

Summary of Roundtable Dialogue Workshop Discussion SIANI Annual meeting 2020

More than 60 enthusiastic participants took part in the SIANI Annual meeting 2020, which focused on the effective inclusion of rural youth. The meeting explored different ways to increase the interest and participation of youth in the food system as well as the connections between young people, food security and agriculture.

All participants at the meeting were invited to take part in round table discussions to share their ideas on how to ensure that young people who live in rural areas can seize opportunities, achieve their life goals and shape development of their countries. The discussions were revolved around the question:

How can you and your organization help build an attractive future together with rural youth?

Vivid and fruitful conversations at all tables produced many great ideas. The participants stressed the critical role of secured land rights, appropriate insurance systems and access to social services. However, "soft measures" were considered equally important. Shifting the perception about farming as a low-status activity was a key issue in many discussions, together with youth empowerment and an increased inclusion of youth in decision-making at all levels.

Examples from the category of most important and impactful ideas

- Break the stigma associated with farming and rural life. Change the perception that farming and agriculture are only for unqualified people.
- Provide functioning infrastructure such as schools, healthcare, telecommunication, distance studies and alternative employment in rural areas.
- Create space and opportunity for young people to engage in decision-making. Offer youth participation in decision organs, why not 50/50?
- Assist succession from old to young farmers, both in terms of knowledge and in physical assets.
- Enable structural changes, such as secured access to land and policies counteracting the urban norm.

Examples from the category of most innovative ideas

- Establish mentorship programmes for inspiration and guidance.
- Develop business models and enterprise opportunities for rural youth, such as agritourism.
- Create projects where rural youth get to be social media ambassadors for the rural lifestyle.
- Set up school farms and give them a central role in education and community.
- Organize fun events, such as cross-generational culture festivals, to create social inclusiveness and attractiveness in rural areas.

Other than proposing their many inspiring ideas, every group formulated a Mission Statement in response to the main question: **How to help build an attractive future together with rural youth?**

Mission Statements

By concerted action at all levels and by listening to, understanding and involving youth.

By shifting understanding of progress through enabling education and policy.

By enabling young women and men to create a social, cultural and physical infrastructure that changes negative attitudes and stimulates profitable rural businesses.

By encouraging and enabling youth to work in agricultural and rural business.

By combining new and traditional knowledge through networks and partnerships to empower youth to influence decision making in rural development.

By promoting pride of people with rural identities.

Many thanks to all the groups for your active engagement in the workshop, and for contributing with your personal perspectives, experiences and ideas. We hope to see you all soon again!

Best wishes, The SIANI Team

