place that can benefit both the FFPO and the migrating person. The notion of social connectedness – building a sense of community attachment – is a particularly important way of maintaining youth involvement over time (Theodori and Theodori, 2014). But it requires a proactive approach by FFPOs so that youth know that they are valued and that efforts are being made to foster and maintain their links with their place of origin over time.

One practical option for all concerned can be to try and secure financial literacy training for the reinvestment of remittances (Doi *et al*., 2014). One of the main shortcomings of much remittance flows is the failure to reinvest the money constructively in value addition that can provide longer- term income flows for those receiving the remittances. A gap is often the management of a proper investment fund by the FFPO out of which loans to potential investors could be repaid. By developing FFPO financial literacy, based around proper enterprise development plans with costed investment proposals, those receiving remittances can be encouraged to play a leading role in community development – with the option not only to gift money to the FFPO but also loan it to the FFPO with agreed repayments over time.

Practical options for returning youth might be to develop some kind of flexible debriefing process – like offering those returning the opportunity to speak about their experiences and highlight potential new market links and opportunities that could benefit the FFPO.

If reintegrating back into the FFPO, these returning youth could be given responsibility to develop opportunities in line with their new experience. Certainly, these returners could be effective 'market ambassadors' to any urban centres where they had spent appreciable amounts of time. More importantly, if they have assimilated new skills, it would obviously be useful for them to run training in that particular issue (e.g. ICT opportunities, market niches and their development, certification, etc).

Those leaving and returning from more seasonal labour migration patterns might require some form of integration planning. This could involve some reciprocal arrangements, such as care for their land and resources during their absence in return for particular contributions on their return. In this way the FFPO can create a supportive environment for youth and build loyalty to the place of origin in the process. The intention of any youth engagement strategy might be to involve youth in defining targets for meaningful work and then agreeing some mutually supportive process to try and attain those targets.

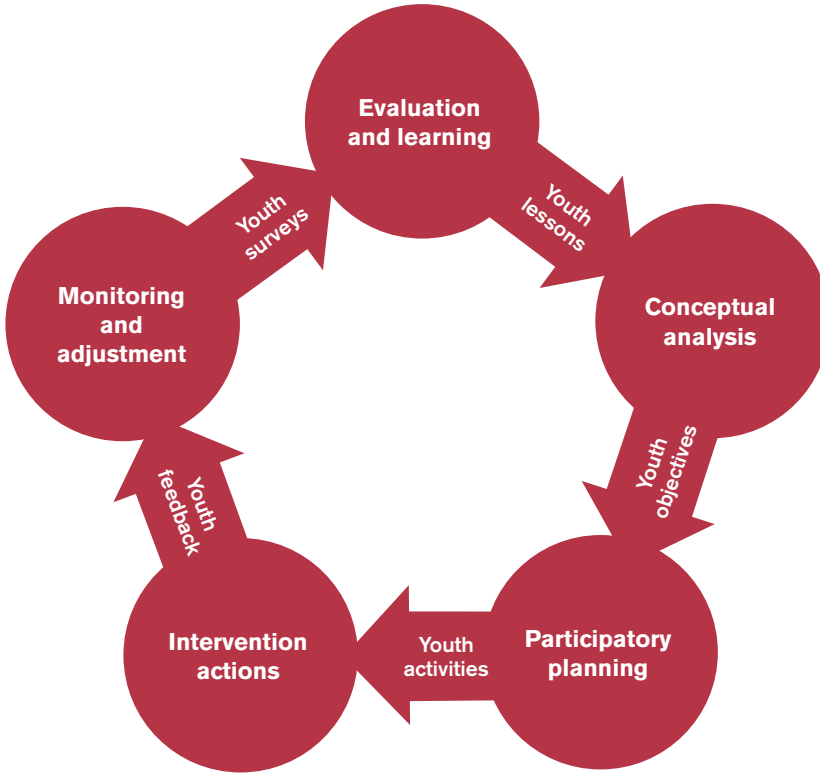
4.3 Developing a process with metrics to discern progress in youth engagement

An important consideration in any area of development is the metrics with which progress is to be measured. If youth engagement and outcomes are not part of regular assessment, it is unlikely that there will be any dynamism within youth engagement strategies. And this applies to the need to make gender-disaggregated assessments.

Increasingly in business performance metrics, companies are measuring impacts not only on improving value for customers and shareholders, but also for their employees and the community at large (Bourne *et al.*, 2003). Thinking of ways to have youth themselves measure and assess the extent to which they are involved is important. The rationale is that motivated employees are integral to successful business – and there is no reason why the same logic should not apply to FFPOs interested in youth engagement. Indeed, it has been argued that FFPOs could and perhaps should attempt to distinguish themselves from conventional profit-driven corporations by measuring their democratic control and attention to broader areas of sustainable development, including vocation education so that youth can fulfil their full human potential (Macqueen *et al.*, 2018b).

Building the FFPO culture such that youth are nurtured into productive full membership and can then in turn induct new youth into the FFPO will create a cycle of success. It is worth thinking in terms of an annual learning and development cycle for youth engagement with a conventional series of steps involving: evaluation and learning; conceptual analysis; participatory planning; intervention actions; and monitoring and adjustment (see Figure 7).

Figure 8. Cyclical process within a youth engagement strategy



The first step is to evaluate, as far as is possible, male and female youth perceptions about the opportunities for meaningful work in their place of origin and learn why they are opting to stay or leave. This might need to involve assigning someone to do a little background research with youth in each of the three categories above: remainers, leavers and returners .

The second step would be to engage youth in a participatory process of conceptual analysis (perhaps disaggregated by gender) that sets targets for change. This could involve reciprocal empathic approaches such as 'radical listening' – developed by Health-in-Harmony – adapted to ask the question 'what might the FFPO do or put in place to assist you (youth) as the future custodians of our community to want to contribute to that future in this place'. Such participatory approaches are effective methods to facilitate locally-designed, youth-led, sustainable targets that work for remainers, leavers and returners.

A third step might be to take those targets and develop participatory plans about how to make them work in practice. So, for example, if one of the targets for remainers was local electricity to allow youth to develop processing businesses, an action plan could be

developed to approach local authorities and try to find solutions to that issue. Similarly, if gendered entrepreneurial training and mentoring was perceived as a target for remainers – a plan could be developed by the FFPO to meet that need with training processes appropriate for young men and women. And the same planning process could also work for those intending to migrate out of the community, perhaps setting targets for facilitating remittances, and so on.

Once a plan is put in place, responsibilities would need to be agreed as to who would implement the actions, and at what time and with what resources. As noted above, involving youth and giving them responsibility at each stage of the intervention from its conception to completion is one way of increasing the sense of commitment and meaning for those actions.

The final step could be to report on an annual basis at the annual general meeting of the FFPO on the progress made with the youth engagement strategy. In part that reporting stage is to check on progress, and in part it is to maintain youth at the centre of an FFPO's considerations.

There is the question of whose responsibility oversight of a youth engagement strategy might be. Ideally, if the FFPO already has a business incubation unit, youth engagement could become part of the overall business incubation strategy – especially because of the potential networks of 'youth associates' that could be established to provide business incubation support over time. Alternatively, the FFPO could assign a permanent youth engagement officer to promote youth. Using social media in creative ways to build a youth movement may be one of the more powerful means to motivate youth to stay. Giving fellowships for youth to study their own traditional knowledge and production systems, with a view to finding and promoting innovations, may be another way that larger FFPOS or even government programmes could incentivise youth engagement.

Youth community tour guide in Myanmar © Duncan Macqueen

5 Recommendations and next steps

5.1 Recommendations for FFPO leaders

As noted throughout this report, FFPOs come in many shapes and sizes. In the forest core, one encounters indigenous people's groups with strong territorial claims and varying perceptions about markets and the need to access or reject them. At the forest periphery, one encounters community groups based around communal forest tenure or a mix of communal and private responsibility. As one moves out into forest and farm landscape mosaics, one encounters local groups of private smallholders, sometimes even informal, selling a particular commodity or basket of products. One level above are peri-urban or urban regional aggregation and processing cooperatives and associations. Finally, there are national and even international unions and federations that can talk powerfully with government. On account of that diversity, it is difficult to offer general prescriptions that will be equally appropriate for all groups. Nevertheless, there do seem to be some recommendations that could be offered, drawing on the analysis in previous sections:

- **Establishing youth engagement processes** – the high numerical proportion of youth in developing countries where FFPOs exist, and the high levels of rural unemployment, underemployment, precariousness and inactivity that they face, are good reason to be

more intentional about youth. Setting up a youth engagement strategy through a process similar to the one described in Section 4.3 could offer significant benefits, both to male and female youth, and to the long-term prosperity of the FFPOs.

- **Survey male and female youth perceptions of what it would take to engage them** – such a process might start with a participatory assessment of youth issues to better understand their needs, aspirations and potential contributions. The assessments should be inclusive of different youth groups and needs (e.g. young women, younger youth, etc). This could then feed into a planning and implementation process based around the targets that youth themselves set – grouped into remainers, leavers and returners.
- **Analyse results to design youth interventions for remainers, leavers and returners** – youth are not a homogenous category and even among the remainers, leavers and returners there are distinctions to be made, especially for younger youth versus older youth and young women versus young men, but also more educated youth versus less educated youth/school dropouts. As a result, there will be a wide range of needs and aspirations. Some of these aspirations, and for some youth groups, might be met within the place of origin, while for others leaving the forest and farm landscape to take up education or employment opportunities elsewhere might be the more sensible course of action. Some may move temporarily and then want to return. Whatever the reality, an FFPO can work with those youth groups to develop constructive plans to make the most of their continuing relational ties to people and place.
- **Plan to improve intergenerational opportunities through business incubation and innovation –** creating a strong positive cycle of youth engagement will mean planning actual changes that improve the situation for youth – differentiated by young men and women (and indeed between any other categories of youth). This may be from simple adjustments to decision-making processes (such as ensuring greater inclusion of women through the timing and process of meetings), through training and employment opportunities (noting the emphasis on value addition and service roles described above), to lobbying for wider infrastructure developments. Part of that planning process is to recognise and strengthen the important ties that link youth to traditional knowledge and cultural activities arising from the land and region as experienced by both men and women.
- **Implement plan and monitor its effects** – having an annual session devoted to reporting on the youth engagement strategy and its impacts on young men and women will help the FFPO to take seriously its commitments to the next generation. Change is inevitable, but there will always be ways to improve the opportunities that FFPOs can offer youth and to improve the contribution youth can make to FFPOs.

5.2 Recommendations for policy makers

In the same way that FFPOs vary, so too government agencies vary in the scale and sphere of authority. Almost all governments operate at a range of levels from national policy making and institutional oversight, through regional or provincial policy making and institutional oversight to local or community level decision making and institutional oversight. Budgets at each level will vary roughly in line with the degree to which decision making is delegated. It has proved highly useful for FFPOs who are often grouped into tiered structures (from local groups to national unions or federations) to try and engage government at each of those levels. That is because useful ways of supporting youth engagement may be housed at different levels. Nevertheless, some general recommendations can be made on the basis of the analysis above:

- **Ensure migrants, both men and women, are granted full human rights, services and resources** – migrants should receive the same protections, standards and resources as non-migrants; providing these can benefit the economy more broadly and have positive feedback in rural areas which benefit from remittances. This includes non-discrimination in access to the labour market and job sectors and the particular need for scrutiny of domestic employment sectors and of those acting as intermediaries in recruiting employees to work in distant locations (especially to prevent human trafficking).
- **Increase opportunities for gendered rural entrepreneurial training, particularly related to agribusiness, ICTs and other new technologies** – making use of government extension services to provide business incubation support – especially in the area of entrepreneurial training – can greatly help FFPOs' efforts to undertake and benefit from youth engagement. Including distinct incubation approaches for women is advantageous.
- **Establish incentive and recognition programmes for youth-led rural enterprises in partnership with FFPOs** – strongly-held perceptions that job opportunities in forest and farm landscapes are 'backward' or 'uninteresting' need to be countered by highlighting rural entrepreneurial innovations that are improving livelihoods and landscapes. Incentives for such enterprises and public award schemes to draw attention to them could be useful.
- **Invest in rural infrastructure** – more needs to be done to facilitate FFPO business upgrading and attract businesses to rural towns keeping in mind the specific needs of youth (e.g. sports facilities, coffee shops, high-speed internet, and so on). Rolling out service provision in the form of roads, electricity, telecommunications, healthcare, sanitation, and so on can act as magnets for structural transformation in business opportunities.

- **Support more accessible financial channels for sending and receiving remittance for men and women** – women are often disadvantaged in access to finance; efforts should be made to reduce financial illiteracy and risk to those wishing to send remittances to their place of origin.

5.3 Next steps for the FFF partnership

Since its establishment in 2012, the first phase of FFF partnership provided direct support to 947 FFPOs: three global; three regional; 10 national; and 931 local or provincial (comprising 21-79 percent women depending on country/region) and indirect support to many hundreds more. In total, these FFPOs represent more than 30 million forest and farm producers (see FFF, 2018). Strengthening FFPOs for business has focused primarily (but not exclusively) on the 931 local and provincial FFPOs with a programme of training of trainers and linkages to 80 new financial or business service providers. The results enabled 262 documented FFPO businesses to diversify or add value to their products, with 158 gaining access to new finance in the process. The combined progress on FFPO businesses has substantially raised incomes for hundreds of thousands of forest and farm producers (with ranges of specific income increases documented for FFPO businesses, for example between 35-50 percent in The Gambia, 46-65 percent in Kenya, 12-18 percent in Myanmar, 30-50 percent in Nicaragua, 10-20 percent in Vietnam (with several outliers in excess of 500-1,000 percent in Bolivia, The Gambia and Myanmar).

Many of these advances described above have improved conditions for youth employment – although the precise metrics covering youth engagement were not in place during FFF Phase 1. For example, youth have benefited from specific diversification and improvements in market access for the following forest-based value chains: acaí; bamboo; tuno bark; broom grass products; cashew; charcoal; chicken under forest cover; cinnamon; cocoa; coffee; craft; ecotourism; elephant foot yam; furniture; goat raising; green tea; fish; honey; juice; livestock; mushrooms; palm heart; palm thatch; pomelo; pottery (wood fired); ramón nuts; star anise; sawn timber; tree nurseries; rattan; sterculia resin; and vegetables.

Coming into effect in 2018, FFF's Phase 2 programme document gives more explicit treatment to an FFF's youth strategy in line with FAO's response on the challenges of youth in rural areas. The programme document commits FFF to working towards creating equal opportunities for all producers, no matter their sex or age, and to specific activities to empower young people, to tap and enhance their capacities – especially with regards to business development and entrepreneurship. These activities aim to include facilitation of: youth assessments within country partner FFPOs; improved youth engagement in FFPOs; direct youth capacity development in entrepreneurship; climate resilience and social and cultural service provision through trainings; exchange visits and workshops;

increasing youth numbers in value chains and markets; and youth empowerment and advocacy. This report contributes to FFF's youth strategy by shedding light on ways of achieving these programmatic commitments. An important next step will be to discuss these plans with the youth employment unit in FAO to join forces at the country level.

As indicated above, a country-specific approach is inevitable for appropriate and sustainable female and male youth empowerment and support. The initial assessments behind this report will now form the basis for further interventions that will be targeted towards the overall objectives of the FFF. This report will next be distributed to FFPO leaders with an invitation to pilot some of the approaches to youth engagement which have been laid out. Further case studies may be commissioned through IIED to refine the guidance on youth engagement and provide more prescriptive suggestions. Consideration will be given to regional gatherings to assess progress towards youth engagement in FFPOs more broadly. The regular FFF programme of work will continue to look at youth opportunities, including building entrepreneurial capacity to enhance employment opportunities. Assessments of these options will be compiled in a briefing paper to share success factors with the broader international community.

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Knowledge Products

Research report

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Forests

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