

MULTI-FUNDER INITIATIVE

Cultivate Africa's Future (CultiAF)

Expanding business opportunities for African youth in agricultural value chains in Southern Africa

In Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, original and creative business models are being generated and tested to increase youth participation in the fish and maize postharvest agribusiness sectors.

The challenge

There is a revived interest in promoting agribusiness approaches for better food security, diversifying exports, creating jobs and reducing poverty. Despite this, there are few programs that seek to encourage young people, especially girls and young women, to realize agribusiness opportunities in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. A third of Africa's population is now aged between 10 and 24, and by 2045 this is expected to double; 59% of the continent's workforce is also expected to have a secondary or tertiary education by 2030. Poverty and unemployment remain high, especially among youth and rural agricultural populations. Rapidly expanding populations in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe, are set to increase pressure on food security and jobs. The pressing challenge, therefore, is how to harness an increasingly educated and entrepreneurial workforce to drive growth in agribusinesses and create decent employment, especially in rural areas.

The research

This project will support young men and women to identify and realize agribusiness opportunities in the fish and maize postharvest agribusiness sectors in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Researchers will assess the agribusiness environment, identify viable employment opportunities with prospective youth entrepreneurs, and target markets for selected fish and maize products. The process will involve building the capacity of entrepreneurial youth with business and market development skills enabling them to generate and implement effective business plans and models, and developing a portfolio of youth-managed businesses and firms and linking them to business development services. The project is specifically targeting young women. Training materials will be created and lessons documented to scale up successful entrepreneurial start-up experiences in the three countries.

Expected outcomes

- A tested model for effectively engaging youth in profitable agribusinesses.
- Increased employment for young men and women in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- Increased fish trade and higher incomes for youth in rural communities in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Implementing partners:

ATDF Entrepreneurship Hub Limited supported by its associates in Malawi and Zimbabwe.

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Cultivate Africa's Future Fund (CultiAF) supports research to achieve long-term food security in Eastern and Southern Africa. Learn more at www.idrc.ca/cultiaf.



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