



## Decent rural employment for Nigerian youth: Reversing rural-urban migration

Agrihub Trove is a bi-monthly publication that explores the key issues and challenges faced by agribusiness owners in Nigeria in recent years and shows how they can change their business models and deal with these challenges innovatively and creatively. Written in an engaging and accessible style, the contributors and staffs of Rural Youth Employment Opportunities: Support to integrated agribusiness hubs in Nigeria (IFAD-Agrihub) have drawn on years of experience in the industry to examine the massive changes in the agribusiness sector and share relevant thoughts.

This issue focuses on providing decent rural employment for Nigerian youth and its implications in reversing rural-urban migration

Rural communities in Nigeria are synonymous with high agricultural productivity. The majority of agricultural commodities are produced in the nooks and crannies of rural communities with the active participation of every household member. Rural dwellers are major contributors to food production across the world, and the narrative of such an important part of the society should be positive, but the reverse is the case as they are characterized by poor livelihoods and socio-economic challenges.

The rate of unemployment among young people in Nigeria is high while few engage in menial jobs for survival. This has contributed significantly

to rural-urban migration, social ills, and insecurity. The obvious drivers of rural development - access to good roads and transport systems linking people and goods to cities, access to electricity, markets, health services, communication, education, access to financial services, safe and hygienic water, and sanitation, etc. - remain elusive, affecting the creation of an enabling environment for the optimal use of local resources and rural youth engagement.

In recent times, the issue of youth employment in rural communities in Nigeria has not figured prominently in policy dialogues at various levels of government. While the

international community has contributed towards a narrative change through several development interventions, which often only provide short-term effects in a lot of cases. After a series of policies, programs, and investments aimed at rural development, past governments have failed to achieve the intended goals of economic development, increased employment, and improved social and living standards. As laudable as these programs may seem, they have failed in tackling rural youth unemployment and now have to tackle urban youth unemployment. Inadequate problem definition, conceptualization, management, and administrative approaches,

and lack of sustainability measures have hindered the achievement of desired results.

Stakeholders working to provide decent jobs for rural youth in Nigeria need to redefine the problem using contemporary perspectives and a mindset that promotes prosperity and entrepreneurship. Handouts to youths and shoddily designed schemes such as the 774,000 jobs for 3 months being peddled by the government are to be discouraged. It has been argued that entrepreneurship has the potential to promote self-employment, community employment, value chain development, and sustainable development. This approach is key to reversing the rural-

urban migration, where the real wealth remains in rural areas and the movement is focused on finished and semi-finished goods and services.

Rural entrepreneurship in this context means tailoring the broad concepts of entrepreneurship to rural youth in rural areas. The ability to identify and exploit opportunities while creating wealth for the entrepreneur and contributing to rural and national economic development.

Providing the above economic drivers through partnerships between public, private, and development agencies, including other innovative approaches, enforcing policy discussion

on economic restructuring, strengthening institutional capacity to provide training for entrepreneurs are proven positive drivers of decent jobs and wealth creation. The government should focus on creating an enabling environment, facilitating infrastructure development, sustainable human capacity building, facilitating export market access, and other macroeconomic functions that attract and secure investment in the rural economy. Government should defer policy job creation in its various ministries, departments, and agencies while using limited financial resources to provide needed infrastructure and access to credit for rural entrepreneurs (youth).

**This bulletin is a production of the IFAD Agrihub Project**

**Writers:** Dr. Afolabi Olawale

**Contributors:** Adesanya Omotomiwa

**Design/Layout:** Adedeji Temiloluwa

**Reviewers:** Adenmosun Adetola, Timilehin Osunde

IITA Headquarters  
PMB 5320, Oyo Road, Ibadan 200001,  
Oyo State, Nigeria.

+234 8168377334, 07069781595

Agrihub-Nigeria@cgiar.org