



**GENERATION
AFRICA**

Survey on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19

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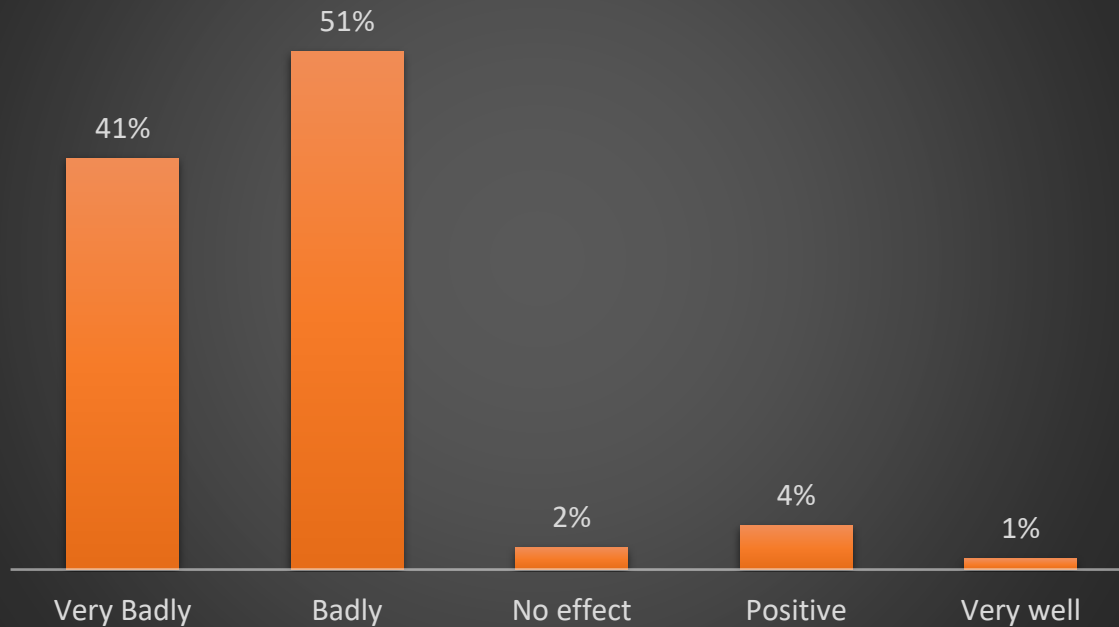
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INTRODUCTION

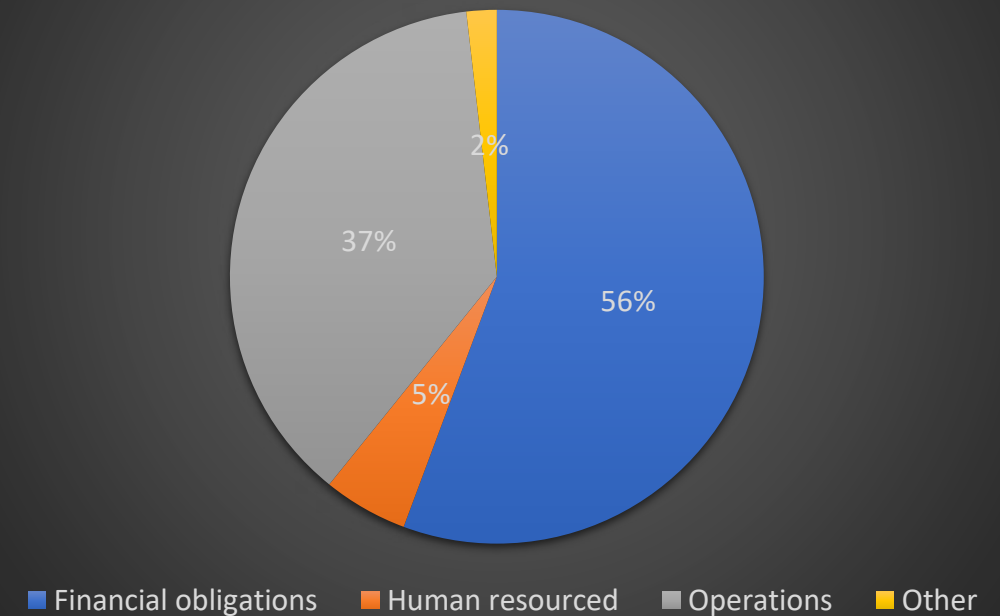
- 2020 was a year that few people anticipated. The Covid-19 pandemic introduced the world to conditions that challenged the existence of businesses. Most businesses struggled and others closed. It became clear that the world would not be the same thus the need to invent ways to survive in the unprecedented conditions.
- 2021 has become a year of rebuilding and refocusing business strategies for resilience. We carried out this survey to understand the actual impact that the young agripreneurs faced and to understand the needs in order to prioritize support to them.
- During our members meeting and UNFSS Dialogue, it became clear that the mental health of these young agripreneurs was also affected yet the ecosystem lacks intervention for individuals psychological health but focuses on the business. **A healthy mind is a healthy body** , we would like to explore ways to help the young agripreneurs ventilate their frustrations.
- The survey was responded by 280 young agripreneurs in 27 African countries of which 30% were female. 44% of the respondents were below 30 years.
- Here are the results from the survey.

Impact of Covid 19

Actual effect to Businesses



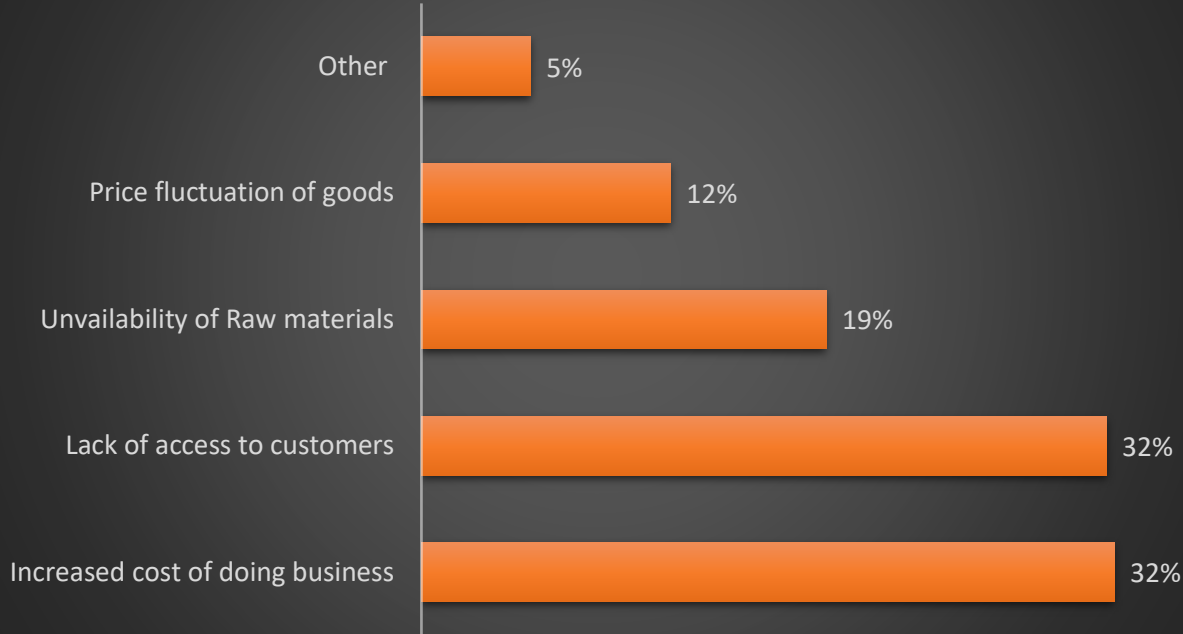
Aspect of the business Most affected



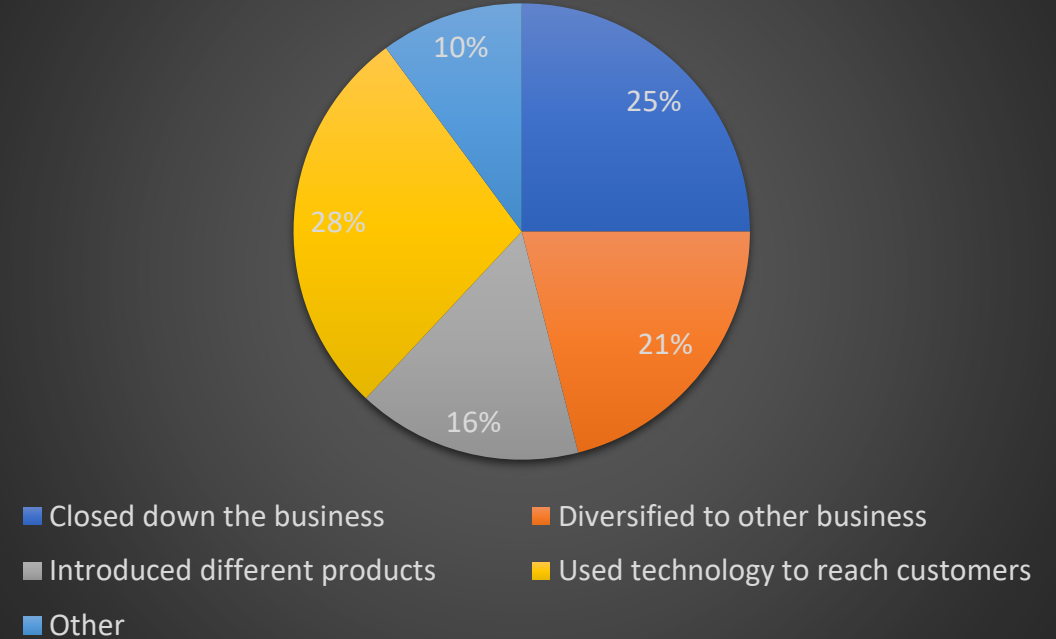
- 92% of the businesses we adversely hit.
- Most businesses we unable to meet their financial obligations (56%). This includes payment of loans, payment of suppliers and staff.

Where was the strain?

Biggest Constraints



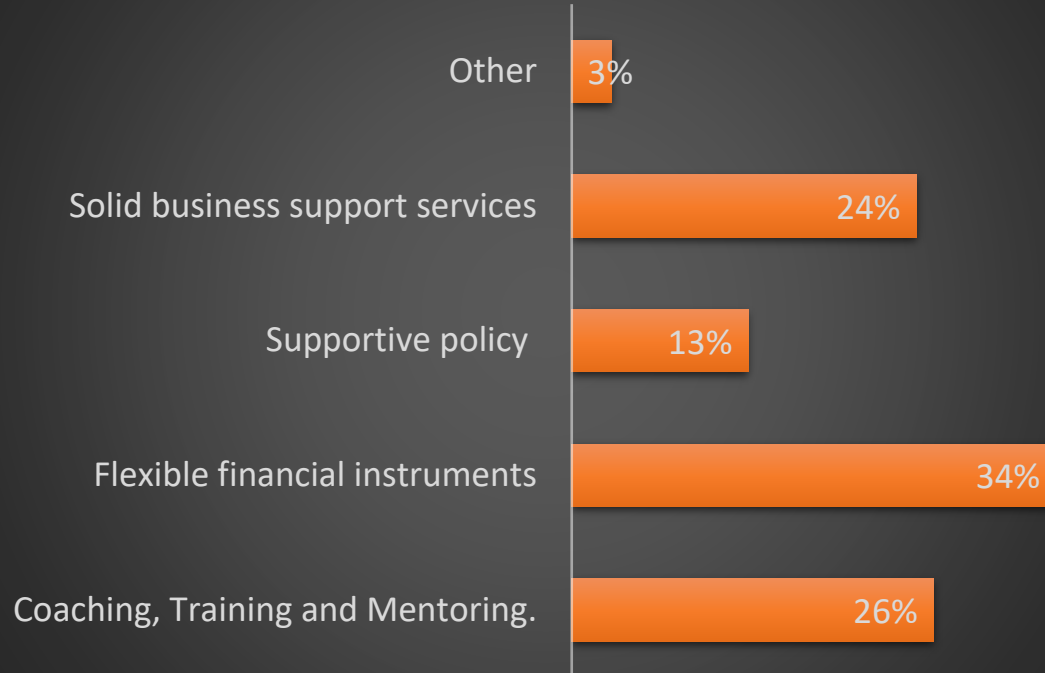
Coping with the challenges



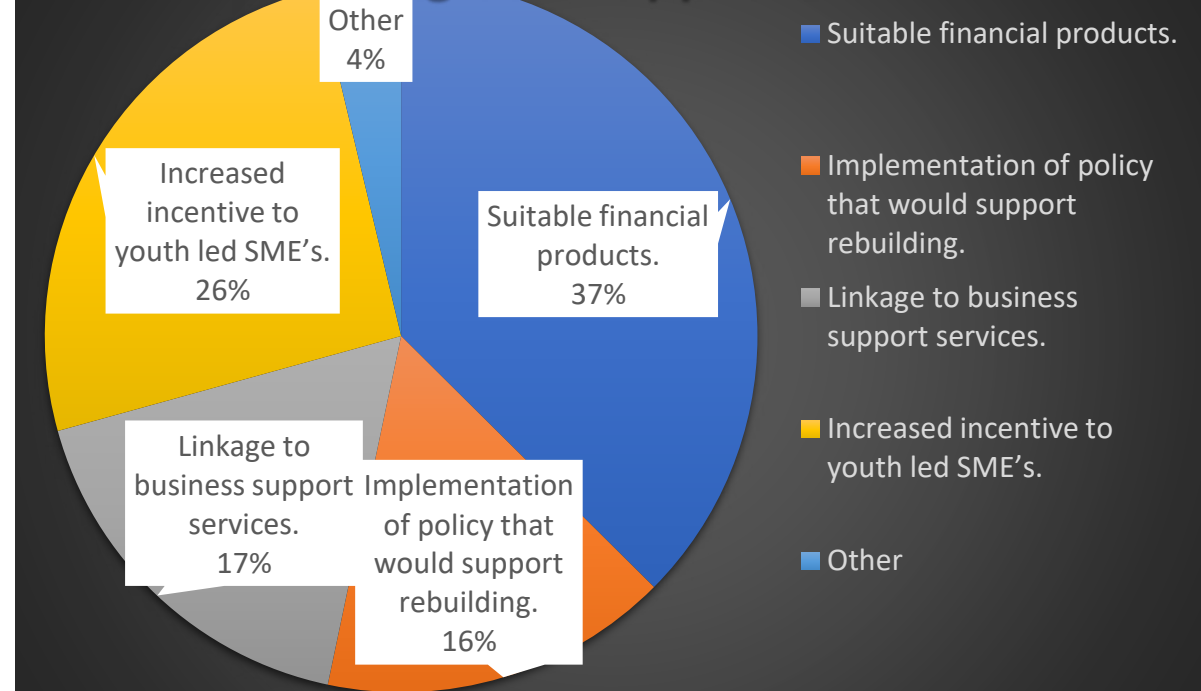
- Access to customers and increased cost of doing business were the leading constraints.
- Most business reinvented market approach to digital. Utilizing the different social sites to access the customers.
- 25% of the business had to close down while rest down-sized, got into other businesses or introduced alternative products.

Interventions

Immediate Need



Long-term approach



- The youth believe that flexible financial instruments is most crucial for their rebuilding process.
- Support services and coaching will also enable them rebuild resilient businesses.
- Friendly financial products and incentives are crucial as a long-term strategy to enable the youth participate in the food systems by creating sustainable resilient businesses.
- Least of the youth believe in policy change.

Personal well-being

Mental State

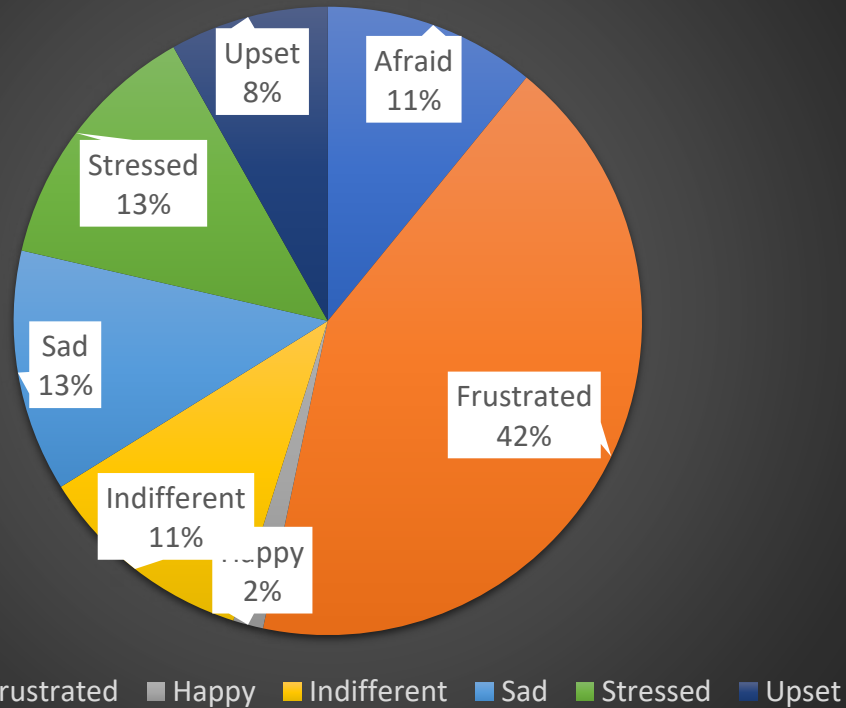
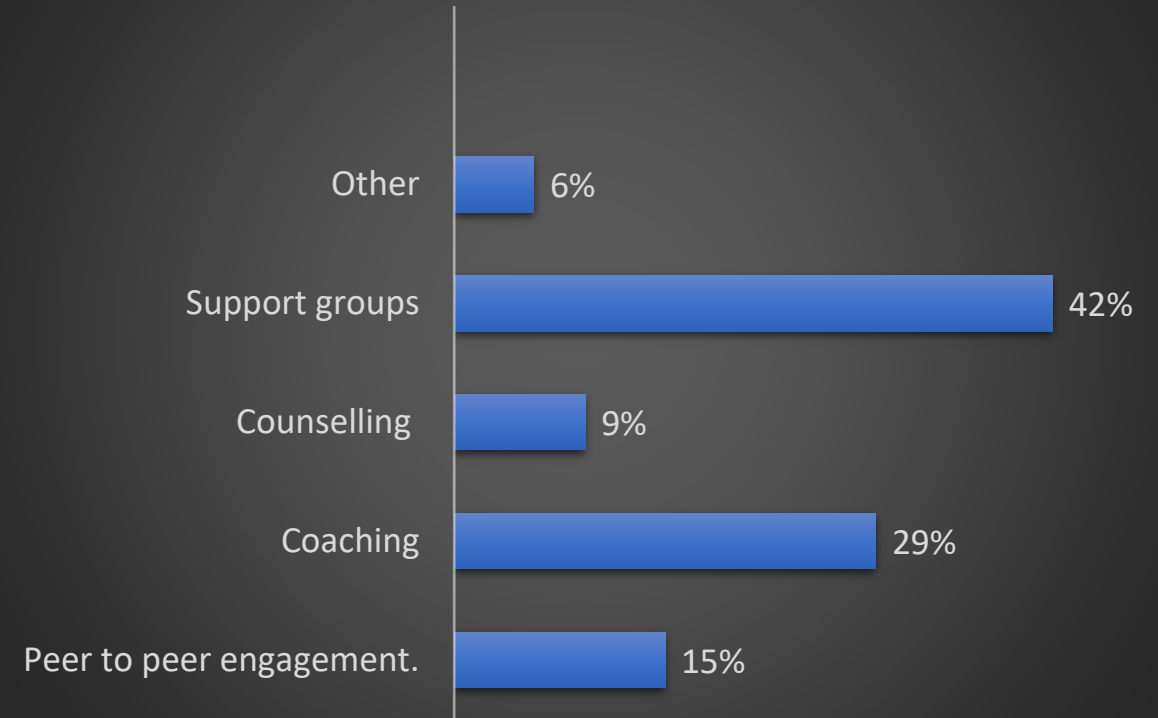


Chart Title



- Most of the youth were frustrated by the period. Only 2% were happy.
- There were no structures or support to help them get through these emotional and mental situations.
- 42% suggest formation of support groups while the rest prefer coaching and counselling.

Positives – Opportunities that emerged	What would they have done differently.	How they coped emotionally.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grew to online markets • Received Government subsidy • Had perspective to develop Progressive business plans, • Developed new products (Ginger in Milk, Medical tea (TZ)) • Pushed for more media following, virtual platforms and exhibitions, • Diverse customers were on boarded • Got into preservation and value addition • Had more time in the farm and time for personal development • Closed trade borders led to reduced imports thus increase in demand price of goods(Sierra Leon -rice) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper documentation (Financial documents) • Spread risk by diversifying the business. Taking up more products or customer segments. • Taken up insurance for products • Online marketing (created a strong digital presence) • Developed meaningful long-term Partnerships • Personal development (School and additional courses) • savings, • Dedicated to have a disciplined relationship with banks • Plan and implement (avoiding procrastination) • Manage costs early • Create multiple streams of income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayer • Enough rest • Persistence • Online courses and webinars • Family and friends, • Remained optimistic, • Social media interaction • Coaching and sharing.

Selected responses

<p>“Life was really terrible, I had to close down my business for good. This year I have had to build another business from scratch. I survived all the hardship of the pandemic with support from family and friends. But all in all, I still believe I will pass through all these hardships with lessons.” (Uganda, Male)</p>	<p>“Sadly, I broke down because I did not allow myself a break or time to heal from the overwhelming issues going on as well as our zeal to provide our food products to as many people as we could since people were panicking. (Nigeria, Female)</p>	<p>“The pressure came in all at once (customers, retaining employee, pivoting digitally, etc) but I just pushed through. I have a very supportive team, they are very understanding so that eased out some pressure, and with my supportive family too who offered petty loan, etc also contributed my partial relief. I had the opportunity to speak with mentors too, who have suggestions and ideas from best practices” (Nigeria, Female)</p>
<p>“I tried to adjust to the system and later closed down as I realized I was just makes making a huge loss.” (Nigeria, Female)</p>	<p>“Looked beyond the losses and identified new opportunities and different ways of doing things to keep the business running.” (Liberia, Male)</p>	<p>“Due to the impact of this pandemic I could not continue with my broiler business because day old chicks became almost unavailable. To stay afloat, I had to diversify to buying eggs and supplying in bulk or wholesale prices to large cities in my country. This helped me stay afloat and to continue to sustain myself and my workers” (Cameroon, Female)</p>
<p>“If I could go back I would Insure my business to have the financial backbone to rebuild regardless of negative economic impact.” (Congo, Male)</p>	<p>“I decided to be optimistic and press forward believing for a better tomorrow, but I had to reduce my production rate” (Nigeria, Female)</p>	<p>“The pressure from pandemic forced the enterprise to start a new norm of organizing its activities in terms of operations, meetings and trainings. The only way was to go online and try to digitize organization of activities by using digital tools and platforms like WebHr and Asana”</p>

Issue	Proposed Solution	
Support rebuilding of businesses post Covid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subsidy funds and grants to rebuild. 	
Creating incentives for youth to get into Agripreneurship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create bias for young agripreneurs to promote their chances to succeed e.g., technical assistance from companies for young agripreneurs, market bias to youth products, contracting by off takers • Competitions and award schemes. 	
Promote access to finance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary training on financial bookkeeping for credit purpose • Technical assistance to banks to develop financial products aimed for youth agripreneurs • Guarantees to banks 	
Promoting healthy minds for young Agripreneurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support coaching sessions • Organize forums for peer-to-peer experience sharing • Country level groups. 	

Call to Action – insights to be discussed by Ambassadors

Covid-19 amplified the already existing challenges that the African youth face in the journey to build successful enterprises. Most businesses are in the verge of rebuilding, but the youth face a stiffer journey and need the support from all Ecosystem player.

The call to action will be around mobilizing support for youth-led SMEs to enable them rebuild their businesses. Some of the proposed areas are:

1. Set up of funds/grants that will enable the businesses substitute their costs.
2. Development of financial products that target the youth, this can be achieved by providing technical assistance to banks to craft these products and setting up smart guarantees to encourage risk taking by financial institutions.
3. There is uptake of M-commerce on-line platforms as a channel to reach customers. There is need to further develop this area to allow youth access customers and markets beyond the traditional physical infrastructure.
4. A call to governments to be aware of the youth ecosystem and marshal for policy change to enable growth and maturity of youth-led SMEs.
5. Private companies to establish bias and support for youth-led SMEs in contracting and off-take.
6. Continuous building of business support services targeted to the youth-led SMEs.
7. Create awareness of the psychological stress businesses cause to young agripreneurs and create avenues for channeling the frustration through support groups, peer sharing platforms and coaching.

