Influence of youth access to finances on their participation in agricultural value chain development in Kajiado North Sub-County, Kenya

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Abstract

Agriculture in Kenya has great untapped potential for developing gainful employment opportunities for youth that would enable them exploit their creativity, economic innovation and access to finances for agricultural value chain development, in order to spur faster national economic growth. Thus, improving youth productivity in the agricultural sector and exploring effective livelihood diversification is imperative for the nation to develop. Youth’s interest in agriculture is however likely to be positively related to their ability to gain access to financial resources needed for the activities. The influence of youth access to finance for agricultural value chain activities in Kajiado North Sub-County was poorly understood and hence the need for this study, which used a cross-sectional design to collect data from 397 randomly, selected youth and 22 youth and agricultural officers. Content validity of the youth and agricultural officers’ questionnaires was ascertained by extension experts while reliability was determined through a pilot test involving 30 respondents. The reliability coefficient were 0.86α and 0.80α respectively, which were above the 0.70 threshold for acceptable reliability. The results showed a statistically significant positive relationship (r=.197, p=0.01) between youth access to finances and their participation in agriculture. It also showed that youth access to finances influenced their participation in agriculture since accessing finances was a major challenge with only 3.5% youth having borrowed finances from micro finance institutions, 53.4% had saved from sources other than salaries while only 1.2% youth had obtained money from government youth fund. Youth with easy access to finances had higher participation rates in agricultural activities than those with minimal access.

Keywords: Agriculture, Employment, Finances, Participation, Value chain, Youth