



YOUTH WORKSHOPS ON
PROMOTING INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN SUSTAINABLE
FORESTRY AND LIVELIHOODS IN KENYA

CONCEPT NOTE

Taita Taveta: 07-09 November 2022 | Nairobi: 16-18 November 2022.

#AfricanYouth4Forests

1. BACKGROUND

Africa is the world's youngest continent. Projections by the United Nations show that by 2030, young Africans are expected to make up 42 percent of the world's youth and account for 75 percent of those under the age of 35. This “youth bulge” could either become a dividend or a liability for the continent – especially in the context of the current stress on natural resources.

On the positive side, youth in Africa are more educated, more connected and tech savvy than ever before. They provide an opportunity for African countries to reap the huge demographic dividend for socio-economic benefits. While the quest to nurture the continent's sustainability is vital, the creativity and innovation of Africa's burgeoning young workforce can help address the crises of forestry and climate on the one hand whilst creating jobs and wealth on the other.

Young people bring new ideas and far-reaching ambition that can help conserve African forests, sustain efforts on reforestation, and slow down the alarming rate of deforestation and land degradation. When empowered, they can build climate resilience and adaptive capacity in their communities even though they are among the most vulnerable populations which will be overly affected by climate change.

Effectively engaging continent's youth is also crucial because they are embracing the power of disruptive technology to connect across borders and implement nature-based solutions from global to community levels. Despite this latent potential, they are — and feel — under-represented. Besides the enormous challenges that they face, their needs, and aspirations are not as frequently heard when global sustainability topics are debated. Neither are their perspectives and dependency on forests studied compared to peers in high-income countries.

The scientific community can help prepare young people in Africa, to in a near future, sustainably govern and manage the continents' forest resources. By gaining and sharing science-based knowledge on the significance of forests for the youth, this group can overcome barriers to their meaningful contribution to the forest sector, including achieving the Global Forest Goals, the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, and progressive and meaningful national and private sector forest-related sustainable objectives.

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Through a pilot project dubbed, “*AfricanYouth4Forests*,” the African Forest Forum (AFF), the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) and the Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI) have partnered to engage young people in sustainable forestry and livelihoods in Kenya.

Grounded in knowledge co-creation and dialogue between researchers and young people, the project seeks to: (i) explore the roles of forests in young people's lives and in their communities and society; (ii) inform and communicate with the youth about Kenya's and Africa's forests, their richness, and importance (iii) empower and encourage the youth to articulate their vision of future forests in Kenya and also on the continent, and to explore creative approaches for sustainable forest use.

2. RATIONALE AND PURPOSE OF YOUTH WORKSHOPS

In view of the foregoing, AFF, SLU and KEFRI plan to organize two three-day workshops in Kenya to prepare the youth for future governance of forests. The workshops have been designed to give youth space to better understand the environmental and economic roles of forests and social sustainability; the challenges and opportunities facing the sector; to voice their concerns or views; and share creative solutions using scientific information.

While the workshops are targeted at youth in Taita Taveta and Nairobi Counties of Kenya, it recognizes that young people from across Africa may find the information beneficial due to increased speed and availability of internet access.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE YOUTH WORKSHOPS

The overall objective of the youth workshops is to provide a platform for young people to engage with researchers in meaningful conversations about their views, vision, goals and ideas in shaping the future governance of the continent's forests; and how to make changes towards transformational change.

Specific workshop objectives are to:

- i) Stimulate reflection, discussion, engagement and innovation on how future African forests should be governed, protected and used.
- ii) Increase youth awareness and pride in Africa's forests and tree resources based on evidence-based research.
- iii) Strengthen the capacity of African youth on commercial creative skills required to run projects within a green economy.
- iv) Provide a platform for youth voices to be heard in forest governance and decision-making processes.
- v) Inspire youth action for the sustainable management of African forests for present and future generations.
- vi) Encourage youth to identify their niche in forestry.

4. EXPECTED OUTPUTS

The specific outputs of the youth workshops will include:

- More insights about young Africans' concerns for future forest research topics
- Video documentation to be used as teaching materials at SLU (courses SG0246 and SG0222) and in Universities in Africa.
- The niche of youth in forestry
- Workshop report

5. APPROACH AND FORMAT

The youth workshops will be held in Taita Taveta on 07-09 November 2022 and in Nairobi from 16-18 November 2022. The workshops will combine plenary presentations, open discussions, and field visits to connect with the young participants' realities and concerns.

Group exercises will also be included to help young participants come up with their niche in forestry, creative solutions to identified challenges; and through texts, illustrations, media clips and drawings describe their observations and visions for forests. Planned sessions will be based on scientific knowledge, openness, creativity, equal value, and gender balance.

The premise is that the contact with 'ordinary' youth will generate genuine insights about Kenyan youth's relation to forests and be complemented by more general sociological and economic analyses about Kenyan and African youth.

The workshop modalities will revolve around:

- **Discussions on the role of forests in the local community.** Group discussions and demonstrations will identify the local forests, their uses, and diverse local benefits.
- **Discussions with forest researchers on selected issues.** The participants will discuss the forests and their uses with researchers from AFF, SLU and KEFRI in forest ecosystems management. The encounters will concern forest trends and the diverse forest types in Kenya and on the African continent.
- **Expression by participants of expectations, thoughts, and concerns for the forests in the future, and the niche of youth in forestry.** The module will elicit novel, creative and entrepreneurial views on forest conservation and sustainable forest use.

6. PARTICIPANTS

The primary target audience is youth from rural and urban areas, between 18-25 years of age in Taita Taveta and Nairobi. This includes young people-led associations, networks, youth entrepreneurs and leaders. Secondary audiences will include policy makers, research institutions, CBOs/NGOs, private sector, extension agents, international community, and other stakeholders in African forestry. In total, 15-20 participants will be invited to attend each workshop.

7. VENUE AND LOGISTICS

To be confirmed.