

Diversification in East &
Southern Africa
Technical Report



INITIATIVE ON
Diversification in East
and Southern Africa

A photograph of a woman with dark curly hair, wearing a patterned green tank top and a necklace, looking down at a large purple cauliflower and a bunch of green leafy vegetables she is holding. The background is a blurred field of crops.

Youth Engagement in Agripreneurship in Zimbabwe:

Report & Recommendations

2024

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CGIAR Initiative on Diversification in East and Southern Africa

The CGIAR Initiative on Diversification in East and Southern Africa, Ukama Ustawi, aims to help smallholders transition to sustainably intensified, diversified, and de-risked agri-food systems based on maize in 12 Eastern Southern Africa (ESA) countries. Specifically, it seeks to enable 50,000 value chain actors, including farmers (at least 40% women, 40% youth), to adopt climate-smart maize-based intensification and diversification practices and to access digital agro-advisory services. Emphasizing the role of the private sector in driving such transformation, UU targets to support at least 30 start-ups and SMEs.

Disclaimer

This publication has been prepared as an output of the CGIAR Initiative on Diversification in East and Southern Africa and has not been independently peer-reviewed. Responsibility for editing, proofreading, layout, opinions expressed, and any possible errors lies with the authors and not the institutions involved.

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List of Acronyms

BUSE	Bindura University of Science Education
CAPYOU	Capacitate Youth Proposed Intervention
CBZ	Commercial Bank of Zimbabwe
CGIAR	Global Research Partnership for a Food-Secure Future
CIMMYT	International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center
DRI	Development Reality Institute
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GZU	Great Zimbabwe University
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IITA	International Institute of Tropical Agriculture
IWMI	International Water Management Institute
KII	Key Informant Interviews
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SAVE-WY	Sustainable AgriVentures for Empowered Women and Youth Proposed Intervention
MUAST	Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology
NGOs	Nongovernmental Organizations
PABRA	Pan African Bean Research Alliance
ToR	Terms of Reference
UU	Ukama Ustawi (CGIAR initiative)
UZ	University of Zimbabwe
WP5	Work Package 5
YETT	Youth Empowerment Transformation Trust
ZELA	Zimbabwe Environmental Lawyers Association
ZIDA	Zimbabwe Investment Development Authority

Executive Summary

Africa has witnessed various initiatives, programs, projects and investments aiming at poverty alleviation, agricultural sector strengthening, and rural income generation. Interventions such as agricultural training and technology adoption have shown promising results, boosting productivity and incomes among smallholder farmers. In Zimbabwe, the Ukama Ustawi (UU) initiative has spearheaded efforts to engage youth in agribusiness, fostering food security and social inclusion. This CGIAR Initiative on Diversification in East and Southern Africa aims to empower millions of vulnerable smallholder farmers to transition from maize-mixed systems to sustainably intensified, diversified, and de-risked agri-food systems. One of the research activities under this initiative is Work Package 5 (WP5): Empower and Engage Women and Youth in Agribusiness Ecosystems. Following landscaping study and dialogue in Zimbabwe and Malawi, UU plans to implement brief, impactful interventions intended to pilot or amplify existing youth agripreneurship interventions in both countries. The intervention will be implemented over a period of six months in Zimbabwe, and it will align with WP5.

A mixed-methods approach was used to gather data on agripreneurship in Zimbabwe. The data collection process involved a document review, key informant interviews, and a stakeholder engagement workshop. The workshop applied a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion framework (GESI) lens to facilitate interactive discussions among 29 participants. The participant group consisted of 17 men and 12 women of whom 48% were youth from diverse stakeholder groups. The workshop aimed to validate the research findings and design interventions to support agripreneurship in Zimbabwe.

During the workshop, participants reviewed the *2022 Zimbabwe Dialogue on Inclusive Agribusiness Summary Report* (Davis et al., 2022) through a gender GESI lens, providing a critical perspective on the agripreneurship landscape in Zimbabwe. The validation discussion confirmed the challenges and opportunities documented in the 2022 dialogue report as a true reflection, and participants used the opportunity to update the challenges and opportunities based on their insights and experiences. This comprehensive review ensured that the key constraints, such as the lack of youth involvement, were thoroughly understood, enabling the participants to design appropriate interventions that positively influence and shape the ecosystem.

Using participatory group exercises the participants reflected on solutions that can be applied to address capacity, resource, and cross-cutting challenges in youth agribusiness. This exercise yielded insightful suggestions that include providing financial management training for youth, establishing youth accelerator programs, facilitating mentorship connections (also peer-to-peer learning), and empowering youth storytelling and proposal writing skills. To increase access to finance and productive assets, interventions such as collateral-based loans, contract farming, and financial literacy training were recommended. To address cross-cutting risks like climate change, the participants proposed solutions that encompass climate-smart agriculture training, gender-responsive programming, nutrition integration through diversified farming, and leveraging indigenous knowledge. The solutions had a focus on developing the technical,

entrepreneurial, and financial capacities of youth while accounting for contextual challenges and opportunities.

Following the broad-based reflection, participants zeroed in on proposing specific interventions. Participants were divided into three groups to brainstorm potential initiatives. These initiatives aimed to address the capacity, resource, and cross-cutting risks identified earlier. Each group completed a detailed template capturing the intervention, including its description, objectives, rationale, alignment with Ukama Ustawi Work Package 5 goals, potential risks, and sustainability strategies. The groups presented their proposed initiatives in a plenary session, receiving feedback to update their proposals. This collaborative process enabled the stakeholders to co-create context-appropriate interventions to support the development of Zimbabwe's agripreneurship ecosystem. This process identified the following three potential interventions:

- *Sustainable AgriVentures for Empowered Women and Youth (SAVE-WY)*: Aims to establish a revolving fund to provide financial support to households, with a focus on promoting gender equality and social inclusion. The fund enables beneficiaries to access resources and services to build resilient livelihoods, to transform household and community dynamics.
- *CAPYOU AgriHub: Growing Futures, Empowering Rehabilitated Youth*: Pamumvuri Trust establishes a Center of Excellence for Youth Agripreneurship. The center provides comprehensive training to empower rehabilitated young people, particularly young women, in agripreneurship skills to enable them to contribute to society and make a livelihood.
- *Fish Harvest Empowerment: Strengthening Communities through Aquaculture*: This project aims to empower and uplift marginalized communities residing on former white settler farm compounds in Zimbabwe by integrating them into sustainable agricultural value chains, particularly aquaculture. The project equips beneficiaries with necessary skills, resources, and support to establish thriving livelihoods and break the cycle of poverty, gender-based violence, and social isolation.

To ensure a high-impact intervention is selected, the authors developed a screening criteria. The criteria envisage that an impactful solution will be catalytic and will have the potential to trigger broader, systemic change in the agripreneurship ecosystem. The solution should facilitate connections between young agripreneurs and relevant stakeholders, build their marketing and sales capabilities, and leverage peer-to-peer learning and the experiences of past beneficiaries to create a ripple effect that amplifies its impact beyond the direct participants and addresses the root causes of the challenges facing young agripreneurs. To this effect, the *Sustainable AgriVentures for Empowered Women and Youth (SAVE-WY)* was recommended as the most catalytic investment option. By leveraging a transformative approach, the project seeks to build resilient livelihoods and contribute to the overall well-being of the targeted communities in Zimbabwe. The Intervention Program was later selected to be implemented through the Climate Change and Food Security Institute at Marondera University of Agricultural as IWMI's partner Organization. The A revolving fund was set up through the intervention program with the aims providing financial support to 150 beneficiaries—specifically youth and women agripreneurs—in the Mashonaland Central and Masvingo provinces of Zimbabwe.

The success of the proposed initiative relies on collaboration with government departments, civil society, and the private sector. Concerted efforts involving government, private sector, and developmental organizations are essential for fostering youth engagement in agribusiness. By addressing challenges such as limited access to finance, infrastructure gaps, weak soft skills, and knowledge deficits, Zimbabwe can unlock the potential of its youth, leading to enhanced food security, economic growth, and sustainability in the agricultural sector.

This workshop and its recommendations contribute to the broader goal of unlocking the potential of Zimbabwe's youth in agribusiness. By actively engaging participants, it empowered them to become key contributors to bolstering food security, fostering economic expansion, and promoting sustainability within agriculture. An active participation of youth will position them to contribute to enhanced food security, economic growth, and overall sustainability in the agricultural sector.

1.0 Introduction

Various initiatives have been implemented across Africa to address poverty, strengthen the agricultural sector, and generate income for rural populations. According to Stewart et al. (2015), interventions vary from improving agricultural practices and productivity through training and skills development programs to familiarizing smallholder farmers with new technologies and encouraging their adoption. These interventions lead to increased agricultural production and productivity among smallholder farmers, ultimately bolstering their incomes and generating more agricultural employment opportunities.

Overall, the Ukama Ustawi (UU) Initiative aims to support climate-resilient agriculture and livelihoods in 12 countries in East and Southern Africa by helping millions of smallholders intensify, diversify, and de-risk maize mixed farming through improved extension services, enterprise development, and private investment. The UU initiative is a collaborative initiative led by IWMI, and the Alliance of Biodiversity International CIAT, with WP5 collaborating with CGIAR centers such as WorldFish, IITA, IFPRI, and PABRA. Ukama Ustawi Initiative has a strong focus on agribusiness, that is, how to support the agribusiness ecosystem as an engine of growth to diversity farming systems in the Eastern and Southern Africa region. The initiative's name is a bilingual term derived from the languages of Shona and Swahili, representing its vision of achieving system-level development through innovative partnerships. In Shona, "Ukama" means partnerships, while in Swahili, "Ustawi" signifies well-being and development, collectively encapsulating the initiative's aspirations.

Specifically, UU seeks to enable 100,000 value chain actors, including farmers (40% women, 40% youth (mutually inclusive)), to adopt climate-smart maize-based intensification and diversification practices, and 2 million agro-value chain actors (40% women, 40% youth (mutually inclusive)) to regularly access digital agro-advisory services. Emphasizing the role of the private sector in driving such transformation, this initiative targets to support 60 start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises. US\$ 200 million (50% promoting biodiversity) is enabled to promote climate resilient agriculture and US\$ 25 million is for investment in scaling work in the region for resilient agrifood systems. One of the key research activities within the UU Initiative is Work Package 5: Empower and Engage, which seeks to empower and engage women and youth in agribusiness ecosystems.

1.1 Objective

The Ukama Ustawi Initiative, under its Work Package 5, aims to foster youth engagement in Zimbabwe's agribusiness sector to promote food security and social inclusion. As part of this effort, the initiative undertook a dialogue in November 2022 to identify key stakeholders in Zimbabwean agribusiness, discuss bottlenecks and opportunities for more inclusive agribusiness, and plan next steps for 2024 activities.



Image 1: Workshop participants group photo

In 2024, a follow-up validation meeting was organized by the Ukama Ustawi WP5 and the Development Reality Institute (DRI)¹ to achieve two key objectives: First is to validate the findings of the 2022 dialogue on youth engagement in agripreneurship in Zimbabwe, and second is to build upon the recommendations from that dialogue to develop a concrete plan for implementation in 2024. During the validation discussion, participants (see Image 1) brainstormed proposed interventions and collaboratively crafted a detailed implementation plan for 2024. This report documents the outcomes of the 2024 validation conversation, reflecting on the key agripreneurship stakeholders and their roles, and providing recommendations for a specific intervention to be carried out in the coming year.

The goal of this collaborative effort between UU WP5 and DRI is to leverage both capacity-building through training and the introduction of relevant technologies to support Zimbabwe's youth in the agribusiness sector. By empowering young Zimbabweans with the necessary skills, resources, and networks, the initiative aims to catalyze a new generation of successful agripreneurs who can drive innovation, enhance food security, and contribute to the country's economic development through sustainable farming practices.

In Zimbabwe, the agricultural sector offers significant opportunities for youth employment and economic empowerment, but it also faces significant challenges, including limited access to finance, infrastructure gaps, and knowledge deficits. Validation and intervention design are essential steps to designing an effective and targeted strategy for engaging young people in transformative agricultural activities. This should be done in close collaboration with local stakeholders to ensure that the activities are tailored to the needs of the community. It is also important to ensure that the activities are sustainable and have a clear impact. Finally, it is important to measure the impact of the activities to ensure that they are successful.

¹ DRI is a social innovation hub that specialises in climate change innovations. They also promote sustainable socio-economic development and build the capacity of community based and civil society organisations to transform livelihoods of the marginalized groups through participatory and innovative solutions.

LinkedIn Profile: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/development-reality-institute/?originalSubdomain=zw>

1.2 Agripreneurship in Zimbabwe

The importance of agripreneurship in Zimbabwe's agricultural sector cannot be overstated. Zimbabwe's agricultural sector contributes significantly to food security and overall development, employing a large portion of the population. Since 2019, agricultural production has risen by a compounded annual growth rate of 94.8%, from about US\$5 billion to US\$7.2 billion in 2023 (ZIDA Invest, 2024). However, the participation of youth² in this thriving sector remains a concern. As the country's largest employer and second-largest export earner, the agricultural sector accounts for a substantial portion of total value added in Zimbabwe. It supports the livelihoods of over 60% of the population (ibid), yet the youth of Zimbabwe are not fully engaging with this vital industry. Concerns have been raised about the aging farming population and the need to attract more young people to the sector.

Agricultural entrepreneurs contribute to agricultural productivity, value addition, and market linkages by establishing and expanding their agribusinesses. Chigumira et al. (2024a) indicate that agricultural activities are involved at all levels of the value chain, including crop production, livestock rearing, horticulture, agro-processing, transportation, and advisory services. Often, these ventures have a ripple effect on the broader economy, creating jobs, particularly in rural areas where agriculture is the primary source of income. However, the participation of Zimbabwean youth in these entrepreneurial endeavours remain limited, hindering the sector's full potential (Chigumira et al., 2024b).

In Zimbabwe, farmers who engage in agribusiness need to employ innovative farming methods, adopt modern technologies, and promote sustainable agricultural practices, to generate higher productivity and a reduction of post-harvest losses. Additionally, they need to facilitate the development of value chains and agro-processing industries, to access higher-value markets, increase their income, and reduce reliance on subsistence farming. Fostering greater youth involvement in these activities could significantly boost the agricultural sector's impact.

² The African Union through the African Youth Charter (2006) refers to Youth or Young People as every person between the ages of 15 and 35 years.

2.0 Methodology

To gather data on agripreneurship in Zimbabwe, a multi-pronged research approach was employed. This included a document review, key informant interviews, and a stakeholder engagement workshop. The workshop, which applied a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) framework, facilitated interactive discussions among 29 participants (17 men, 12 women) from diverse stakeholder groups. This allowed the research team to validate findings and collaboratively design interventions to support agripreneurship in the country.

2.1 Document Review

The literature review included an examination of the following documents:

- Zimbabwe Dialogue on Inclusive Agribusiness Summary Report (Davis et al., 2022) outlines key findings from a multi-stakeholder workshop that examined barriers and opportunities for women and youth participation in the country's agricultural entrepreneurship ecosystem. It provides recommendations to enhance inclusivity and strengthen the capacity of agripreneurs from underrepresented groups.
- The Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) framework for inclusive agribusiness in East and Southern Africa. The GESI framework for inclusive agribusiness, as described by Nortje et al. (2023), is a holistic approach that considers the unique needs and challenges faced by women, youth, and marginalised groups in agricultural entrepreneurship. It promotes equitable participation and benefits across the agribusiness value chain.

2.2 Key Informant Interviews

- Development Reality Institute (DRI) conducted four KIIs with key stakeholders (two men and two women) ahead of the workshop to get some insight into the challenges these organisations are facing and their proposed solutions ahead of the workshop. The interviews provided valuable insight into the experiences, strategies, and success stories of agripreneurs. Interviews were conducted using an open-ended questionnaire. The respondents included representatives from local and international NGOs, private sector representatives, and academics. Due to time constraints, KIIs were conducted through telephone calls.

2.3 Stakeholder Engagement Workshop

- A workshop was held on 21-22 May 2024 at Cresta Oasis Hotel, Harare-Zimbabwe to:
 - a) Validate the findings from the 2022 dialogue report.
 - b) Design intervention for implementation from June 2024 – December 2024.
- The workshop delivery approach applied a GESI framework analytical lens. The facilitator briefed participants on the GESI framework to familiarise the participants with the framework. The framework centers on three main areas: i) resource access, ii) agency and capability, and iii) institutional norms and practices that affect gender equality and social inclusion in agribusiness.

- Group discussions facilitated critical evaluation among participants: Participants were put in four groups of six people each to discuss and document their feedback on the 2022 dialogue report. They received guiding questions to support their read-through and reflection on the report. They were encouraged to apply themselves and think critically and independently as they read through and evaluated the report.
- Validation guide: Participants received guiding questions to support their evaluation of the dialogue report.

2.2.1 Workshop Participant Analysis

The workshop convened a total of 29 participants, including 12 women and 17 men, of whom 14 were youth from diverse stakeholder groups representing a diverse range of stakeholders (Table 1). Attendees were from educational institutions, the private sector, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and international organizations. The use of the term “Youth” in this regard are persons between the ages of 15 and 35 years in accordance with the African Union’s definition.

Table 1: Participants’ profile

Gender	Youth	Adults	Total	Freq (%)
Men	6	11	17	58.6
Women	8	4	12	41.4
Total	14	15	29	100
Freq (%)	48.2%	51.7%	100%	

2.2.2 Techniques to stimulate Interactive dialogue among participants

The use of icebreakers to enable interactions among participants from diverse backgrounds. The "[Pig Personality Test](#)" and "[An Ode to the Other Hand](#)" were fun and engaging icebreaker activities for the first and second day of the workshop. Additionally, there was a cocktail and pitch event to foster collaboration and connections among the participants. Given its strong value add, more information on the cocktail event is provided below.

The pitch and cocktail event provided an invaluable platform for agripreneurs to come together, share their experiences, and explore potential collaborations. In this informal setting, participants had the opportunity to articulate their unique sales points, whether it was connecting people to nature, reducing post-harvest losses, empowering women through indigenous vegetable production, or diversifying into complementary ventures beyond just farming (Table 2). Beyond the pitches, the event fostered meaningful connections and relationship-building between the attendees. Participants had the chance to network, exchange ideas, and identify synergies that could lead to future partnerships and joint initiatives. Many left the event with a renewed sense of optimism, having gained insights and new perspectives on overcoming the major challenges they have faced in the past year or even the last five years. This setting paved the way for the next steps, as participants explored opportunities to collaborate, leverage each other's strengths, and collectively address the pressing issues in the agricultural sector.

Table 2: Participants who delivered their pitch at the cocktail event.

Organization	Description
Pamumvuri PVO	<p>Focused on connecting people to nature to promote environmental health as well as providing opportunities for youth to engage in agriculture and entrepreneurship. Tatenda shared his initiative where he successfully raised broilers and used the income to pay back a loan and pay for his own school fees.</p>
Chashi Foods	<p>Focused on reducing post-harvest losses by offering drying services for products like bananas, apples, and cashew nuts. Jenniffer sees opportunities to link up with other participants as an agro-processor. She is presently investigating the use cases for buckwheat.</p>
Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences	<p>Empowering women through growing African indigenous vegetables. The university is looking for opportunities to integrate practical success stories in the agricultural value chain. Tanya believes the focus should shift from challenges to finding solutions in the agricultural sector and this has made her start looking at things in a more holistic, interconnected way.</p>
Maka fert	<p>Focused on agricultural value chains and offering customized fertilizers and animal feeds. Looking forward to communicating and collaborating with all participants.</p>
Great Zimbabwe University	<p>The program has provided valuable insights and has been eye-opening. Plans to give projects to university students to help raise their fees at the university farm. Ian wants to work with the community, providing them with traditional grains and processing, packaging, and selling them. Ian gives weekly talks on the Masvingo community radio station. Has grown a herd of goats from 4-20 high quality breed. Recently he sold 12 bucks at \$1,100 each.</p>
Mnandi Africa	<p>Providing conservative training to smallholder farmers in Marondera. Offering conservative agricultural machinery and funding to smallholder farmers. Anoda shared that he has diversified into sound engineering activities to mitigate the risks of focusing solely on farming.</p>
Shamva farm	<p>Engages in diversified farming at a small scale. She was particularly moved by what was hearing and observing that youth are leveraging agripneurship as a means of livelihood. Nancy recognises the risk of focusing solely on farming, so has combined her agri-venture with other endeavors.</p>

3.0 Summary of Findings and Key Decisions

3.1 Challenges and opportunities in the agripreneur landscape

Key informant interviews (KIIs) identified critical issues facing agripreneurs face including limited access to affordable financing and unreliable infrastructure, (power, water, and transportation), which were found to significantly increase operational costs and lead to losses. Additionally, the impacts of climate change, including droughts and floods, coupled with economic instability, (inflation and unpredictable policies), were disruptive to agricultural operations and livelihoods. Skill gaps in the workforce and intense market competition from informal traders also posed challenges for agribusinesses to thrive. However, the interviews also highlighted emerging opportunities, such as the growing demand for food and the increasing recognition of the role of young entrepreneurs in the sector. Adoption of innovative agricultural technologies and value-addition activities were seen as pathways to improve productivity and profitability. Fostering collective action through farmer associations and strengthening stakeholder collaborations, such as public-private partnerships and university-industry cooperation, were identified as avenues to address the challenges and leverage synergies (Table 3).

Table 3: Challenges and opportunities in the agripreneur landscape

Stakeholder Group and Name	Key Take Aways
Key Informant 1 Private Sector	<p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Limited access to capital: Starting or expanding an agribusiness requires capital for things like seeds, fertilizers, equipment, and storage. Many aspiring entrepreneurs struggle to secure loans due to stringent requirements and a lack of affordable options, ● Unreliable infrastructure: Power outages, water scarcity, and poor road conditions make it difficult to operate efficiently. This can increase costs and lead to post-harvest losses, ● Climate change: Droughts, floods, and unpredictable weather patterns can devastate crops and livestock, impacting yields and livelihoods. <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Growing demand for food: Zimbabwe's population is rising, and the demand for safe, nutritious food is increasing. This creates a market for local producers, ● Focus on youth entrepreneurship: There's a growing recognition of the role young people can play in agriculture. NGOs can support training and resources to empower them, ● Value addition: Processing, packaging, and marketing agricultural products can create new income streams for farmers.
Key Informant 2	Challenges

<p>Farmers Associations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bulk purchasing: The association help members negotiate better deals on essential inputs like seeds, fertilizers, and equipment by buying in bulk. ● Access to information: Disseminating information on new technologies, market trends, and government policies can be crucial for members' success. The association act as a central hub for sharing knowledge. ● Financial literacy: Many farmers lack basic financial management skills. The association provide training and resources to help them manage their finances effectively. <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collective marketing: The association pool resources to develop a strong brand and marketing strategy, reaching wider markets and achieving better prices for members' produce, ● Value addition: Collectively, the association is exploring options for processing, packaging, and branding agricultural products, increasing their value and profitability for members, ● Knowledge sharing: Experienced farmers within the association share best practices and techniques with newer members, fostering a collaborative learning environment.
<p>Key Informant 3 Research, Science and Education</p>	<p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Skill gap: The education system might not be adequately preparing graduates with the practical skills and knowledge needed to succeed in modern agripreneurship, ● Land tenure insecurity: Uncertain land ownership rights can discourage investment and hinder long-term planning for agribusinesses, ● Limited access to extension services: Farmers, especially in rural areas, might lack access to qualified extension officers who can provide training and support on new technologies and best practices. <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Entrepreneurship education: Universities can develop programs that equip students with the skills and knowledge needed to launch and manage successful agribusinesses, ● Climate-smart agriculture: Research can focus on developing and promoting practices that help farmers adapt to climate change and build resilience, ● Public-private partnerships: Collaboration between universities, government, and private companies can address challenges like access to finance, infrastructure development, and market access for agripreneurs.

<p>Key Informant 4 Agripreneur</p>	<p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Access to funding: Securing loans or investments can be difficult due to lack of collateral, high-interest rates, and complex application processes, ● Input costs: The cost of seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and other essentials can be high and fluctuate significantly, squeezing profit margins, ● Market access: Reaching profitable markets, especially for perishable goods, can be challenging due to poor infrastructure and a lack of market connections. <p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Direct sales to consumers: Farmers markets, online platforms, or farm-to-table initiatives can provide higher profits by cutting out middlemen. ● Value addition: Processing, packaging, and branding agricultural products can create products that fetch premium prices, ● Technology adoption: Using technologies like irrigation systems, solar power, or mobile money can improve efficiency, reduce costs, and connect agripreneurs to valuable information.
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3.2 Stakeholder Engagement Workshop

In his welcome remarks, the CGIAR Convenor in Zimbabwe, Dr. Nyagumbo, provided an overview of the CGIAR's global positioning and initiatives (Image 2). He explained that the CGIAR is a consortium of organizations dedicated to conducting agricultural research to create a more nutrition-secure world by 2030. Dr. Nyagumbo noted the CGIAR's strong presence in Zimbabwe, with several of its centers operating in the country, including CIMMYT, ILRI, Alliance for Biodiversity and CIAT, IFPRI, and IWMI. Dr. Nyagumbo expressed the CGIAR's focus on the Regional Integrated Initiatives, that aim to enhance collaboration and coordination among the centers and their partners. He also highlighted the organization's commitment to moving away from an "ivory tower" approach and engaging more broadly with farmers, policymakers, and other stakeholders to ensure their work has maximum impact on the ground. Additionally, Dr. Nyagumbo gave insight into the unfolding process for the post-2025 period, indicating that stakeholders are currently designing an intervention to build on the current CGIAR implementation.



Image 2: Zimbabwe CGIAR Convenor, Dr Nyagumbo

A presentation from Dr. Kristin Davis (IFPRI) provided an overview of Ukama Ustawi Work Package 5 to level-set the participants' understanding of the project. Dr. Davis provided valuable background information on the problem being addressed and the solutions being implemented. She shared insights on the climate variabilities posing risks for farming in southern Africa, and the expected yield losses and increasing vulnerabilities. Dr. Davis emphasized the importance of using a gender and social inclusion lens to engage women and youth in the project. She highlighted Work Package 5, that focuses on empowering and engaging marginalized youth. Dr. Davis outlined the key recommendations for interventions under the UU initiative, reflecting the project's commitment to addressing the needs of this critical demographic.

Validating the 2022 Dialogue Report

Dialogue report confirmed: Participants were agreeable to the dialogue report. Participants from diverse backgrounds and experiences, including representatives from marginalized groups, commended the comprehensive mapping of key stakeholders in the UU 2022 Dialogue report, which they felt provided a robust understanding of the ecosystem (Image 3). The participants appreciated the report's identification of a wide range of stakeholders who are marginalized as well as norms and cultural practices that tend to disempower youth, particularly young women, which was recognised as an important foundation for designing targeted interventions.

In addition, the participants highlighted that the dialogue report applies an ecosystem lens to analysing issues and participants felt this is a strong attribute of the report. The participants' feedback that the dialogue report applies an ecosystem lens to analysing the issues is a positive attribute. Taking an ecosystem approach demonstrates a holistic and interconnected understanding of the challenges, and opportunities facing the agricultural sector. Some key benefits of using an ecosystem lens include:



Image 3: Participants in a group discussion

- Identifying interdependencies and linkages between different elements (e.g. stakeholders, resources, policies, technologies) that impact the overall system.
- Recognizing the dynamic and evolving nature of the ecosystem and how various components interact and influence one another.
- Highlighting systemic barriers or leverage points that may not be apparent when looking at isolated components.
- Informing more collaborative, coordinated, and sustainable solutions that account for the broader context.

By applying this ecosystem perspective, the dialogue report provided participants with a richer, more nuanced understanding of the complex agricultural landscape. This aligns well to foster meaningful connections and relationship-building between the diverse group of stakeholders.

Participants indicated five key areas of improvement in future iterations of the report, these are highlighted as follows:

- The lack of a clear action plan detailing how the identified challenges are addressed was noted as a key gap. Participants emphasized the need to incorporate robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks that can continuously assess the inclusion of youth, women, and persons with disabilities, and use these insights to adaptively improve program design and implementation.
- Participants also discussed the need to leverage technology as a tool for enhancing youth engagement in agribusiness. The report was perceived as lacking in this regard, and participants suggested exploring innovative digital solutions that can streamline access to information, markets, and finance for young agripreneurs.
- Participants acknowledged the need to address the specific weaknesses and capacity gaps faced by young agripreneurs, such as soft skills development (e.g., resilience, sales skills, financial literacy) and building their sense of self-belief, passion, and grit. The report was seen as lacking in its consideration of these critical success factors for youth-led agribusinesses.
- The report does not show how peer-to-peer learning benefits from existing projects, and this is important to highlight. Peer-to-peer learning is an important capacity-building approach that must be leveraged to build the capacity of agripreneurs.
- The report must amplify the importance of indigenous knowledge systems and position it for effective use in building capacity of upcoming agripreneurs.

Overall, the validation discussion provided valuable insights that inform the design of future interventions and ensure that the agripreneurship ecosystem in Zimbabwe is truly inclusive, responsive, and empowering for all stakeholders, especially marginalised groups. Looking ahead participants highlighted the importance of portraying agripreneurship as an attractive and profitable enterprise, rather than perpetuating the narrative of agriculture as a laborious and unappealing sector. Participants noted that the use of positive, aspirational imagery and messaging can help shift mindsets and make agribusiness a more appealing career path for youth (Image 4).



Image 4: Selected workshop participants posing for a photo with UU staff

3.3 Potential solutions to address issues emanating from capacity, resource, and cross-cutting risks

Several suggestions were made from participants' group discussions on how issues emerging from the three main thematic areas can be addressed. This summary collates the input that was received from four groups at the workshop. The solutions address: capacity bottlenecks in youth agribusiness, and the proposed solutions include providing financial management training, establishing youth accelerator programs, facilitating connections to mentors, training on technology and carbon credits, and empowering youth storytelling and proposal writing skills (Table 4). On the aspect of increasing/improving access to finance and productive assets like land and equipment, interventions such as collateral-based loans, contract farming, rent-to-buy schemes, and financial literacy training were suggested (Table 5). The participants acknowledged the existence of cross-cutting risks like climate change, and their recommendations include climate-smart agriculture training, gender-responsive programming, nutrition integration through diversified farming, and leveraging indigenous knowledge (Table 6). Overall, the focus is on developing the technical, entrepreneurial, and financial capacities of youth while accounting for contextual challenges and opportunities.

Table 4: Solutions to address issues emanating from capacity bottlenecks

Description	CAPACITY INTERVENTIONS
<i>Approaches to mentor and coach youth in agribusiness successfully.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide financial management training to expose young agripreneurs to essential skills for managing money effectively. ● Establishing youth accelerator programs to nurture young agricultural entrepreneurs. ● Facilitate linkages to social networks and mentors to enhance skills. Mentors from banking sector, private companies, government, and NGOs.
<i>How to enhance the technical capacity of youth in agriculture?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Train youth on carbon credits trading: This will equip them with the knowledge and skills to generate additional revenue streams for their

	<p>agribusiness ventures through the monetization of their sustainable farming practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Exchange and site visits: These experiential learning opportunities allow them to interact with successful entrepreneurs, observe best practices, and gain inspiration from real-world examples of thriving agribusiness models. ● Working smart – not hard – using technology: Training on the use of digital tools, precision farming techniques, and other innovative solutions that can help the agripreneurs work smarter, not harder. ● Post-training apprenticeship: Hands-on, on-the-job learning experience to strengthen their practical skills, provide mentorship and networking opportunities to support youths.
<p><i>Other capacity-building considerations</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Empower youth with storytelling skills to effectively communicate ideas. ● Train youth on crafting compelling funding proposals and presenting ideas to potential investors. ● Educate youth on responsible use of credit, financial management, and avoiding direct cash handling. ● Establish centers of excellence to foster entrepreneurship. ● Incorporate locally relevant content to leverage indigenous knowledge in training. ● Offer training on business etiquette, networking, and appropriate conduct in professional settings. ● Launch campaigns to promote agriculture as an attractive and viable career path for youth. <p>Design training programs focused on developing entrepreneurial mindset, and problem-solving.</p>

Table 5: Solutions to address issues emanating from resource constraints

Description	RESOURCE INTERVENTIONS
<p><i>Interventions for the youth to access finance?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Goal is to reduce default risk of youth: By implementing a comprehensive approach, the project aims to enhance the creditworthiness of the target youth and mitigate the risks associated with loan defaults. ● Training for the youth: This will include modules on budgeting, record-keeping, financial planning, and risk assessment, empowering them to make informed decisions and effectively manage their financial resources. ● Identify banks to work with so they train you on financial literacy: These collaborations will enable the youth to receive specialised training directly from the lending organisations, fostering a deeper understanding of the financial system and the requirements for accessing credit. ● Collateral-based loans: By leveraging assets, such as livestock, or equipment, the youth will be able to secure financing and overcome the

	<p>common barrier of lack of collateral, which often hinders their ability to obtain loans from formal financial institutions.</p>
<p><i>Since the youth have limited access to land, is it a productive asset in youth agripreneurship? What can be done to address this challenge?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Youth need a problem-solving mindset and entrepreneurial energy: Through specialised training and mentorship, the initiative are needed to empower young agripreneurs to identify and capitalise on market opportunities, navigate challenges, and drive the growth of their agricultural enterprises. ● Involving use of contract farming: Mutually beneficial agreements between youth-led enterprises and larger commercial buyers or processors will provide the youth with guaranteed market access, stable pricing, and access to technical support, reducing their exposure to market volatility. ● Tailor-made joint ventures: Strategic partnerships to leverage the expertise, resources, and networks of their more experienced counterparts, accelerating their business development and market penetration.
<p><i>Proposed initiatives to enhance access to equipment by the youth.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rent-to-buy schemes and equipment sharing to improve youth access to resources. ● Provide training and support for youth to develop their own tools and business solutions. ● Advocate for policy and regulatory changes to enable youth entrepreneurship. ● Offer subsidies, grants, and empowerment credits as financial incentives. ● Address the challenge of youth in Zimbabwe being exposed to money management late in life through financial literacy training. ● Explore consignment stocking as an alternative funding mechanism to equip youth-led businesses. ● Identify and support less congested areas in the value chain to reduce barriers for youth entrepreneurs. <p>Prioritize building the capacity of youth before providing financing to ensure efficient resource management.</p>

Table 6: Solutions to address issues emanating from cross-cutting risks

DESCRIPTION	RISKS AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES INTERVENTIONS
<p><i>Risks to be anticipated in the youth agripreneurship project?</i> <i>How can these risks be mitigated?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Climate change is a big risk: Erratic weather patterns, droughts, floods, and other extreme weather events have devastating impacts on agricultural operations and undermine the viability and sustainability of the youth-led enterprises. ● Make use of insurance: Risk transfer mechanisms offers financial protection and a safety net for the young agripreneurs, enabling them to safeguard their investments and continue their operations in the face of climate-related shocks and stresses. ● Climate proofing: Training on sustainable land management, water-efficient irrigation methods, crop diversification, and the adoption of climate-resilient crop varieties and livestock breeds. These interventions will enhance the adaptive capacity of the youth-led enterprises to withstand the impacts of climate change. ● Education and exposure: Training on climate science, risk assessment, and adaptation strategies, as well as exposure visits to observe and learn from successful climate-smart agricultural initiatives.
<p><i>Activities to consider in making youth agripreneurship program gender transformative?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gender-responsive training and mentorship: training and mentorship opportunities are designed to address unique needs and challenges faced by young women in agribusiness. ● Incorporate gender-disaggregated data collection and analysis in the program's monitoring and evaluation framework. ● Inclusive project design and implementation.
<p><i>Addressing climate change issues in the youth agripreneurship program?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Climate-smart agriculture training: Equip the young agripreneurs with the knowledge and skills to implement farming practices that enhance productivity, improve climate change adaptation, and mitigate greenhouse gas emissions. ● Youth must be solution oriented. Shift from a mindset of lack i.e. instead of focusing on the challenges and constraints they face - encourage the young agripreneurs to adopt a mindset of abundance and possibility. This shift in perspective will enable them to identify innovative solutions, leverage available resources, and capitalize on emerging opportunities to drive the growth and sustainability of their agricultural enterprises.
<p><i>Integrating nutrition into the youth agripreneurship project?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In times of climate crisis, it's important to diversify. ● Integrated farming to increase nutritional variety. ● It's important for youth to add labels with the nutritional content of their products. ● Think out of the box and see how we integrate nutrition. ● Indigenous knowledge systems are an asset. ● Initiatives should focus on climate-smart agriculture to deal with the issue of climate change. ● Capacity building programs should be tailored to the target group for instance rural youths require different approaches and content than urban youths.

3.4 Institutional and Structural Support for Agripreneurship Initiatives

To further contextualize the opportunities related to capacity, resources, and cross-cutting risk factors for youth agripreneurship in Zimbabwe, an analysis of the available institutional and structural support initiatives was conducted through a literature review. Understanding the institutional landscape is crucial for agripreneurs to be aware of the leveraging opportunities they can capitalize on to advance their initiatives. The key institutions that agripreneurs need to engage with include government ministries, which have diverse focus areas but can provide supportive resources; NGOs, which produce a wealth of informational resources and facilitate peer-to-peer learning opportunities in addition to matching funding; and the private sector, which has emerged as a critical development enabler through the financial resources and technical expertise it possesses.

Paying close attention to these institutional arrangements and the support they can offer helps agripreneurs navigate the ecosystems and maximize the resources available to them. This nuanced understanding of the institutional landscape is an important step in designing targeted interventions that can effectively address the barriers faced by young agripreneurs in Zimbabwe.

3.4.1 Government and Institution Support

Several government departments are involved in activities supportive of agripreneurship initiatives. Their roles range from providing support, guidance, and resources to promoting agricultural entrepreneurship and rural development (Table 7). The role of government ministries in agripreneurship are in:

- Policy Formulation and Regulation
- Value Addition, Market Access, and Trade
- Youth Empowerment and Skills Development
- Support for Women's Participation in Agriculture and Empowering Women Agripreneurs
- Financing, Research, and Innovation

Table 7: Roles of various ministries in supporting agripreneurship initiatives

Ministry	Role
Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water, and Rural Resettlement	This ministry is responsible for overall agricultural policy formulation, implementation, and regulation. It plays a crucial role in creating an enabling environment for agripreneurs and oversees various programs and initiatives to support agricultural development.
Ministry of Industry and Commerce	This ministry focuses on promoting value addition, agro-processing, and market access for agricultural products. It collaborates with agripreneurs to identify market opportunities, facilitate market linkages, and provide support for value chain development.

Ministry of Youth, Sport, Arts, and Recreation	This ministry recognises the importance of engaging young people in agriculture and supports youth-led agripreneurship initiatives. It provides training, mentorship, and access to financing opportunities for young agripreneurs.
Ministry of Finance and Economic Development	This ministry plays a critical role in providing financial support and incentives for agripreneurship. It facilitates access to loans, grants, and other financial instruments to promote investment in agriculture and agribusiness.
Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science, and Technology Development	This ministry focuses on promoting research and innovation in agriculture. It supports agripreneurs by facilitating access to research findings, technological advancements, and innovation hubs that can enhance productivity and sustainability.
Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development	This ministry recognises the importance of women's participation in agriculture and supports women agripreneurs. It provides training, capacity building, and access to resources to empower women in agribusiness.
Ministry of Local Government and Public Works	This ministry plays a role in rural development and infrastructure provision. It supports agripreneurship initiatives by improving rural infrastructure such as roads, irrigation systems, and market facilities, that are crucial for agricultural activities.

3.4.2 Private Sector

Private sector companies are actively investing in initiatives and programs that specifically target women and youth in agripreneurship (Table 8). The companies recognize the importance of inclusive and sustainable agricultural development, particularly when it comes to empowering women and youth in agripreneurship. They have taken proactive steps to invest in initiatives and programs that specifically target youth and women to thrive in the agricultural sector. The role of private sector companies includes:

- Establishing agribusiness incubation hubs, providing training, mentorship, and access to resources. These hubs serve as platforms for capacity building, offering support in areas such as business planning, access to finance, and market linkages.
- Value chain development. Companies have invested in initiatives that help women and youth become key stakeholders in the agricultural value chain. By providing training on quality standards, post-harvest handling, and processing techniques, these companies enable agripreneurs to add value to their agricultural produce. This, in turn, opens access to higher-value markets and increased profitability.
- Developing mobile applications, digital platforms, and data-driven solutions that empower agripreneurs by providing information, facilitating product marketing, tracking production, and enhancing overall farming efficiency.

- Partnering with NGOs, government agencies, and development organizations, to implement comprehensive programs that provide training, capacity building, and access to resources such as land, inputs, and equipment. These collaborations ensure a holistic and inclusive approach to supporting agripreneurship among women and youth.
- Companies are investing in agro-processing facilities, creating opportunities for women and youth to engage in value-added activities e.g. Nhimbe fresh foods. These facilities enable agripreneurs to process and package agricultural products, leading to higher profitability and increased market opportunities.

Table 8: Private sector initiatives in agripreneurship

Company	Description
Ariston Holdings Limited	"Ariston Empowerment Program" to empower women and youth in agriculture. The program offers training, mentorship, and financial support to enhance their skills and income generation opportunities.
Cairns Foods	"Cairns Contract Farming Initiative" involving women and youth. The program provides training, inputs, and market linkages for contract farming, empowering farmers and enhancing their agripreneurship opportunities.
CBZ Bank Limited	"CBZ Women Agripreneurs Development Fund" supporting women in agribusiness. It offers financial assistance, training, and mentorship to enhance their participation and economic empowerment in the agricultural sector.
Tanganda Tea Co.	Engages women and youth through the "Tanganda Smallholder Tea Growers Scheme." It offers training, technical support, and financial assistance for tea production and agripreneurship.
Cairns Foods	Established the "Cairns Contract Farming Initiative" involving women and youth. The program provides training, inputs, and market linkages for contract farming, empowering farmers and enhancing their agripreneurship opportunities.
Econet Wireless EcoCash platform	EcoFarmer Market, connecting farmers, including women and youth, with buyers and consumers. It expands their business opportunities and income potential through an online marketplace.
Nhimbe Fresh Produce	Nhimbe Fresh Produce, a company in Zimbabwe, is actively engaged in supporting youth and women in the agricultural sector. They provide training, mentorship, access to finance, and market linkages for youths and women involved in agriculture.
Olivine Industries	Collaborates with partners to implement the "Olivine Contract Farming Program" targeting smallholder farmers, including women and youth. It provides training, inputs, and market access to empower farmers in contract farming and agripreneurship.

Schweppes Limited	has initiatives such as the Schweppes Pineapple Outgrower Scheme and the Schweppes Female Citrus Farmers Development Program. These programs provide training, technical assistance, and market access to empower farmers, particularly women and youth, in fruit production and agripreneurship.
Seed Co Limited	The SeedCo Youth Agripreneurship Program offers training, mentorship, and access to high-quality seeds and inputs. It supports youth in starting and managing successful agricultural enterprises.
Stanbic Bank	Launched the Agri-Tech Incubation Program, providing mentoring, finance, and business development support to youth-led agribusiness startups. It fosters innovation and entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector.
Standard Chartered Bank	"Women in Agribusiness Initiative" supports women entrepreneurs in agriculture through financial products, training, and mentorship. It aims to enhance their access to finance and promote sustainable growth in the sector.
Tanganda Tea Company Limited	Engages women and youth through the "Tanganda Smallholder Tea Growers Scheme." It offers training, technical support, and financial assistance for tea production and agripreneurship.
Varun Beverages	"Fruit Outgrower Development Program" in collaboration with local farmers, including women and youth. It provides training, technical support, and finance for sustainable fruit enterprises and benefits from the beverage industry's value chain.

3.4.3 Nongovernmental and International Organizations

The agripreneurship sector in Zimbabwe faces significant challenges, from access to finance and markets to the need for technical expertise and sustainable practices. In this context, the involvement of NGOs has proven to be crucial in driving the development and growth of the sector. NGOs, such as Mercy Corps, SNV, TechnoServe, and Youth Empowerment Transformation Trust (YETT), have stepped in to fill critical gaps by providing a range of tailored support services to aspiring and existing agripreneurs (Table 9). Their technical expertise and guidance help agripreneurs adopt more efficient and environmentally friendly farming methods, enhancing the sustainability of their operations.

NGOs apply a collaborative approach to their work and engagements. The collaborative approach adopted by these NGOs, working in partnership with the government and local stakeholders, ensures that the initiatives are well-aligned with national priorities and responsive to the unique needs of the local context. This collaborative model enables a comprehensive and coordinated support system for agripreneurs, maximizing the impact of the interventions. Recognising the importance of building entrepreneurial capabilities, NGOs have also invested in providing specialised entrepreneurship training, capacity building, and mentorship programs.

Furthermore, NGOs play a crucial role in facilitating agripreneurs' access to finance and linkages to domestic and international markets. This market-oriented support helps agripreneurs overcome barriers and integrate into competitive value chains, thereby enhancing the commercial viability and scalability of their ventures. Importantly, NGOs have also prioritised the promotion of sustainable and inclusive practices in the agripreneurship sector. By emphasising environmental, social, and economic sustainability, they ensure that the sector's development is aligned with long-term resilience and equitable outcomes. The inclusive approaches contribute to a more diverse and representative agripreneurship ecosystem.

The multifaceted roles played by NGOs is instrumental in driving sustainable, inclusive, and impactful growth. Their technical expertise, collaborative partnerships, entrepreneurship development, market access facilitation, and focus on sustainability and inclusivity make them indispensable actors in the ecosystem, paving the way for a thriving and resilient agripreneurship landscape in the country.

Table 9: NGO support in agripreneurship

#	Organization	Description
1	Mercy Corps	Mercy Corps is an international non-profit organization that works to alleviate poverty and promote sustainable development. They support agripreneurship in Zimbabwe through programs that focus on market-oriented agriculture, entrepreneurship training, and access to finance and markets for smallholder farmers and agribusinesses.
2	SNV Netherlands Development Organisation	SNV works in collaboration with local partners to support agripreneurship and agricultural development in Zimbabwe. They provide technical expertise, capacity building, and market access support to agripreneurs, with a focus on sustainable and inclusive agricultural practices.
3	TechnoServe	TechnoServe is a non-profit organization that works with enterprising individuals and businesses to build competitive industries and promote sustainable livelihoods. They support agripreneurship in Zimbabwe through business training, market linkages, and access to finance, aiming to strengthen agricultural value chains and create economic opportunities.
4	Youth Empowerment and Transformation Trust	YETT is an organization that works to empower young people across various sectors, including agriculture. They provide training, advocacy, and mentoring programs to support youth agripreneurs and promote their participation in the agricultural value chain.
5	Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association	ZELA is a local organization that advocates for sustainable natural resource management, including in the agriculture sector. They provide legal support, policy advocacy, and capacity building to agripreneurs, focusing on environmental sustainability and social responsibility.

3.5 Case Study Presentation: Integral Kumusha

A case study was presented to give participants an awareness of the context of at least one agripreneurial project that is being implemented. The Integral Kumusha project is a Buhera based community enterprise aimed at eradicating poverty in Zimbabwe. It was motivated by the staggering poverty and hunger challenges facing Africa, where according to Dr. Taranhike, 60% of the world's extreme poor reside. In Zimbabwe, 72% of the population lives in rural areas, but there is a drift toward urban centers due to inadequate rural infrastructure.

The project's founder, Dr. Taranhike (Image 5), recognised that "he who controls food, controls the world." He sought to address the "poverty of the mind" - the invisible enemy that makes people compete to demonstrate they are poorer than their neighbours, perpetuating the cycle of poverty across generations. The project aims to unlock the potential of rural homesteads, transforming them into viable economic ecosystems. It looks beyond just profits, focusing on overall community wellbeing. A key principle is that empowering women empowers the entire home and community.



Image 5: Dr. Taranhike, Founder of Integral Kumusha

The project envisions regenerative local economies that benefit Zimbabwe, Africa, and the world. It recognizes that everyone has inherent genius and seeks to provide a conducive environment for people to thrive. It addresses both productive and domestic work, and the issue of "time poverty." One specific initiative is changing crop varieties to address diminishing grain output in the region. Overall, the Integral Kumusha project takes a holistic, community-based approach to eradicating poverty and building sustainable, equitable local economies.

There was an active discussion after Dr. Taranhike's presentation. When asked if he was making money from the venture, he responded by indicating that the agribusiness venture showcased is indeed profitable and is generating substantial revenue. He also highlighted that by selling raw material the agripreneurs had to make do with government-set prices for goods but once they engaged in selling processed products, they had the advantage of determining their product prices which is a big advantage for the bottom line.

Another question posed to him was "How can youth establish an operation as refined as the one presented?" Dr. Taranhike advised that aspiring young agripreneurs should strive to develop strong business and operational expertise, invest in high-quality infrastructure, equipment, and processes, and continually innovate and optimize their practices, and build a talented, well-trained workforce. Lastly, in terms of the time taken to establish the project, Dr. Taranhike pointed out that establishing a refined, large-scale operation takes significant time, effort, and resources. The youth in this regard should be prepared for it to be a multi-year endeavor requiring patience and persistence.

It was also noted that a site visit to observe the Integral Kumusha project first-hand would be extremely valuable for youth to better understand what true success looks like in this domain. Overall, the discussion highlighted that this project was viewed as an inspiring model that youth should aspire to.

3.6 Soft skills development needs

As part of a process to determine important skills needed, participants highlighted that soft skills development is a weak area for agripreneurs. Participants reflected that in an environment where entrepreneurial energy is a must, agripreneurs need a robust set of soft skills to thrive and succeed, no matter what challenges they face. They must be resilient and stubborn, drawing upon a versatile pool of interpersonal, intrapersonal, and entrepreneurial capabilities. The participants identified a crucial set of soft skills that are essential for success. These interpersonal, intrapersonal, and entrepreneurial capabilities are crucial for agripreneurs to navigate the challenges and uncertainties of the agricultural sector. Developing and honing these soft skills can empower them to be more adaptable, resourceful, and successful in their ventures. The soft skills identified by the participants as critical include (Table 10):

Table 10: Identified soft skills grouped into Intellectual and Emotional Skills

Intellectual Soft Skills	Emotional Soft Skills
Innovation	Hope
Negotiation	Passion
Agility	Being a Pathfinder
Versatility	Grit to overcome challenges
Financial literacy	Patience
Networking	Resilience
Willpower (Win over your mind)	Self-Belief
Lifelong learning	Learning from failures
Sales (Money follows good ideas)	Motivation
Discipline	
Focus	
Hunger for Results	

The recognition by participants that this is an area that needs more emphasis in future research and training programs is valuable feedback. Incorporating targeted soft skills development alongside technical agricultural knowledge can help strengthen the "connecting tissue" for agripreneurs to thrive. This holistic approach addresses both the practical and personal dimensions required for agripreneurial success.

4.0 Intervention Description for UU WP5 Youth Partnership Consideration

Following the stakeholder validation discussion, participants were divided into three groups to brainstorm potential interventions in youth agripreneurship for UU to undertake in 2024. These initiatives aim to address the capacity, resource, and cross-cutting risks identified earlier. Each group then completed a detailed template capturing the intervention name, description, objectives, rationale, alignment with UU WP5 goals, potential risks, and sustainability strategies. The groups presented their proposed initiatives in a plenary session, receiving feedback on their proposals. After all groups had presented, participants voted to establish the initiative that best met the pre-determined impact criteria. While the voting was not used to directly determine the final intervention design, it served as an important gauge of the participants' opinions based on the information available.

This collaborative process enabled the stakeholders to co-create context-appropriate interventions to support the development of Zimbabwe's agripreneurship ecosystem. The budget presentations were prepared in a limited time and do not reflect the actual amounts needed for the proposed activities but provide some ideas of the priority activities that participants believe would need to be funded if the intervention is to be adopted. A detailed budgeting process may be needed as a follow-up.

4.1 Proposed Intervention 1: CAPYOU AgriHub: Growing Futures, Empowering Rehabilitated Youth

Table 11 shows the CAPYOU AgriHub profile, table 12 the proposed workplan and deliverables, and table 13 the estimate of the related cost.

Table 11: CAPYOU AgriHub: Growing Futures, Empowering Rehabilitated Youth

Intervention Name	CAPYOU AgriHub: Growing Futures, Empowering Rehabilitated Youth
Intervention Description	<p>Through the CAPYOU AgriHub: Growing Futures, Empowering Rehabilitated Youth Pamumvuri Trust will establish a Centre of Excellence for Youth Agripreneurship. The center provides comprehensive training to empower rehabilitated young people, particularly young women, in agripreneurship skills. The curriculum covers both theoretical and practical aspects, including marketing, value addition, and general business development. Participants engage in site visits, bootcamps, and hands-on learning to gain real-world experience.</p> <p>The center will work closely with local agribusinesses to create youth-focused opportunities along the value chain. It will also support participants in developing business proposals, that they can then pitch to potential funders. By leveraging CIMMYT's expertise and the University of Zimbabwe resources, the center aims to cultivate a sustainable, youth-driven agribusiness ecosystem that is scalable to other provinces. The goal is to transform the lives of rehabilitated young people, especially young women, through agripreneurship.</p>

Goals and Objectives	<p>Strengthen mental health of rehabilitated youth to re-engage with society through agripreneurship.</p> <p>Objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and test a holistic curriculum for agripreneurship (include gender transformation). 2. Provide skills and experiences to young people to launch their own agribusiness. 3. Provide mentorship and coaching. 4. Expose youth to industry and entrepreneurs. 5. Build a network of mentors and other experts for agripreneurship.
Key activities	<p>This intervention be implemented in Six months, from June to December 2024 and include the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop curriculum, ● Select youth cohort, ● Train and mentor youth, ● Conduct site visits to expose youth to success stories, ● Undertake shadowing, ● Build a network of mentors and other experts for agripreneurship.
Impact Area	Harare
Budget	50,000 USD (18,665,000 ZWD)
Target Beneficiaries	50 rehabilitated youth (equal numbers of women and men)
Duration	Six Months (June to December 2024)
Stakeholders/Orgs to work with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pamumvuri PVO – run the project, provide authorization letter, write report, ● WHO and other rehabilitation organizations – help identify the cohort members, ● Funders: Ukama Ustawi, Germany, Netherlands, embassy small grant schemes, GIZ, ● Private sector players for shadowing, site visits: Schweppes, Old Mutual, Chashi Foods, ● NGOs: platforms for access to markets, curricula, funding – SNV, HIVOS, PLAN International, ● Local government stakeholders to give permissions, ● Marondera University for curriculum development.
Alignment with Work package 5 Outcomes	<p>We are focusing on the agency part of the GESI framework. The intervention aligns with the Work Package 5 outcomes: Women, youth, and marginalized male smallholder farmers and agri-entrepreneurs and interventions that benefit and reduce livelihood risks through GESI targeted support and integration.</p>

Project risks	<p>Drop-out, low uptake, no-shows – competition to participate, careful selection of participants and mentors, strong sensitisation component before and after selection, provide incentives (e.g. the pitch prize). Onboard motivated individuals.</p> <p>Delays in activities – set up a plan, have regular report-in.</p> <p>Lack of continuity – monitoring & evaluation, mentor reports, engage local government.</p> <p>Sustainability – reinvestment of what they make back into their businesses. Creating agribusinesses. Prize money to scale up to seed the business. Multiplier effect through training of trainers – once they have a start-up, they offer services to new agripreneurs.</p>
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4.1.1 Proposed Workplan

Table 12: Deliverables and associated activities

Deliverables	Activities	Duration
Curriculum developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hire consultant to develop and consolidate curriculum. ● Set up training schedule. ● Set up site visits. 	June to July 2024
Enrolment list created	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop list of criteria for participants. ● Template for interested participants to use. ● Participants compete to participate. ● Review and select participants. 	June to July 2024
Trainings held (participant list)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Soft skills training. ● Hard skills training. ● Exposure visits. ● Shadowing. 	August – November 2024
Business proposals developed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop template for proposal. ● Develop initial idea (youth). ● Present ideas to mentors and cohort. ● Pitch to the community. 	November 30 2024
Comprehensive project report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coordinator writes report, 	December 15 2024

Table 13: Proposed Budget

Activities	Total Costs \$ (USD) & (ZWD)
Curriculum development	5,000 USD (1,866,500 ZWD)
Training (eight) (soft and hard) (printing, lunches, transport) (\$22 per person) 800 for facilitator fees (eight trainings)	10,000 USD (3,733,000 ZWD)
Site visits (transport, food, allowances)	2,000 USD (746,600 ZWD)
Logistics costs – transportation, food	10,000 USD (3,733,000 ZWD)
Allowances for mentors, advisors, coaches, instructors, coordinator	10,000 USD (3,733,000 ZWD)
Land rental & inputs, repairs & maintenance	7,000 USD (2,613,100 ZWD)
Communication	1,500 USD (559,950 ZWD)
Prize for best pitch	1,500 USD (559,950 ZWD)
Total Budget	45,000 USD (16,798,500 ZWD)

4.2 Proposed Intervention 2: Sustainable AgriVentures for Empowered Women and Youth (SAVE-WY)

Table 14 shows the SAVE-WY profile, table 15 the proposed workplan and deliverables, and table 16 the estimate of the related cost.

Table 14: Sustainable AgriVentures for Empowered Women and Youth (SAVE-WY)

Intervention Name	Sustainable AgriVentures for Empowered Women and Youth (SAVE-WY)
Intervention Description	Sustainable AgriVentures for Empowered Women and Youth (SAVE-WY) initiative aims to establish a revolving fund to provide financial support to households, with a focus on promoting gender equality and social inclusion. The fund will enable beneficiaries to access resources and services to build resilient livelihoods, with the goal of transforming household and community dynamics. The project will be implemented in Zimbabwe, where the total budget is \$50,000. It has been implemented before by several organizations such as Partners for Integrated Growth and Development (PIGAD). The project that focused on poultry started in Mashonaland East and has since up scaled to other provinces from the proceeds of the revolving fund. This project will improve on the model by ensuring capacity building and mentorship that prioritises youth and especially women as well extension services to ensure that default risk is minimised. This is important to ensure that a gender transformative approach is applied. The key indicator will be that 60% of the beneficiaries will be women and youth. This will ideally work as seed funding and be an avenue for sustainably regenerating wealth.
Goals and Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To increase access to agripreneurship financial services for households, with a focus on women, youth, and marginalized groups. ● To support the development of resilient and sustainable livelihoods through the provision of tailored financial and non-financial support (capacity building through mentorship/coaching, peer-to-peer learning etc). ● To promote gender equality and social inclusion within households and communities through a gender transformative approach. ● To establish a self-sustaining revolving fund model that can be replicated and scaled up in the future. ● To strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders and beneficiaries in financial management and business development.
Key activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This intervention is to be implemented in 6 months, from June to December 2024 and will include the following activities. ● Conduct a baseline assessment to identify target beneficiaries and their needs. ● Establish the revolving fund mechanism and develop selection criteria and disbursement protocols. ● Provide tailored financial and non-financial support (e.g., business development, financial literacy, market linkages) to beneficiaries.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Facilitate household and community-level dialogues to promote gender equality and social inclusion. ● Strengthen the capacity of local stakeholders and beneficiaries in financial management and business development. ● Monitor and evaluate the impact of the intervention, and document lessons learned.
Impact Area	The intervention is focused on selected two districts in Mashonaland Central and two Districts from Masvingo in Zimbabwe, with the aim of reaching a diverse range of beneficiaries. These are the sites that were ongoing UU work is taking place and the project will connect to an ecosystem of existing relationship and possible peer-to-peer learning.
Budget	The total budget for this intervention is \$50,000.
Target Beneficiaries	Approximately 150 households, with a focus on women, youth, and marginalized groups.
Duration	The intervention is to be implemented over a 6-month period.
Stakeholders/Orgs to work with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local financial institutions. ● Community-based organizations. ● Government agencies (e.g., Ministry of Women Affairs, Community, Small and Medium Enterprises Development). ● Civil society organizations focused on gender equality and social inclusion. ● Women empowerment bank (match funding).
Project management	<p>Lead: Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (Climate Change and Food Security Institute).</p> <p>Supported by: Bindura University of Science Education (Centre of Agro-Ecology, Food security and Climate Change).</p>
Alignment with Work package 5 Outcomes	This intervention aligns with the outcomes of Work Package 5, as it aims to benefit women, youth, and marginalized male smallholder farmers and agri-entrepreneurs through GESI-targeted support and integration.
Project risks	<p>Risk One: Beneficiaries may struggle to repay the loans, leading to a depletion of the revolving fund.</p> <p>Mitigation Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement robust beneficiary selection criteria and screening processes. ● Provide financial literacy and business management training to loan recipients. ● Monitor repayment rates and provide timely support to struggling beneficiaries. <p>Risk Two: Existing power dynamics and socio-cultural norms may limit the participation of women and marginalized groups in the project.</p>

	<p>Mitigation Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct targeted outreach and awareness campaigns to encourage participation of women and marginalized groups. ● Engage community leaders and influential stakeholders to promote gender equality and social inclusion. ● Engage whole households and communities in sensitization and training. <p>Risk Three: Local implementing partners may lack the necessary skills and resources to effectively manage and scale the revolving fund.</p> <p>Mitigation Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide comprehensive capacity-building support to local partners, including training on financial management, and monitoring and evaluation. ● Establish strong partnerships with government agencies and financial institutions to leverage their expertise and resources. <p>Risk Four: The revolving fund model may face difficulties in securing long-term funding and support to ensure its sustainability.</p> <p>Mitigation Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Engage with empowerment banks and other financial institutions to explore co-financing and partnership opportunities. ● Develop a comprehensive sustainability plan that leverages local ownership, capacity building, and policy advocacy. <p>Risk Five: The project may be affected by external factors, such as economic downturns, natural disasters, or political instability,</p> <p>Mitigation Strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Incorporate risk assessment and contingency planning in the project design. ● Diversify livelihood activities supported by revolving fund to increase resilience. ● Establish strong partnerships with local government and disaster management agencies to enhance preparedness and response capabilities.
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4.2.1 Proposed Workplan

Table 15: Workplan for intervention

Deliverables	Activities	Duration
Baseline assessment and fund establishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct project baseline assessment. ● Establish revolving fund mechanism and selection criteria. 	June to August 2024

Provision of financial and non-financial support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Disburse funds to selected beneficiaries. ● Provide business development and financial literacy training. ● Facilitate household and community-level dialogues. 	September 2024 to December 2024
Monitoring, evaluation, and documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monitor and evaluate the impact of the intervention. ● Document lessons learned and to prepare a comprehensive project report. 	June 2024 to December 2024
Comprehensive Project report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At the end of the six month implementation period, a comprehensive project report is developed to document the key activities, achievements, challenges, and lessons learned from the Revolving Fund for Gender Inclusive Resilient Livelihoods intervention. 	December 2024

4.2.2 Costing of Activities

Table 16: Proposed Budget

	Activities	Total Costs (\$) & (ZWD)
1	Financial support for beneficiaries	34,000 USD (12,692,200 ZWD)
2	Training and capacity building	5,000 USD (1,866,500 ZWD)
3	Monitoring and evaluation	3,000 USD (1,119,900 ZWD)
4	Administrative costs	3,000 USD (1,119,900 ZWD)
5	Market access support	5,000 USD (1,866,500 ZWD)
	Total Budget	50,000 USD (18,665,000 ZWD)

4.3 Proposed Interventions 3: Fish Harvest Empowerment: Strengthening Communities Through Aquaculture

Table 17 shows the profile of intervention 3, table 18 the proposed workplan and deliverables, and table 19 the estimate of the related cost.

Table 17: Fish Harvest Empowerment: Strengthening Communities Through Aquaculture

Intervention Name	Fish Harvest Empowerment: Strengthening Communities Through Aquaculture
Intervention Description	<p>"Fish Harvest Empowerment: Strengthening Communities Through Aquaculture" is a project dedicated to revitalizing the lives of community members residing on former white settler farm compounds in Zimbabwe. These individuals have long been deprived of job opportunities, stable income, and access to education and training programs, particularly during the period of land redistribution. As a result, they currently grapple with issues such as gender-based violence (GBV), poverty, and social isolation.</p> <p>Despite these challenges, community members have actively engaged in agricultural endeavours, gaining practical experience and knowledge in crop farming, fishing, and animal husbandry. In line with the adage "Fish Bringing Life!", our project aims to uplift these community members by implementing a holistic approach. The project will integrate the community members into sustainable agricultural value chains through comprehensive training programs. These programs will focus on key areas such as value chain management, financial literacy, business development, and entrepreneurial skills. By equipping them with the necessary skills and resources, we empower them to establish thriving aquaculture-based enterprises and break the cycle of poverty and social marginalization.</p> <p>The project will be implemented in partnership with the local Ministry of Agriculture and the Zimbabwe Farmers' Union. This collaborative approach will ensure that the training and support programs are tailored to the specific needs of the target communities and aligned with national agricultural development strategies.</p>
Goals and Objectives	<p>Goal: Empower and uplift the marginalized communities residing on former white settler farm compounds in Zimbabwe by integrating them into sustainable agricultural value chains, particularly focused on aquaculture, and equipping them with the necessary skills, resources, and support to establish thriving livelihoods and break the cycle of poverty, gender-based violence, and social isolation</p> <p>Objectives:</p>

	<p>The projects measurable objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Training 100 community members in aquaculture value chain management and business skills by the end of the first year, ● Facilitating the establishment of two sustainable aquaculture-based enterprises in 6 months, ● Achieving a 30% increase in household incomes among the participating community members within the first two years. ● Reducing the incidence of gender-based violence by 25% in the target communities over the project duration. ● Set up a local management committee to steer and oversee the project. <p>Regular monitoring and evaluation will be conducted to track the project's progress and impact, allowing us to identify areas for improvement and ensure the long-term sustainability of the "Fish Harvest Empowerment" initiative.</p>
Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Workshop with the households to raise awareness on agricultural value chains and development projects. ● Workshop on financial and technical training. ● Set up a local management committee to steer and oversee the project. ● To co-develop a fish farming scheme with the affected households.
Impact Area	Mashonaland Central
Budget	\$50 000 USD (18,665,000 ZWD)
Target Beneficiaries	100 Individuals consisting of Women (25), Men (25) and Youth (50)
Duration	June to December 2024.
Stakeholders/Orgs to work with	<p>Target Communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Marginalized community members residing on former white settler farm compounds in Zimbabwe particularly women, youth, and other vulnerable groups within these communities. <p>Local Government Agencies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Social Welfare, Local municipal authorities. <p>Regional/National Agricultural Organizations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Zimbabwe Farmers' Union, and Zimbabwe Aquaculture Association. <p>Private Sector Actors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Local and regional aquaculture businesses, Agricultural input suppliers, Buyers, and distributors in the aquaculture value chain. <p>Academic and Research Institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Bindura University

	<p>Project Implementation Team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Project management and coordination staff, Training and capacity building experts, Monitoring, and evaluation specialists. <p>Effective engagement and collaboration with diverse stakeholders are crucial for the success and sustainability of the "Fish Harvest Empowerment" project. By aligning the project's objectives with interests and needs of stakeholders, the initiative can leverage their resources, expertise, and influence to maximize its impact on target communities.</p>
<p>Alignment with Work package 5 Outcomes</p>	<p>This intervention aligns with the Work Package 5 outcomes as it centers on women, youth, and marginalized male smallholder farmers and agri-entrepreneurs. The proposed interventions benefit and reduce livelihood risks through GESI targeted support and integration.</p>
<p>Project risks</p>	<p>Possible resistance from the households</p> <p>Mitigation strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct thorough community engagement and sensitization campaigns to build trust and buy-in from households. ● Involve local leaders and community representatives in the design and implementation of the interventions. ● Address any concerns or fears the households may have through open dialogue and tailored support. <p>Theft and vandalism of machines</p> <p>Mitigation strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement robust security measures such as secure storage facilities, surveillance systems, and community-based monitoring. ● Engage the local authorities and law enforcement to ensure adequate protection of the project assets. ● Raise awareness among the community about the importance of safeguarding the shared resources. <p>Water Shortages</p> <p>Mitigation strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Invest in water harvesting, storage, and distribution infrastructure to ensure reliable water supply. ● Promote water conservation practices. <p>Budget cuts by funders</p>

	<p>Mitigation strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversify the funding sources and explore alternative financing mechanisms. • Maintain transparent and accountable financial management practices to build donor confidence.
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4.3.1 Proposed Workplan

Table 18: Deliverables and associated activities

Deliverables	Activities	Duration
Workshop report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop with the households to raise awareness on agricultural value chains and development projects. 	June to July 2024
Training material and report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop on financial and technical training. 	June to August 2024
Local management committee established	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a local management committee to steer and oversee the project. 	September 2024
Feasibility study report Fish storage, cold chain, and drying facilities installations. Fish farming material procured.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-develop a fish farming scheme with the affected households. • Set up fish storage, cold chain, and drying facilities. 	October-December 2024
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a feasibility assessment. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procure material for fish farming (cages, feed, fingerlings). 	
Comprehensive project report		

4.3.2 Costing of Activities

Table 19: Proposed Budget

	Activities	Costs (\$) and (ZWD)
1	Workshop with the households to raise awareness on agricultural value chains and development projects.	\$5,000 USD (1,866,500 ZWD)
2	Workshop on financial and technical training.	\$5,000 USD (1,866,500 ZWD)
3	Set up a local management committee to steer and oversee the project.	\$5,000 USD (1,866,500 ZWD)

4	Co-develop a fish farming scheme with the affected households.	\$5,000 USD (1,866,500 ZWD)
5	Set up fish storage, cold chain and drying facilities.	\$10,000 USD (3,733,000 ZWD)
6	Conduct a feasibility assessment.	\$3,000 USD (1,119,900 ZWD)
7	Procure material for fish farming (cages, feed, fingerlings).	\$12,000 USD (4,479,600 ZWD)
8	Monthly project trips for M&E.	\$4,000 USD (1,493,200 ZWD)
	Total Budget	\$50 000 USD (18,665,000 ZWD)

4.4 Criteria for Interventions Selection

To ensure high-impact intervention- criteria, the consultants developed a criterion to screen the proposed interventions (Table 20). The criteria, with a rank from 1 (low) to 3 (high) reviewed the interventions for the following attributes:

- The intervention is catalytic and can trigger broader systemic change in the agripreneurship ecosystem. It should create a ripple effect that amplifies its impact beyond direct beneficiaries, and it should be designed to address root causes rather than just symptoms of the challenges facing young agripreneurs. *(1 – Low; 2 – Medium; 3 – High)*
- The intervention facilitates connections between young agripreneurs, industry mentors, and subject matter experts. It should provide access to guidance, advice, and support from experienced professionals, and build the capacity of young agripreneurs to engage and leverage these networks. *(1 – Low; 2 – Medium; 3 – High)*
- The intervention includes components that help young agripreneurs develop marketing and sales capabilities and address the challenges young agripreneurs face in accessing and navigating broader value chains and market channels.
- The intervention has mechanisms to facilitate peer-to-peer knowledge sharing, collaborative problem-solving, and mutual support among young agripreneurs. It should leverage experiences and lessons learned from past beneficiaries to strengthen the support provided to current and future participants. *(1 – Low; 2 – Medium; 3 – High)*
- The intervention provides a holistic approach to addressing nutritional deficiencies. It should inherently provide an alternative farming priority to maize farming. *(1 – Low; 2 – Medium; 3 – High)*

Table 20: Proposed Interventions scores against criteria

#	Description	Criteria	Intervention 1: <i>CAPYOU AgriHub: Growing Futures, Empowering Rehabilitated Youth</i>	Intervention 2: <i>Sustainable AgriVentures for Empowered Women and Youth (SAVE-WY)</i>	Intervention 3: <i>Fish Harvest Empowerment: Strengthening Communities Through Aquaculture</i>
1	Is the intervention catalytic?	Could intervention lead to broader, systemic changes in agripreneurship?	1	3	2
		Can intervention create a ripple effect that amplifies its impact beyond direct beneficiaries?	1	3	3
		Is intervention designed to address root causes rather than just symptoms of the challenges?	1	2	2
2	Is there a potential to access investor network, mentors, and experts?	Does the intervention facilitate connections between young agripreneurs, and relevant mentors, and subject matter experts?	2	3	3
		Are there mechanisms in place to provide young agripreneurs with access to guidance, advice, and support from experienced professionals?	3	3	3
		Does the intervention help young agripreneurs leverage these networks effectively?	2	3	3
3	Is there an infrastructure to support marketing support?	Does intervention include components that help young agripreneurs develop their marketing and sales capabilities?	2	2	2
		Does intervention address challenges young agripreneurs face in accessing and navigating broader value chains and market channels?	1	1	1

4	Access to Alumni Network and peer learning support	Are there mechanisms in place to facilitate peer-to-peer knowledge sharing, collaborative problem-solving, and mutual support among young agripreneurs?	2	3	2
5	Holistic approach	Does intervention provide a holistic lens to addressing productivity and nutritional deficiencies?	1	2	2
		Does intervention provide an alternative to maize farming?	3	3	3
Total			19	28	26

Key

1 – Low

2 – Medium

3 - High

4.5 Intervention Recommendation

Sustainable AgriVentures for Empowered Women and Youth (SAVE-WY).

This intervention was selected because it scored highest on the criteria developed by the consultants. This catalytic intervention aims to establish a revolving fund to provide financial and non-financial support to households, with a focus on promoting gender equality and social inclusion. By leveraging a transformative approach, the project seeks to build resilient livelihoods and contribute to the overall well-being of the targeted communities in Zimbabwe.

- **Catalytic Potential:** The intervention has the potential to trigger broader systemic change in the agripreneurship ecosystem, creating a ripple effect that amplifies its impact beyond the direct beneficiaries. It is designed to address root causes rather than just symptoms of the challenges facing young agripreneurs.
- **Facilitating Connections:** The intervention facilitates connections between young agripreneurs, industry mentors, and subject matter experts. It provides access to guidance, advice, and support from experienced professionals, and builds the capacity of young agripreneurs to effectively engage and leverage these networks.
- **Market and Value Chain Development:** The intervention includes components that help young agripreneurs develop marketing and sales capabilities, as well as address the challenges they face in accessing and navigating broader value chains and market channels. The intervention draws lessons from a similar initiative implemented in neighboring communities.
- **Peer-to-Peer Support:** The intervention has mechanisms in place to facilitate peer-to-peer knowledge sharing, collaborative problem-solving, and mutual support among young agripreneurs. It leverages experiences and lessons learned from past beneficiaries to strengthen the support provided to current and future participants.
- **Nutrition and Diversification:** The intervention provides a holistic approach to addressing nutritional deficiencies, inherently promoting alternative farming practices beyond the dominant maize-focused approach.

4.6 Sustainability

To ensure the continued viability and scalability of the revolving fund, the following strategies will be pursued:

- **Securing Match Funding:** The project team will actively seek out opportunities for match funding from development agencies. This will diversify the funding sources and reduce reliance on a single source and will be a positive step toward ensuring sustainability.
- **Collaboration with Empowerment Bank:** The purpose of this project is aligned with the mission of the Empowerment Bank of Zimbabwe. This presents an opportunity to secure additional funding,

technical assistance, and support for the revolving fund model. A business case to be presented to the bank will be developed and used as collateral to approach the bank.

- The capacity building of local stakeholders, including community-based organizations, financial institutions, and government agencies, will be a critical component of this project's sustainability planning. By strengthening the knowledge, skills, and resources of these key local actors, the project will foster a sense of ownership and commitment, ensuring the continuity of the initiative's activities and impact even after the initial implementation phase. Capacity building enables local stakeholders to independently operate and maintain the project's services, making it more adaptable and responsive to evolving community needs. This focus on developing local capacities will increase the potential for the project's approach and lessons to be replicated or scaled up, multiplying its impact beyond the initial implementation area.
- Promoting Beneficiary Ownership and Participation: Fostering a sense of ownership and commitment among the target communities is an important aspect of sustainability. This will increase the likelihood of sustained engagement and repayment of the loans, ensuring the continued operation of the project.

Documenting and Disseminating Lessons Learned: Comprehensively documenting the key lessons learned and best practices, and widely disseminating this information to relevant stakeholders, will contribute to the project's long-term impact and potential for replication or scaling up in other contexts.

As such, the Sustainable Agriventures for Empowered Women and Youth proposal was also selected at the winning proposal to be implemented as it aligned perfect with Work Package 5 objectives of achieving social inclusion. The aim of intervention program in this regard is to deliver tailored demand-driven gender-inclusive programs, particularly around market needs, and linking youth in agripreneurship to financial opportunities through a revolving fund to advance their agribusiness activities.

The Climate Change and Food Security Institute at [Marondera University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology](#) in Zimbabwe is the implementing partner. Their role as implementing partners is to support intervention activities that include:

- Establishing a self-sustaining revolving fund mechanism to provide financial support to young agripreneurs and women involved in agripreneurship through UU WP5 funds.
- Providing tailored financial and non-financial support programs such as business development, financial literacy, and market linkages to participants for women and youth empowerment.
- Strengthening the capacity of local stakeholders and beneficiaries in financial management.

The intervention program will be implemented between August and December 2024.

5.0 Conclusion

This workshop report highlights important themes in the effort to drive agricultural development, poverty alleviation, and youth engagement across Africa. A common thread from the conversations and knowledge sharing is the focus on empowering smallholder farmers, particularly women and youth, to transition towards more diverse, resilient, and sustainable agri-food systems. The workshop, conducted in Harare, demonstrates the importance of co-creating context-appropriate interventions through participatory stakeholder engagement. Participants highlighted that for agripreneurs to thrive and overcome challenges, they need a robust set of soft skills, as such, there is a need for research and training focused on developing soft skills for agripreneurs.

The insights and initiatives outlined provide a roadmap for empowering vulnerable communities, promoting gender equality, and positioning youth as agents of change in African agriculture. Ultimately, the success of these efforts will depend on sustained commitment and coordination across government, private sector, and civil society stakeholders. With the right enabling environment, Africa's smallholder farmers can lead the way toward a more food secure, prosperous, and environmentally resilient future.

The *Sustainable Agriventures for Empowered Women and Youth (SAVE_WY)* proposal was chosen as the winning proposal and was implemented through the Climate Change and Food Security Institute at Marondera University of Agricultural Science and Technology (MUASt) as IWMI's partner organization. The intervention was instrumental in establishing a revolving fund with the aim of addressing structural barriers such as lack of financial resources, limited agribusiness and financial literacy and market opportunities to agripreneurs in Zimbabwe. The revolving fund thus provided financial support to 150 beneficiaries—specifically youth and women agripreneurs in the Mashonaland Central and Masvingo provinces of Zimbabwe. The Project was implemented between August and December of 2024 as an Ukama Ustawi WP5 initiative.

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Annexes

Annex 1: Dialogue Agenda

Youth Engagement in Agripreneurship in Zimbabwe 21 – 22 May 2024

Day 1: Setting the Stage and Building Consensus

Time	Activity	Approach	Lead
08:30-09:00	Arrival and Registration.		Seipati
09:00 - 09:20	Welcome and Introductions.		Tapiwa
09:20 – 09:30	Welcome by the CGIAR Convenor in Zimbabwe.		Isaiah
0930 – 09:50	Workshop Objectives and Ice breaker.		Tapiwa
09:50 – 10:20	Overview of Ukama Ustawi Work Package 5 .		Kristin
10:20 – 11:00	2022 Dialogue report validation applying the GESI Framework Lens <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Framed through the GESI framework that was organized along three thematic areas. - Building off the 2022 report to frame strategies and implementation plans for youth in Agri business. 	Presentation and discussion. Group work on reflection questions.	Tapiwa
11:00-11:15	Tea break		All
11:15- 12:00	Plenary Discussion/reflection: Gender and Social Inclusion in Agripreneurship (45 minutes).	Group feedback.	Verengai
12:00 – 13:00	CASE STUDY importance of youth and women engagement in agripreneurship. Integral Kumusha.	Presentation and discussion.	Taranhike
13:00- 14:00	Lunch		
14:00 – 15:30	Key challenges and opportunities within their theme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Building Skills and Capabilities for Young Agripreneurs - Facilitating Access to Finance and Resources - Fostering Supportive Policies and Institutional Frameworks - Risks and Cross Cutting Issues (climate change, gender transformative policies, macroeconomic risks). 	(Participatory activity to create program of work and Collaboration Matrix. Instruction sheet Flip charts.	Verengai

15:30 – 17:00	Group Reports and Discussion (60 minutes)		Tapiwa
17:00 – 18:30	<p>Pitch and cocktail event: An informal evening gathering fosters connections and relationship building between participants.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As an agriprenuer what are sales points? - Out of this setting what next? Who did you meet? What are you be able to take forward? - What major challenge have you overcome in last year /five years? 		All

Day 2: Charting the Path Forward

Time	Activity		Lead
08:30- 09:00	Arrival and Registration		Seipati
09:00 – 09:20	<p>Recap and Day 1 Outcomes (15 minutes)</p> <p>Briefly summarize key points and insights from Day 1 discussions.</p>	One participant to present	Participant
09:20 – 09:40	Day 2 instructions		Verengai
09:40 – 11:00	<p>Developing an Actionable Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborative session to develop a comprehensive program of activities addressing: - Specific actions based on Day 1 breakout group discussions. - Sequencing and timeframe for proposed activities. - Cost estimates for program implementation. 	<p>Group work</p> <p>Propose interventions (one intervention)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who do you think we can work with? Actors - Opportunities, Threats - Orgs to work with <p>Building up from key challenges and opportunities on the first day.</p>	Verengai
11:00- 11:20	Tea break		All
11:20 – 13:00	<p>Sustainability Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop strategies to ensure program sustainability beyond short-term funding. - Explore potential funding sources and long-term ownership models. 	<p>Next steps: outline the short-term intervention with UU and long-term program developed through current partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential funding sources. - Primary actors to engage. 	Tapiwa
13:00 – 14:00	Lunch		

14:00 – 15:00	Summary of key takeaways and overall dialogue achievements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where expectations met - What was your most insightful session? - If we were to do this, what would you want us to do differently 	Tapiwa
15:00 - 15:15	Closing Remarks		Karen

Annex 2: Workshop Attendance

#	Name	M/F	Youth (Y/N)	Organization Name
1	Tafadzwa Gutsa	M	Y	Nature Day
2	Nancy Dzviti	F	Y	Corryton Farm
3	Trust Mandizvidza	M	N	
4	Ashleigh Makore	F	Y	My Trees Trust
5	Takudzwa Mashakwe	M	Y	Green Impact Trust
6	Tatenda Malunga	M	Y	Pamumvuri Trust
7	Ian Munyanga	M	N	Great Zimbabwe University
8	Tanya Rukasha	F	Y	MUAS
9	Lovemore Musemwa	M	Y	BUSE
10	Vincent Munyati	M	N	BUSE
11	Jennyffer Makusha	F	Y	CHASHI FOODS
12	Simon Magama	M	Y	Maga Fert
13	Siphiwe Zabala	M	N	Maga Fert
14	Njabulo Dubazana	M	N	Maga Fert
15	Anoda Matendawafa	M	Y	Mnandi
16	Nyasha Nyabawa	F	Y	Pamumvuri Trust
17	Clophas Ncube	M	N	FAO
18	Daud Taranhike	M	N	Integral Kumusha
19	Walter Svinurai	M	N	MUAS
20	Kristin Davis	F	N	IFPRI
21	Ojong Enokenwa Baa	F	N	IWMI
22	Isaiah Nyagumbo	M	N	CIMMYT
23	Karen Nortje	F	N	IWMI
24	Lisa Chitura	F	Y	ZELA
25	Verengai Mabika	M	N	DRI Africa
26	Tapiwa Mukwashi	M	N	DRI Africa
27	Seipati Mokhena	F	Y	IWMI
28	Mitchel Gwatimba	F	N	Tzoro Greenfields
29	Chiedza Mahovo	F	N	

Annex 3: Semi Structured Interview Questionnaire

Category	Questions
Private Companies	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What specific challenges or barriers do you see young people facing when entering the agricultural sector, particularly in terms of entrepreneurship and business development?2. Are there specific skill sets or training programs that you believe are crucial for youth to succeed in agribusiness?3. Are there opportunities for partnerships between your company and NGOs to promote agricultural entrepreneurship among young people?4. What are the potential business opportunities within the agriculture value chain that could be particularly attractive to youth entrepreneurs?5. What incentives or support mechanisms do you think should be created or provided to attract more youth to pursue careers in agriculture?
Non-Governmental Organizations	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What are some of the common challenges or barriers that young entrepreneurs in agriculture face, and how does your program work to address these challenges?2. How does your program tailor its support to address challenges faced by young people entering the agricultural industry?3. How do you assist young entrepreneurs in accessing funding or investment opportunities for their agricultural ventures?4. What lessons has your organization learned or best practices from working with youth entrepreneurs in agribusiness, including any successful strategies for overcoming common barriers to entry or growth?

Annex 4: Validation Guideline

Workshop: Work Package 5, Ukama Ustawi, 16 November 2022, Bronte Garden Hotel, Harare, Zimbabwe

Report prepared by: Kristin Davis (IFPRI), Abiyot Anbacha (IRRI), Ojongetakah Enokenwa (IWMI)

Purpose and Objectives:

1. Is the purpose of the workshop – reflected in section 1.2.1 of the report adequately addressed in the report?

Content and Discussion:

1. Does the report provide a detailed summary of the discussion outcomes? i.e:
Identify key stakeholders in agribusiness in Zimbabwe.
Discuss bottlenecks and opportunities for more inclusive agribusiness in Zimbabwe.
2. Do the key issues highlighted capture accurately the situation of youth and women in agripreneurship in Zimbabwe? Are there any gaps or limitations in the recommendations presented?

Outcomes and Recommendations:

1. Does the report clearly outline the recommendations for engaging youth and women?
2. Are the recommendations feasible, actionable, and relevant for youth in agripreneurship?

Stakeholder Feedback:

1. Are diverse perspectives and opinions represented?
2. Are there any notable concerns or challenges raised by participants?

Annex 5: Validation Discussion Summary

1. Group# : _____
2. Group Members Names:

#	Name	Organization
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		

3. Three positive highlights

4. Two negative highlights

5. What emerging opportunities have you identified

6. Group Conclusion

Annex 6: Participants' guideline to brainstorm overarching interventions

CAPACITY	RESOURCES	RISKS AND CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What approaches can be employed to mentor and coach the youth in agribusiness successfully? ● How can we enhance the technical capacity of the youth in agriculture? ● Are there other capacity-building aspects we need to consider? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What interventions can be employed for the youth to access finance? ● Since the youth have limited access to land, is it a productive asset in youth agripreneurship? What can be done to address this challenge? ● Proposed initiatives to enhance access to equipment by the youth. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What risks should be anticipated in the youth agripreneurship project? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How can these risks be mitigated? - What activities should be considered to make the youth agripreneurship program gender transformative? - How can we address climate change issues in the youth agripreneurship program? ● -What technologies/digital innovation can we consider and how can this bring change for young people? ● - How can nutrition be integrated into the youth agripreneurship project?

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