Youth Eager to Explore Careers in Agriculture Amidst Economic Challenges, Survey Highlights Key Roadblocks

In the face of daunting economic challenges arising from various shocks, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and the persistent cost of living crisis, a significant number of young individuals are turning to agriculture as a potential career path.

However, a recent survey on Youth engagement in Policy and Access to Productive Resources conducted by Generation Africa has revealed that nearly 75 percent of these aspiring youth are deterred by inadequate financing options and the difficulty of accessing agricultural land.

The survey findings underscore the urgent need to address these roadblocks and encourage greater youth engagement in agri-food systems. As young people represent a crucial demographic in shaping the future of agriculture, immediate and innovative solutions are being sought to enable their participation in the sector.

One of the proposed solutions is the establishment of youth savings and credit cooperatives (SACCOs), which facilitate young individuals in borrowing funds within their networks. By fostering financial inclusivity, these SACCOs can empower aspiring youth farmers to overcome the challenge of limited financing options, thus providing them with the necessary resources to kickstart their agricultural ventures.

Furthermore, peer-to-peer lending platforms are seen as another ideal avenue to address the pressing issue of limited access to finance. Such platforms leverage technology to connect lenders directly with borrowers, eliminating intermediaries and making capital more accessible to the youth, who would otherwise face significant barriers when seeking financial support for their agricultural pursuits.

Addressing the issue of land access is equally vital to foster youth engagement in agriculture. Digital land platforms that use innovative mapping technologies can play a crucial role in identifying and documenting unused agricultural land. By connecting aspiring young farmers with landowners willing to lease or sell their properties, these platforms create opportunities for the youth to access agricultural land and initiate their farming endeavors.

To ensure the preservation of agricultural land for future generations, the adoption of land trusts is being suggested. These trusts can serve as protective measures against development and help safeguard agricultural lands, making them available for youth farmers to cultivate and contribute to food security and sustainability.

Additionally, implementing land tenure reforms that prioritize access to land for youth and eliminate ownership barriers will significantly accelerate youth participation in agricultural transformation. By granting easier access to land resources, young farmers can invest in long-term agricultural projects with confidence and dedication.

Beyond addressing the challenges of finance and land access, engaging the youth in policy development processes is of paramount importance. By actively involving young individuals in shaping laws and policies that affect the agricultural sector, their voices will be heard, and their interests better represented. Inclusivity in policy-making will ultimately lead to laws that work to the advantage of the youth and foster a conducive environment for agricultural growth and innovation.