

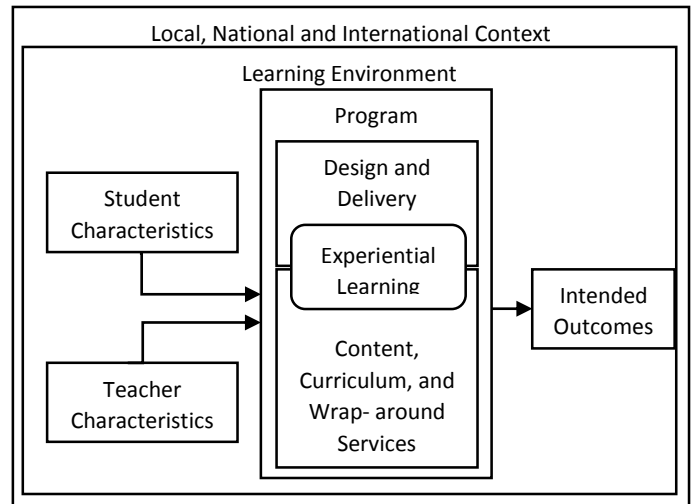
### Engaging Rural Youth in Entrepreneurship through Extracurricular and Co-curricular Systems

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#### Why focus on entrepreneurship for engaging rural youth in agriculture?

Rural youth around the world, aged 15-24, are a significant and growing portion of the population. Nearly three-fourths of the world's poor live in rural areas, but mass outmigration has been strong in recent decades. A vibrant agriculture sector is important for livelihoods of the rural poor, poverty reduction, and food security (Bennell, 2010).

However, youth engagement and interest in agriculture the world over has been low, and entry for many into agriculture has carried a host of challenges (FAO, 2014). In response, entrepreneurship education in agriculture for secondary students may reengage rural youth and slow rural outmigration. Yet, little has been written about agricultural entrepreneurship education programs for rural youth enrolled in secondary education globally. A review of the current state of entrepreneurship education programs is necessary to make recommendations for the development of such programs and make lasting impact on rural youth.



**Figure 1** Conceptual framework for rural agricultural entrepreneurship education programs

The conceptual framework for this review was based on the work of Valerio, Parton, and Robb (2014) and modified with several variables added and the overall structure of the model reorganized (Figure 1).

#### Context

Rural areas in many developing nations have received limited investment in education, especially agricultural education and training (FAO, 2010). Rural youth outmigration has led to problems in rural and urban settings. Large numbers of youth have left agriculture; they have negative perceptions of it, associating it with subsistence and poverty (Sharma, 2007). Many may have interest in agriculture, but lack resources and support to enter and persist in the industry (FAO, 2014; Muir-Leresche, 2013).

#### Implications and recommendations related to context

- The entrepreneurial ecosystem varies significantly between nations. Understanding the environmental factors that may help, or hinder youth trying to establish a business is critical.
- Design curricula to be locally relevant; based on local opportunities and challenges.
- Research the local environment to understand issues such as resources available to rural youth, youths' attitudes about agriculture, or barriers to starting youth-owned agricultural enterprises.

## Teacher characteristics

Teachers are open to teaching entrepreneurship, but many lack training or experience in entrepreneurship. Teachers' entrepreneurial experience has had an impact on what was taught and its effectiveness in the entrepreneurship education classroom (Ruskovaara & Pihkala, 2012; Seikkula-Leino et al., 2010).

### Implications and recommendations related to teachers

- In order to have more, and more effective entrepreneurship education taught in agricultural education and training programs, teachers must be equipped.
- Develop teacher training on entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education that uses agriculture as the medium of instruction. Little has been written in this area and more research is needed.

## Student characteristics

Often, students are uninterested in agriculture or rural areas but may have aspirations for entrepreneurship (Alibaygi & Poya, 2011; Ball & Wiley, 2005). Traditionally, youth have been ignored as stakeholders (FAO, 2014). Youth may be un- or underemployed.

### Implications and recommendations related to students

- Secondary students may be uninterested in agriculture and enter the classroom with limited real world experience for business or entrepreneurship.
- Work to help students make the connection that agriculture is about entrepreneurship, which may help it seem a more interesting and lucrative livelihood option.
- Recognize that secondary school youth are likely limited on time due to their studies. Design curricula and any co-curricular or extracurricular activities with this in mind.

## Programs

Entrepreneurship education programs around the world are highly variable. Experiential learning is a widely used framework for the design and delivery of many entrepreneurship education programs. Student-established mini-corporations and home-based entrepreneurship programs are examples of two widely used co-curricular experiences (Valerio et al., 2014). Examples of wrap-around support services provided to students include funding, mentors, information communication technology, business incubators, trade fairs, and entrepreneurial competitions (IFAD, 2015; Ngurukie & Deshpande, 2013; Nor, 2015).

### Implications and recommendations related to programs

- Design curricula and co-curricular or extracurricular programs based on experiential learning.

### AgriCorps, Ghana, Africa



An AgriCorps volunteer brings the lessons of 4-H to Liberia. Photo: Allison Hoover, AgriCorps member

AgriCorps is an NGO working to promote youth agricultural entrepreneurship through 4-H programs as a co-curricular part of secondary schools. AgriCorps members, who must be former 4-H or Future Farmers of America members, serve a minimum one year term as a teacher, advisor and extension agent in a community in Ghana. Home-based entrepreneurship projects are taught to students using school facilities. AgriCorps members facilitate linkages between students, local markets and input providers. Through home entrepreneurship projects, students are able to establish an income-generating enterprise and learn business skills in school.

## Junior Farmer Field & Life Schools, Global

The International Labour Organization (ILO) and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) combine agriculture, and life and entrepreneurship skills into Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools (JFFLS). The program is taught by local facilitators using experiential and participatory learning designed for highly vulnerable, rural students. Students work with adults to run a farm, combining agricultural, entrepreneurial and life skills. Special attention is given to promoting gender equality.

- Plan support services for students based on local needs. Often students lack capital, land, etc. Consider partnering with organizations doing similar work if the needed wrap-around services are beyond the scope of what the program is able to provide.
- Something that appears to be missing is a set of best practices for connecting agricultural content with developing entrepreneurial mindsets and capabilities. Further research is needed to address this apparent gap.

### Intended Outcomes

Few impact evaluations have been conducted on entrepreneurship programs. Measuring change in entrepreneurial mindsets and capabilities, as well as business formation, have been the key outcomes measured for many entrepreneurship programs (Elert et al., 2015, Regele & Neck, 2012; Valerio et al., 2015).

### Implications and recommendations related to intended outcomes

- Actual business formation, while ultimately a key outcome for many programs, may be difficult to gauge for students enrolled in secondary education.
- Programs should be designed with clear thought for how impacts will be assessed. Several scales for measuring entrepreneurial intent, efficacy, etc. exist and could be used as a basis to assess impact.

## Conclusions

Agricultural entrepreneurship education programs for rural youth are happening all across the globe. Little has been written about how to equip teachers for this task. Best practices in program design, curricula, and content should be more thoroughly researched for this unique group. Entrepreneurship education holds potential to, at least in part, help engage rural youth in agriculture.

For the full version of this brief, read [Engaging Youth in Entrepreneurship through Extracurricular and Co-curricular Systems](#), on the InnovATE website.

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