



# **Swaziland Report on Current and Emerging Youth Policies and Initiatives with Special Link to Agriculture**

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## 1.0. Definition

Based on the Youth Policy, the youth in Swaziland are defined as ‘young men and women aged from 15 to 35 years of age.’

## 1.1. Purpose of the study

This was a desk review that seeks to identify gaps and opportunities for developing national youth and agriculture policies within agricultural policies and make appropriate policy decisions.

## 1.2. Background

FANRPAN hosted an Annual Regional Food Security Policy Dialogue in Swaziland on the 19-23 September 2011 focusing on ‘Advocating for the active Engagement of the Youth in the Agricultural Value Chain’. *There is recognition that for Africa to achieve food security the youth must be regarded as critical agricultural players who need and deserve special attention, support and follow-up as they have the energy, passion and talents which they can apply to contribute towards solving many of the serious problems the world faces today.*





- It has however been noted that the youth is most often excluded from participation in the policy processes yet the policies also have a bearing on the youth. In Swaziland, although 43% of the total population comprises the youth, the current urban and rural structures allow for very minimal participation of the youth in the economic, social and political arena.





- Agriculture being considered as a survival enterprises than a profitable trade where careers can be focused on
- Inability of Government through the Ministry of Agriculture to provide financial support to youth groups engaged in agribased enterprises
- Agriculture being considered as a rural livelihood means
- Lack of exposure to information on innovative agriculture that would entice youth to consider agriculture as a career option
- Stagnant agriculture – not being innovative
- Low returns realized from agriculture due to high production costs and low market prices
- Lack of markets or market gluts leading to poor returns on agriculture
- Low levels of participation by youth in policy discussions and national programs requiring youth involvement especially in the decision making processes





- Furthermore, the following recommendations were made as regards to promoting youth engagement in agriculture.
- Need for a shift in the mindset of the youth regarding agriculture so that it is not viewed negatively as a non profit and laborious trade but a profitable career with positive prospects
- Youth should be involved in all stages and areas of policy development
- More focus on evidence based research on youth development issues by the country to facilitate better understanding and how the youth can best be engaged as economic drivers in the country
- Development of policies and programs that are youth responsive
- The National Youth Policy should be strengthened to ensure youth participation in community and civic affairs
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- An initial Youth policy was adopted in 2002 after which a review was conducted in 2007 which led to a revised policy being adopted in 2009. This policy seeks to create and ensure an enabling environment for developing youth to their full potential, socially, mentally, physically, culturally and spiritually by providing training and economic empowerment to further the aims of sustainable human development.





## Comprehensive Agricultural Sector Policy

- This policy addresses issues related to youth engagement in the agricultural sector. The CASP recognizes the participation of youth in agriculture as depicted in the policy that:
- *'For the Agricultural sector to improve and thus develop a vibrant economy for Swaziland, there is need to vigorously engage the youth of Swaziland in agricultural production through initiatives such as the 4-S program.'*

## Food Security Policy

- This policy emphasises on the role of the youth in the food security sector especially in the production arena.
- Youth and women are becoming increasingly more vulnerable, in particular orphans and other children, creating very serious social and food-security problems.
- HIV/AIDS has dramatically changed the population structure and social functions, in particular in the rural areas where the youth forms the majority of the population and the active middle-age group - especially males - is largely disappearing.
- The youth form an increasingly large portion of rural populations, yet their participation in both rainfed and irrigation farming is limited.





## Youth Policy

- Need to prioritise interventions towards addressing all youth issues in Swaziland
- Need to integrate the Youth Policy with key macro and sectoral policies to avoid youth activities to operate in isolation.
- The Youth policy needs to articulate a more elaborative and practical approach to addressing the unemployment concern







- **Strategic recommendations made for the youth in the Comprehensive Agriculture Sector Policy:**
  - The youth should have equal access to arable land, facilities and services including irrigation and appropriate credit services
  - Promote careers and participation of youth in agriculture and provide training programs in aspects such as production, services and marketing
  - Adapt farming practices to the available labor force which is more that ever dominated by youth and women.

### **Food Security Policy**

- Promoting the role of youth and women in Food Production. However, the policy does not provide strategic recommendations on how the role of the youth would be promoted.





- Ministries (Governments)
- e.g. Agriculture, Youth, Labour
- International Organizations
- Academic/research institutions
- Farmer organizations
- NGOs





- The **youth** indicated that **opportunities** for their participation in the **agricultural sector** was mainly through **agri-business**.
- This has further been motivated by the availability of funding by a number of institutions including Government through the Youth Enterprise Fund where the youth are eligible to loan funds which can be used for capital financing of their businesses either as individuals or associations including agri-based enterprises.
- It is however clear that the youth have not yet fully comprehended the agri-based value chain and how they can fully participate in the process through establishment of agri-businesses as producers, processors or employers.





In conclusion we noted that there is minimal participation of the youth in the policy formulation processes in Swaziland. This could be in part attributed to the following:

1. The youth are not sensitized on their role in the policy formulation process and therefore do not prioritize their participation in the processes.
2. The youth do not attend forums especially at community level where the policy issues are discussed during data collection and verification exercises.
3. Policy formulators not considering the youth as part of the key stakeholders during the policy formulation processes yet the policy also borders on youth as well





THANK YOU ALL

