



## SUMMARY

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## PREAMBLE

The World Farmers' Organisation (WFO) Gymnasium Program is a high-level capacity building program aimed at preparing young farmers as future leaders in the agricultural sector. In each edition of the program, the Gymnasium group is composed of around 20 young farmers selected from WFO member organizations worldwide. The experience and training prepare each young farmer to handle critical issues hindering agriculture on the globe.

In the framework of the Gymnasium program, young farmers receive lessons from international leaders, working in the various policy areas at global level and have the opportunity to attend actively and engage in global events related to agriculture. At the conclusion of this program, young farmers are exposed to opportunities that support working together across the globe.

The need to fight climate change has emerged, during the session of the Gymnasium Program, as it possesses a considerable threat to livelihoods and food systems, significantly affecting food availability and increased poverty across the globe. Notable changes were observed such as the changing seasons, variation in the rainfall patterns, frequent natural disasters with severe effects. This exposes farmers to greater risks, fostering changes in the Food systems, significantly affecting production, transportation, food availability, considerably impacting water availability, soil health and food losses.

Climate change is highlighted as a key to biodiversity loss, generation of waste and greenhouse gas emissions, and it contributes to increase food insecurity. However, farmers play a significant role in mitigating climate change through sustainable land management and Climate-Smart agricultural practices.

Furthermore, the Gymnasium program enlightens young farmers to mobilize, sensitize and train farmers on how to integrate markets, low-cost irrigation, storage, and Information Communication Technology (ICT) solutions for agricultural advice and trade information to enhance commodity value chain agronomic and economic performance.

In the past decades farmers developed an in-farm economy based on cost and high volumes due to raw materials, low prices. Nowadays, for a farmer, it is challenging to change farm structure and mission. However, our new generation of farmers has a growing level of instruction. As educated farmers, we recognise the need to start the ecological transition, and we are the experts that can guide the shift in our field.

This manifesto, the final assignment we worked on together as part of our training, aims to present our commitment as a new farmers' generation, promoting strategies that enhance resilient and sustainable agricultural systems, promote value addition, and improve food storage and management systems to always ensure food security as a factor of resilience.

Therefore, the policy makers should support system transitions that; - 1) Improve farmers' income and livelihoods, 2) Support environmental protection and productivity, 3) Trigger agro-based industrial growth, 4) Support Information Communication Technology (ICT)/Accelerate Digitalization of Agriculture 5) Foster Public private partnerships to collaborate in smallscale Capacity building solutions as a global interest. This will create an impact on unemployed youth, mitigating the impact of COVID 19, stimulate economic status and food security, thus contributing to the progressive achievement of the targets of SDGs 1, 2 & 3.

Working on this manifesto, we practiced to express our recommendations to policy makers as well as to future young farmers leaders.

## 1. PUTTING YOUNG FARMERS AT THE TOP OF THE INNOVATION CHAIN

- Inclusion of young farmers at all stages of the innovation ladder from concept to implementation.
- Take away the barriers for young farmers to take over innovative farms and manage them as start-ups.
- Encouraging renewable energy for farmers allowing them to have dual income (from sale of produce and electricity).
- Mobilizing and incentivizing electric vehicles, particularly in rural areas, to help produce food sustainably

## 2. ELIMINATING POLICY AND REGULATORY ISSUES FOR ACCESS TO LAND, WATER AND FINANCE

- Standardizing Joint Ventures between the youthful farmers and the beneficiaries who have no capacity or intention of utilizing the land to its productive potential, based on the productivity of the land, access to water and other infrastructure and location
- Improving access to inputs and finance by developing an agricultural-related fund genuinely directed through all the central banks at low-interest rates over a more extended period.
- Establish a Land Bank and provide finance for farming operations and enable productive farmers to gain access to land through uncomplicated and standardized Joint Venture arrangements or low-interest rates capital financing.
- Developing a mentorship program whereby older experienced farmers would mentor those who could benefit from their expertise.
- Embrace the diversity of farms and farm sizes. Both small and large farms have their potential.
- Investing in irrigation and water management strategies for losses resulting from erratic rainfall
- Rehabilitation of road infrastructure to facilitate the cost-effective and safe movement of the increased volumes of agricultural produce.
- Designing a concept for shorter transport routes to avoid unnecessary emissions.

## 3. FACILITATE ACCESS TO MARKETS AND MARKET LINKAGES

- Strengthen primary processing of raw material and value addition by expanding supply of and access to Agricultural Finance and Credit to enable producers to take more steps up the vertical ladder of processing and marketing.
- Improving Information and Communication Technologies, particularly regarding market information, enables the farming community to negotiate with marketers and secondary value-chain participants from a more significant position of strength.

## 4. ENCOURAGING YOUTH ALLIANCE PRACTICES

- Establish alliances among the government, agri-corporate sectors, consumer associations, and young farmers. Support is needed to help create and sustain more young farmers' organizations/youth-led associations to encourage youth participation in agriculture and assist in advocacy and drafting effective policies at the national and international levels.
- Encouraging policymakers to scout new young leaders from farmers' organizations

## 5. FACILITATE ACCESS TO SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

- Provide technical education to farmers to ensure that sustainable agriculture practices come from a bottom-up approach.
- Re-evaluate raw material worth compared to value-added by processing, particularly favoring local production. Farmers demand a fair income from their work and to be less dependent on subsidies. A productive and competitive company is willing to invest in sustainable practices.

Since we are experts in our field, we dare to advise the readers on agronomic practices that could have a significant impact on soil fertility and security, food productivity and climate change mitigation:

- Intensive livestock systems standards should include bedding materials such as straw to have farm-yard manure as by-products (in place of slurry). Breeders could be able to give it or even sell it to arable farmers.
- Encouraging the functioning of biogas plants and the agronomic use of digestate.
- Manage manure spreading smartly: introduction of more flexible regulations that adjust manure application deadlines depending on timing, soil conditions and weather
- Facilitates investments for the separation, compression techniques and pellet systems of organics to ensure sustainable transportation from the rich to the poor regions

## 6. FACILITATE ACCESS TO DATA

- Young farmers need to have access to data on novel and sustainable practices available for them to implement.
- Setting up of a central agricultural knowledge exchange tank could be set up , assembling all the knowledge, research, innovation and experience of all the agricultural stakeholders ranging from academia, scientists, private sectors, agricultural producers, third party organizations and consumers.

## 7. CALL FOR GOVERNMENT SUPPORT TO THE YOUNG FARMERS

- Governments should provide extension services to help farmers adopt sustainable agricultural practices
- Lower the administrative burden to register as a farmer and when applying for grants and schemes.
- Setting up of a policy platform that connect farmers and the government officials
- Developing an agri-consultancy hub to help farmers develop their agribusiness in line with the climate change act
- Deployment of more financial aids to help farmers invest in new technologies for the adoption of climate smart agricultural practices
- Introduction of young farmer zones in the National Budgets for the youths to engage in sustainable food production.
- Repurposing existing acts for farmers/ food producers to champion young farmers engagement in sustainable agribusiness models.

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE YOUNG FARMERS LEADERS

- Plan your schedule correctly to ensure presence in the WFO Gymnasium Program.
- Participate actively in the WFO Gymnasium sessions and dare to talk and break through the screen
- Participate actively in webinars/workshops sent through WFO
- Be equipped with proper logistics: laptop/mobile/computer, earphones, and internet connection
- Commit to homework assigned by WFO Gymnasium to help build their leadership skills
- Be conversant with your national laws in agriculture and trade that would facilitate sharing data with others
- Create buddy groups to allow for the team-building spirit.
- Prefer the in-person meeting

***Note to the organizers: using a Doodle to vote for the appointment would be helpful to ensure participation.***