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**Becoming a Young Farmer in Rwanda:
Aspirations, Pathways and Challenges**

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Disclaimer:

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the International Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

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Contents

<i>List of Tables</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>List of Maps</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>List of Appendices</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>List of Acronyms</i>	<i>v</i>
Acknowledgement	vi
Abstract	vii
Chapter 1. Introduction	1
1.1. Nature of the problem	1
1.2. Research Objectives	2
1.3. Research questions	2
1.4. Research Methodology	3
1.5. Scope and Limitation	5
1.6. Ethical Consideration	6
1.7. Positionality	6
Chapter 2 . Conceptual Framework	7
2.1. Understanding pathways to becoming a young farmer	7
2.2. Understanding aspiration	8
2.2. Who is Youth?	9
2.3. Understanding Generation	10
2.4. Conclusion	10
Chapter 3 . Context: Understanding Bugesera District	11
3.1. Young people and access to farming land	14
3.2. Conclusion	17
Chapter 4 . Empirical Observations on Pathways to Becoming Young Farmers	18
4.2. How are the Aspirations to Become the Young farmers get shaped?	19
4.3. Class and Gender differences in Becoming a Young farmer	21
4.5. Becoming a Successful Young farmer	23
Chapter 5 . Supporting Farming Futures for Young People in Rwanda	26
5.1. The Role of NGOs and Public Institutions	26
5.1.1. Role of NGOs and the government to support young farmers	26
5.2. Support young farmers to ensure their future in agriculture	28
Chapter 6 . Conclusion	31
References	32

List of Tables

Table 1.1: Characteristics of research participants/Respondents list	5
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List of Figures

Figure 1: The unemployment rate among youth and adult	12
Figure 2: Main jobs in Bugesera district	13

List of Maps

Map 1: Map showing the location of Bugesera district relatively to Africa and Rwanda	11
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List of Appendices

Appendices 1. semi-structured online interview Questionnaire	32
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List of Acronyms

FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
ISS	Institute of Social Studies
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
RYAF	Rwanda Youth in Agriculture Forum
MINAGRI	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources
GoR	Government of Rwanda
NISR	National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture Development
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
RPHC	Rwanda Population and Housing Census
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organization
NYP	National Youth Policy
RoR	Republic of Rwanda

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Abstract

This study investigates young people's aspirations and pathways towards becoming farmers and the social structures and institutional challenges on their pathways to become successful farmers and ensure their future in agriculture in Rwanda. Focusing on the Bugesera district, the study specifically investigates how access to agricultural resources, such as land, affects young people's success in farming as an occupation and employment source. Using semi-structured online interviews with 12 young people who are currently practising farming, their farming journey and experiences were deeply studied to understand how their aspirations and pathways to become farmers have been shaped. Moreover, how young people use their agency to overcome the constraints they face are also investigated in this study.

Young people's aspirations to become farmers are shaped through doxic logic of aspiration: unquestioned mainstream propaganda transmitted through school, media, and policy and habitus logic of aspiring, constructed by daily life conditions for a given individual's position in a certain social structure. The study found that young people's aspirations tend to emerge and are (re)shaped through a life course, and their pathways to becoming farmers are not smooth; it is a long, non-linear process. For some, aspirations start shaping during their childhood formed through relational processes within a family/household. For others, it is a journey they start later after finishing a certain level of education, such as high school or undergraduate studies. The study also identified the key challenges young people face while establishing themselves as farmers; these include access to land and agricultural inputs, poor rural infrastructure including internet access, and lack of farming knowledge and skills. However, young people apply their agency to counter these challenges. Their efforts include farming collectively in groups by pulling resources and sharing farming knowledge on social media platforms. The study suggests that governmental and non-governmental actors engaged in promoting young people's employment in agriculture should focus on addressing the key identified challenges young people face to ensure that young people have a future in agriculture.

Relevance to Development Studies

Often development policies and strategies that aim to address rural young peoples' employment in farming tend to assume young people's aspirations and the pathways they would take. It is important to investigate the role of young people's aspiration to becoming farmers to understand how, why, and when a young person becomes a farmer and the role aspirations play. A deeper understanding of these aspects is critical for effective policy formulation for agriculture futures (Leavy and Smith 2010; Okali and Sumberg 2012; Huijsmans *et al.* 2020). In this regard, empirical studies capturing the aspirations, pathways, and challenges of young people in farming in Rwanda are limited. Therefore, this study contributes to academic and policy debates on youth employment and agriculture in Rwanda and beyond

Keywords

Young people, Farming, Aspirations, Pathways, Challenges, Rwanda

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1. Nature of the problem

Young people constitute a significant proportion of the global population, with high growth rates observed in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) (Bennell 2007; Brooks et al.2013; Rietveld et al.2020). About 1 billion of the world's population between the ages of 15 and 24 live in developing countries, and their share is rising much faster than in developed countries and projected to keep increasing in SSA (Brooks et al 2013; IFAD 2013). One of the reasons for this drastic increase is due to what a former World Bank economist Justin (2012) called 'youth bulge', a phenomenon due to decreased infant mortality rate and high fertility rate observed in developing countries. As a result, young people under 30 years constitute a high percentage of the population (70 percent) in Africa (Justin 2012). Globally, 55 percent of young people live in rural areas, but this figure is as high as 70 percent in SSA and South East Asia. But on the other hand, it has been the case that young people are very mobile; they constantly move from rural to cities to search for job opportunities (Losch 2016; IFAD 2013), and sometimes, they move from urban areas back to rural areas.

As in many developing nations, young people make up a significant proportion of the Rwandan population. According to the 4th Rwanda Population and Housing Census (RPHC4), the population of Rwanda is 10.5 million with 78.7 percent aged between 0-35 years (NISR 2014). The recent figures show that the overall youth population (16-30 years) makes up 26.6 percent of the total population of Rwanda (NISR 2017).

On the other hand, though Africa South of the Sahara has a significantly growing population of young people, it has little job creation in the formal sector, and thus, has a high unemployment rate among young people (Brooks et al.2013; IFAD 2013). Thus, young people's employment seems to be a persistent and peculiar challenge in Africa (Lorsh 2016; Stokke 2019). Likewise, in Rwanda, unemployment continues to be a challenge for young people (FAO 2020). The recent 2019 National Labour Force Survey reveals increased unemployment among young people (16-30 ages) from 18.2 percent in May 2019 to 20.6 percent in August 2019, while the unemployment rate among adults (31+ ages) remained 12.5 in that period, thereby confirms that young people's unemployment is higher than adult unemployment (White 2020). The same survey shows that 35.7 percent of young people (16-30 years old) in 2019 were neither in employment nor in school (NISR 2019). Moreover, the rate of employment per population in urban and rural areas of Rwanda shows that in urban areas, employment increased by 1.8 percent, while in rural areas, employment has decreased by 2.8 percent (NISR 2019). These figures show that jobseekers from rural areas have low opportunities than urban jobseekers; thus, educated young people from rural areas looking for white-collar jobs are mostly the ones exposed to unemployment (NISR 2019), which on the other hand justify one of the reasons why rural young people tend to migrate to urban areas expecting to secure white-collar jobs.

Therefore, the high unemployment figures reveal great demand for job creation to accommodate young people seeking employment and to avoid the country's 'demographic time bomb': an adverse effect of 'youth bulge' that can result in social and political instability caused by frustrated unemployed young people ¹(Justin 2012). Due to the limited availability of white-collar jobs, agriculture was thought as a sector that has the potential to employ many young people in Africa as it is still the largest source of employment and livelihood in Africa (IFAD 2013; Bayisenge 2019; Leavy et al. 2014; Maura 2017; White 2020).

¹<https://blogs-worldbank-org.eur.idm.oclc.org/developmenttalk/youth-bulge-a-demographic-dividend-or-a-demographic-bomb-in-developing-countries>

But there is a narrative that young people, especially the educated are not interested in agriculture, that they desire only the white-collar jobs (Bennell 2007; White 2012; Proctor and Lucchesi 2012; Leavy 2010; Leavy et al.2014; Mabiso et al.2019). For example, in 2013, African states' agriculture ministers gathered in Accra/Ghana to discuss young people and farming, they said that young people are not interested in farming; thus, agriculture must be made more attractive to young people through technology, training, communication and information and shifting from subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture(IFAD 2013). On the contrary, there is another narrative that even if young people are interested in farming, they face major challenges, including access to land and capital, farming knowledge and downgraded rural life (Jama and Pizarro 2008; White 2015; Stokke 2019).

Moreover, some scholars claim that educated young people are reluctant to go into farming and tend to wait until they get white-collar jobs suited to what they have studied (Sumberg 2012; Biriwasha 2012; Mwaura 2017). Thus, there have been different initiatives in Rwanda, such as 'farming is cool' initiative that aims to motivate and enhance young people's involvement in agriculture. But attracting young people into farming is not sufficient for resolving the challenges young people face while trying to establish themselves as farmers (White 2020). The efforts towards attracting and enhancing young people's involvement in farming as well as ensuring their success in farming may have been hampered by the "lack of theoretically and historically informed, conceptually sound and context-sensitive research informing the policy framing and responses" (Sumberg et al.2012:1). Thus, this study examines how and what shapes the pathways and aspirations of young people to become farmers and the challenges they face while trying to establish themselves as farmers, how they use their agency to try to find solutions to those challenges and the solutions young people believe public policies and developmental organizations could help to create.

1.2. Research Objectives

The main objective of this research is to examine and understand the pathways young people take to become farmers and the challenges young people face while trying to establish themselves as next generation of farmers in Rwanda, through the case study of Bugesera district, Eastern Province.

1.3. Research questions

The following is the main research question that this study seeks to answer: How and what shapes the pathways and aspirations of young people to become farmers in Rwanda, and what are the challenges they face in establishing themselves as farmers?

Sub-questions.

- 1.How do the pathways to becoming a farmer for young people differ and what shape their aspiration to become farmers?
2. In what ways do access to agricultural resources affect the pathways of young people becoming farmers?
3. What are the challenges young people face in establishing themselves as farmers, and how do they apply their agency to resolve those challenges?

1.4. Research Methodology

This study applies a qualitative approach, “an approach to research highly reliant on qualitative data (words, images, experiences and observations) that are not quantified” (O’Leary 2017:142). This study opted to use a qualitative approach for two main reasons. First, the qualitative approach helps to deeply understand the journey of becoming a young farmer in Rwanda by studying the experiences of young farmers in Rwanda, particularly the perspectives of educated young farmers from the Bugesera District. Second, the study was undertaken including the collection of primary field data took place during the challenging period of the COVID-19 pandemic, and, in such contexts, a qualitative approach enables to collect information from a small number of participants focusing on their experiences, thoughts and feelings rather than conducting quantitative surveys that often involve a large number of participants. By limiting the number of participants and allowing for more in-depth discussions with those included study participants, the qualitative approach helped minimize the COVID-19 related health risks for both research participants and the researcher (research assistant in this case).

In studying young people’s pathways and aspirations to becoming farmers, qualitative data was collected through semi-structured online interviews focusing on their childhood, education, career choices and employment experiences. The interviewees were selected using quota sampling, picking participants according to pre-defined criteria to cover a wide range of youth experiences that answer the research questions; however, the sample is not statistically representative (Mack 2005; O’Leary 2017). Thus, a total of 12 young people (16-30 years) educated at least at high school level (12 years) was selected comprising of 6 boys and 6 girls from different social class (high income, middle income and low-income family) from the Bugesera district. Moreover, the participants selected were the ones who are already doing farming. Because of the COVID-19 related travel restrictions, the researcher could not travel to the research sites to conduct the data collection in person; instead, the primary data collection was done through the help of a research assistant who was already in the study sites.

Due to the limited time available for the research, the research assistant relied on the network he has with young farmers to select the participants, and, in turn, the participants interviewed were asked to refer to other young farmers whom they thought meet the study criteria for who can be interviewed. Thus, four participants interviewed recommended the other six participants who were also interviewed. An equal number of male and female young people were interviewed to ensure gender balance and capture differentiated gender experiences in becoming young farmers and understanding their pathways. Differences in social classes were considered while selecting the participants to understand if their pathways to becoming a farmer for young people from middle income are different from young people from low-income social class. Moreover, apart from young people, the district officer in charge of youth affairs and two representatives from the NGOs, namely Help a Child and One Acre Fund, were interviewed. Help a child is an organization working in 3 districts of Rwanda where it is carrying out child-centred community development programs, and youth employment is one of its core thematic areas. Therefore, Help a Child was selected as a local non-governmental organization empowering young people to prepare them for decent work opportunities including supporting the youth to engage in agriculture as an income-generating opportunity.² Whereas One Acre fund, which is an international organization working in Bugesera district where it is supporting farmers by providing training and inputs, was

² <https://www.helpachild.org/explore-help-a-child/where-we-work/rwanda/youth-employment/>

selected as an international organization that trains young people to seize the agricultural opportunity and play a role in increasing agricultural production in Bugesera district.³

Therefore, through these organizations, information on how non-governmental organizations support young people throughout the journey to becoming young farmers and promoting the creation of young people's opportunity in agriculture was collected. The district officer in charge is an officer who is in charge of youth development; thus, he was interviewed to find out whether and how the district supports young people's involvement in agriculture. Whereas district agronomist is responsible for agriculture development in the district; therefore, he was also interviewed to gather information on how the district involves young people in agriculture policies and practices.

Also, two representatives from young people's farming networks (RYAF: Rwanda Youth in Agricultural Forum and YAN: Youth Agriculture Network) were interviewed. These two young people's farming networks are made of more than 1000 young people who are engaged in farming at different value chain stages (production, extension, marketing, processing and trading) united together to find solutions to the challenges they face in the agriculture value chain. Therefore, to find out the challenges young people face while trying to establish themselves as farmers and how they apply their agency to resolve those challenges, the interviews with the representatives of these two young farmer's networks were crucial.

Moreover, to find out how policies concerning young people reflect their perspectives toward employment and farming, a detailed review of the available literature on the situation of youth employment and farming, policies and regulations, including laws and official documents, was compiled and reviewed critically.

The data collection, which was undertaken between June and September 2020, was constrained by COVID-19, a global pandemic that spread-out across the world, limiting movement and personal contacts. Because of travel restrictions associated with the pandemic during that period the researcher could not personally go to the field to collect data. As already noted earlier, the data collection was, therefore, facilitated by a research assistant who was in the study areas. The research assistant was selected based on the already established connection between the researcher and research assistant. They worked together on the same project between 2017- 2019, which helped reconnect easily. And the research assistant is someone with good knowledge and experience in facilitating data collection and communication, and he has a good knowledge of the communities where the research was undertaken. The research assistant's responsibilities were selecting the interviewees and coordinating the communication between the interviewees and the researcher. During the data collection, the research assistant had to observe all COVID-19 measures put in place by the government of Rwanda, including keeping social distancing and using face masks. Thus, the research assistant communicated with participants only using telephone and met with a few of the key informants who could not be contacted online by observing the COVID-19 measures. As per a contract between the researcher and the research assistant, the research assistant was paid for the activities he conducted during data collection and his transport expenses were covered by the researcher.

For data analysis, the audio-recorded qualitative data were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis and narrative descriptions, including the use of verbatim, as appropriate. The results of the study were arranged around themes identified based on the review of the literature together with the new ones that emerge through the data collection and transcription processes.

³ <https://oneacrefund.org/>

Table 1.1: Characteristics of research participants/Respondents list

	Pseudonyms	Age	Gender	Occupation
1	Sylvia	23	Female	Farming/Office job
2	Philimine	22	Male	Farming
3	Paola	24	Female	Farming
4	Manzi	28	Male	Farming
5	Desire	26	Male	Farming/student
6	Rosalie	29	Female	Farmer
7	Nziza	24	Female	Farmer/student
8	Aurore	22	Female	Farmer/accountant
9	Patrick	27	Male	Farmer
10	Canisius	29 27	Male	Farming
	Key informants - Young farmers network			
11	Alcade	29	Male	A farmer/Youth in agriculture network coordinator
12	Ishimwe	27	Male	Farmer/Youth Network coordinator
	Key informants-Ngos			
1	Mary		Female	One-acre fund
2	Bosco		Male	Help a child
	Key informants- Government officials			
1	Paul		Male	District agronomist
2	Peter		Male	District officer in Charge of Youth

1.5. Scope and Limitation

This research focuses on generating knowledge on how young people (educated young people currently in school and those out of school) become farmers by studying the pathways towards becoming farmers and how farming aspiration are shaped. Moreover, this research also reveals the constraints young people face while trying to become the next generation of young farmers.

This study answers questions such as how young people become farmers, what and how the aspirations of young people towards farming are shaped? In which ways do young people access agricultural resources and capital, and how does it affect their path to become the next generation of young farmers, and how young peoples' success in farming could be achieved?

Since this study was conducted during the unusual period of COVID-19, the collection of primary data was constrained by the current COVID-19 measures. The researcher could not travel from the Netherlands to Rwanda to collect field data himself.

Therefore, to collect the field data, online semi-structured interviews were conducted using online tools such as Skype, WhatsApp and Facebook. The online interviews had limited the ability to reach the respondents who did not have access to those technological tools. And also, this may have limited the opportunity to build a good rapport with the respondents and to interpret their body languages. Thus, to reduce these limitations, the researcher interviewed a small number of interviewees that allowed online interviews more than once with the same informants to build rapport and trust with respondents. And to reach the respondents who did not have access to technological tools such as smartphones, the research assistant facilitated by reaching them in person and mediating the communication between respondents and researcher by observing the current COVID-19 restriction measures (social distancing and using of face masks).

1.6. Ethical Consideration

During the fieldwork, ISS research ethical guidelines were followed, including securing informed consent and protecting the safety and security of research participants. In this regard, the respondents were formally approached and explained to the purpose of the research stating that the data collected from them will only be used for a research paper to be submitted as a fulfilment of a Master's degree program at the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) of Erasmus University Rotterdam. The respondents contributed voluntarily, and their consent was sought before recording the interviews. Anonymity was kept to safeguard the participants from any probable harm that could result from taking part in this research. Some participants had explicitly expressed their willingness to use their last name in this research; however, as the researcher would like to avoid any unforeseen potential problem, pseudonyms were used for all participants.

1.7. Positionality

I am 28 years young man born in a rural area and later moved to a city and come back to a rural area to work on the different agricultural project with farmers' community. This research theme was triggered by my passion for community and young people's development. Thus, being exposed to the young people studies by professor Ben White and agrarian studies with different professors from AFES, I opted to search on young people 'pathways towards becoming young farmers to understand how young people become farmers and the challenges they face while trying to set up their farm. Hoping to voice up their challenges so that different stakeholders involved in supporting young people's success in agricultural and youth employment can get information to rely on.

Chapter 2 . Conceptual Framework

2.1. Understanding pathways to becoming a young farmer

Pathways concept has been used in research focusing to understand different pathways people take to get the means of livelihood. Thus, some scholars like Scoones (1998) have defined livelihood pathways. Scoones (1998:153) indicated that livelihood pathways are “the result of a series of livelihood choices over time, which entail both the result of a set of conscious and planned choices or the unintended consequences of those of external influences”. This concept involves the implicit meaning of a ‘free-willed’ person who can control his or her own life (Rietveld et al.2020). This study builds on this concept to understand the pathways that are taken by young people to become young farmers.

Among young farmers who are already involved in farming, there is a distinction that is necessary to make between those young farmers with a farming background who take over their parents farms (*continuers*) and those who do not possess farming background but find their pathway into farming (*newcomers*). Moreover, a distinction also should be made between those who directly took over family farm (*early continuers*) and those who first leave their family farm to engage in another work in a village or urban areas and return late to farming for various reasons(*late continuous*)(Rietveld *et al.* 2020).

The study by Korzenszky and McGreevy, Kobayashi, and Tanaka focuses on the entry of newcomers into farming revealed five different pathways into farming. First, *Heritage* pathways involving children with a family farming background and divided into two groups: those who get directly involved in farming after school and those who have been away in urban and return later to engage with family farming (farm their family land)(*U-turners*), mostly practising pluriactive farming lifestyle. Second, *non-heritage* pathways which comprise 3 different groups,1) *early converters* who join agriculture school (college or university) after high school and later got employment into farm enterprises, 2) *Entrepreneurial I-turned*, those who involve into farming after establishing a career in another field, those mostly acquire farming knowledge through self-taught or through training, 3) *lifestyle I-turners*, which is a group of young farmers possessing land less than 1 hectare, who acquired knowledge through self-taught aiming to provide their family with safe organic food (Cassidy et al. 2019). Cassidy et al. (2019) argue that young people *non-heritage* farmers hurdle to accessing land as the old farm owners are reluctant to sell their land, thus, *new-comers* can mostly access land through renting. These five pathways to farming are used in this study to understand which pathways young people take to become young farmers.

However, a distinction should be made between those young people involved in farming as their dream career and those who simply ended up becoming farmers in their life trajectories. Thus, to differentiate those two groups the concepts of aspiration that is detailed in the next section has opted.

2.2. Understanding aspiration

In development discourses, a narrative that someone's aspiration contributes to the attainable future has triggered emergent research in recent decades focusing on investigating young people's aspirations with the belief that aspirations inform what someone will achieve and do as a career (Zipin et al.2015). On the other hand, there is also a narrative of young people's failure to achieve a decent future as a result of 'lack of aspiration'. Most specifically, poverty and unemployment of young people from low economic status are attached to what is called 'lack of aspiration' (Appadurai 2004). Therefore, different states from developing countries and developmental organizations believe that raising young people's aspirations towards viable futures will contribute to their success (Johnson and Tonkiss 2002; Scalmer 2005 in Zipin et al.2015). Thus, various literature has been used in this section to understand what aspiration is and how aspirations are formed?

The term aspiration is widely used in academic and policy discourses with different definitions but similar meaning. Aspiration as motivation in someone's mental desire (e.g. Anderson et al.1980; Anderson and Vervoorn 1983 in Zipin et al.2015). A cognitive schematic of a desirable future (Bossenbroek et al.2015 in White 2020), or various forms of young people's imagined futures (White 2020). Others also define aspirations as life dreams, future expectations and goals(Quaglia, R.J. and Cobb, C.D., 1996). Enormous contemporary literature such as Appadurai 2004; Zipin et al., 2015; DeJaeghere, 2018; Stahl et al., 2019a have used Pierre Bourdieu's concepts to conceptualize aspiration. The latter one gives the analytical and theoretical framework of aspiration based on the two underlying logics for aspiring: *doxic logic* and *habituated logic*.

Zipin et al.(2015), based on the work of Bourdieu, Appadurai and Williams, argue that the two types of logic tend to be prominent in narratives. First, *doxic* logic of aspiring, which are formed by unquestioned mainstream propaganda, propagates through media (mass media and social media) and policies. "The doxic logic then universalizes the social construction of perspective and values, such as those who failed to achieve success as the result of a deficit, lack of aspiration or talent" (Lungkang, 2018:12). But, that narrative might affect someone's attempt to pursue a specific aspiration as it ignores social and economic inequality. For example, when a child from a low economic status family tries to pursue higher education to secure a better job in the future, but later fails to pursue higher education due to lack of school fees, he/she might think it is because of her/his low intellect or lack of talent.

Second is the *habitual* logic, "*grounded in biographic-historical conditions*" (Zipin et al. 2015:232). The concept of habitual logic comes from the term *habitus*, which means "a system of cognitive and motivating structures" (Bourdieu 1990:53 as quoted in Zipin et al.(2015:234). *Habitus* aspirations are those constructed by daily life conditions for a given individual position in a certain social-structure and "embody the possibilities within limits of a given social-structural position" making young people eliminate the possibilities of some futures thinking are not for young people like them (Bourdieu 1990a in Zipin et al.2015, Huijsmans et al.2020:5) . "It is often expressed through the self-limitation of the future possibilities, by calculating or estimating the probable futures that accentuate their given social-structural positions"(Lungkang, 2018:13).

Therefore, the concepts of aspirations and how they are formed serve as a lens to analyse how aspirations shape young people's pathways towards farming and, in turn, how pathways of becoming young farmers are constrained by different economic, social-cultural and political conditions, as argued by Zipin et al.(2015) and White(2020). In most cases, the realization of young people's aspirations is hindered by lived experiences and structural barriers; thus,

the simple narrative that raising aspiration will bring young people's life success is questionable (Zipin et al. 2015, White 2020). According to Zipin et al. (2015: 228):

discursive incitements to overcome obstacles through raising aspirations increase rather than attenuate obstacles by operating ideologically to simplify the complexities and mute the severities of historic conditions in which young people in underclass and working–middle-class positions struggle to imagine and pursue futures.

Therefore, as one of the main objectives of this study is to understand how aspiration plays a role in young people's path towards agriculture, to achieve this objective, Bourdieu framework of analysing aspirations is applied in Chapter 4 to differentiate between the *doxic* logic of aspiration and *habitus* aspiration. As argued by Huijsmans et al. (2020), to understand the process of becoming a young farmer, it is crucial to know the role of aspirations.

2.2. Who is Youth?

Young people/youth are variously defined across international organizations, countries and disciplines. It is a socially constructed concept and has evolved, depending on political, economic and socio-cultural contexts (White 2011; Huijsmans 2016). It can mean a life phase based on age (Huijsmans 2014). For the United Nations, youth is an individual aged between 15 and 24. The 2007 World Development Report on youth expands the definition of youth to include all young people aged between 12 and 24⁴. African Youth Charter expands further the upper bound age ranges and defines youth as individuals between 15 and 35 years of age. In Rwanda, youth was defined as a population aged 14 to 35 years until the new National Youth Policy (NYP) of November 2015 officially revised youth age groups and defined youth as people aged 16 to 30 years (RoR 2015). Nevertheless, the youth are non-homogeneous groups; some are educated, uneducated, male, female, rural and urban, from different social classes, cast and ethnicities (Sumberg 2012; Huijsmans 2014). And sometimes, it is understood as a transitional phase in the life course (Glover and Sumberg 2020). For the state and development organizations, youth is considered as a key period to form, transform and shape the values, behaviours and habits of young people (Huijsmans 2016; IFAD 2013). But young people are not an inactive group; they exercise their agency to shape their lives (Bell and Payne 2009).

Differentiated young people are affected differently by emergent economic, socio-cultural and political changes in different spheres of life (Huijsmans 2014). For example, a young male from a middle-income family and a young female from a lower-income land-holding family are differently affected by land reform (Huijsmans 2014). Moreover, two young people from the same social class with a different gender are also affected differently, and their experiences and opportunities are highly gendered. Therefore, it is important to apply a gender lens while studying the embeddedness of young people in a given social structure (Sumberg 2012; Huijsmans 2016). In the case of Rwanda, gender and social classes are applicable, but cast as a marker of social identity is not applicable. Therefore, youth as a category of young people (16-30 years old) was applied in this study to carefully explore the experiences of those educated young people within this age category and from low economic income class who are involved in farming and those interested in getting into agriculture. Moreover, the concept of youth was applied to differentiate young people from older people who are in the same social structure and to take into consideration their differentiated experience.

⁴<http://documents1.worldbank.org/eur/idm.oclc.org/crated/en/556251468128407787/pdf/359990WDR0complete.pdf>

As will be shown later in chapter 4, the social relationships between young people and older people that shape young people's differentiated life experiences on accessing agricultural resources will be analyzed using the concept of generation discussed in the following section.

2.3. Understanding Generation

The terms young generation and old generation are often used in daily life to mean people born during the same age regime, to refer to people from the same age category, for example, 25-30 years, with a similar life-course status (Lungkang 2018; White 2020). Besides its application in everyday life, the concept of a generation has received significant attention in academic literature with various definitions. The concept of generation could take a meaning of "generation as an identity," in which a group identifies and defines itself in terms of common experience (Mannheim 1952 in Berckmoes 2016:2; Huijsmans 2016); generation as a social relationship between young people and adults (Alanen 2001 in Berckmoes 2016:2), and could also mean the relationship between parent and child in a kinship descent (Huijsmans 2016). In short, it denotes social relationships between individuals and groups based primarily on age or their life course status (White 2020: 140). The concept of generation helps to understand how society is structured based on age groups and how that can affect the process of change and continuity in society (Thorne 2004). And also, generation concept is useful in this study to locate the position of young people in a larger social structure in society (Huijsmans 2014). Moreover, it is important to bring in the intersectionality of gender, generation and class to understand young people as a social category and their experiences (Park et al. 2017).

Young people's experience, daily struggles, intersection with gender struggle, 'generational struggle' and social class play a role in shaping their future life aspirations. Therefore, combining the notion of aspiration and generation this research sets out to understand how the aspiration of young people (from 16-30 ages identifying themselves as young generation vis-à-vis the adults' generation) towards farming are shaped and the role of aspirations in young people's path to becoming farmers.

2.4. Conclusion

The concepts mentioned above serve as conceptual guides for this study. Pathways concepts help to understand the different ways young people take to becoming farmers in Rwanda. It is also important to mention that among young people who become farmers some aspired to become farmers as their career since their childhood while others find their way into farming later while searching for a means of living or employment, what White (2020) classifies it becoming a farmer as a last resort. The concept of aspirations was opted to understand how the interests and motivations towards farming of the 12 interviewed young people have been shaped and contribute to young people's path to becoming farmers. Here key moments have been taken into consideration, including childhood farming memories, high school and university memories. These key moments are part of the life-trajectory young people pass through while interacting in a social-structure and institutions that shape or constrain their aspiration (Bayisenge 2016).

While the concept of youth helps to differentiate young people (between 16-30 ages) who are the target group of this study from others (children, adults and old people), the concepts of generation serve to situate young people in a wider social structure in society.

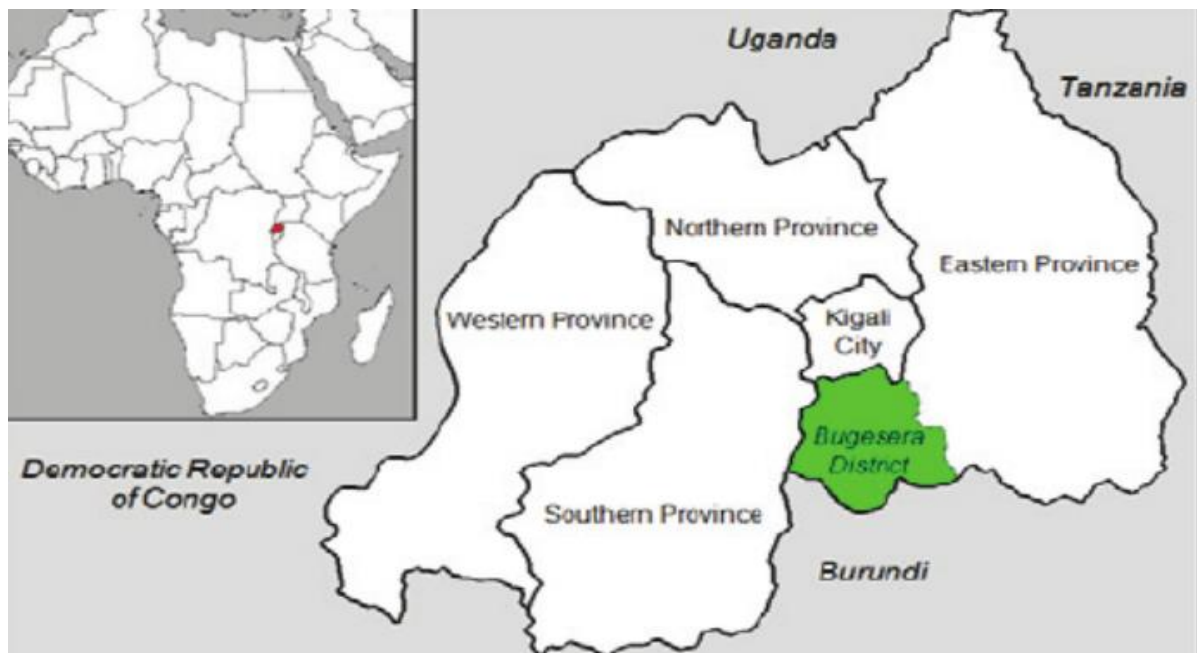
Chapter 3 . Context: Understanding Bugesera District

Before talking about how young people become farmers in the Bugesera district, it is very important to understand the context of the field of study historically, contemporarily, its geographical position, administration and its agriculture situation. Thus, to understand the Bugesera context, we first present the Rwanda Setting and narrow it down to the Bugesera district setting.

Rwanda is a country located in the Eastern part of Africa, small and densely populated. It has 24,670 sq. km of the total land and 525 per km² of the population density (NISR 2019; Bayisenge 2015). Historically It has been colonized by Germany and Belgium consecutively until 1962. It is a country characterized by agriculture as the main activity practised by 70 percent of the population and is 47.7 percent of the total land is under agriculture (NISR 2017). Moreover, Rwanda is known to be a young country because of his young population. Out of 12 million of the total population, 26.6 are young people between 16-30 ages, which is a category considered to be the youth according to recent National Youth Policy (RoR 2015; NISR 2019).

Bugesera district which is the field of study is one of 30 districts of Rwanda, located in Eastern part of Rwanda at 30 km from the capital city (Kigali). It is mostly a rural district, though it has some peri-urban parts vicinity to Kigali city. Moreover, Bugesera is characterized by a young population, educated, and agriculture is the main activity for subsistence and income generation, 76 percent of the population aged 16 and above practice agriculture (NISR 2014; Niyitulinda 2018). Out of 391,000 total population, 65 percent are young people between 16-30 ages, among them, 80 percent have had the opportunity to attend at least 12 years education which is termed 12 years basic education in Rwanda (NISR 2019).

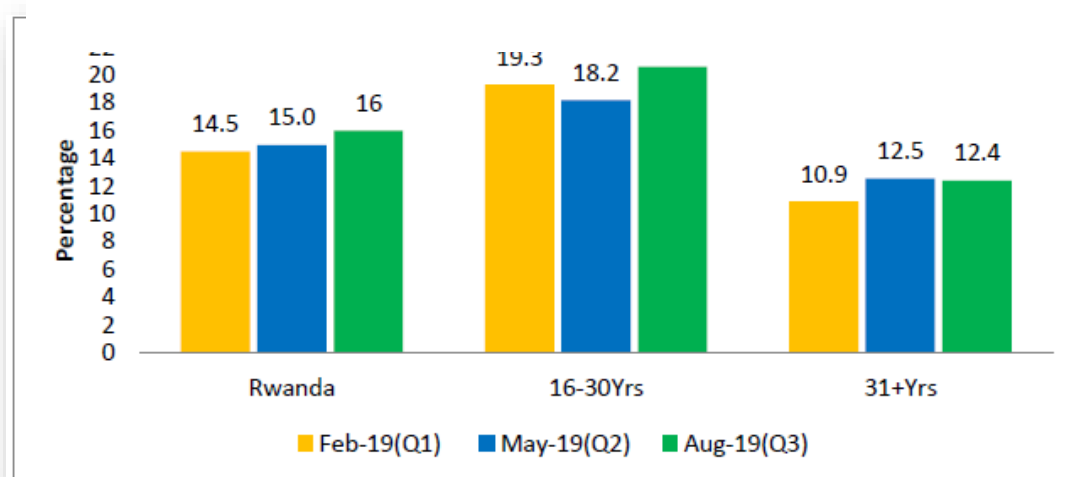
Map 1: Map showing the location of Bugesera district relatively to Africa and Rwanda



Source: Bugesera district

The increasing number of young people who are ready labour show the increasing demand of employment among young people. The following data clearly explain the situation of young people unemployment in Bugesera District.

Figure 1: The unemployment rate among youth and adult



Source: National Institute of Rwanda (NISR), Labour Force Survey (LFS)

Figure 2 shows the trend in the unemployment rate among youth and adults' population in Bugesera district. The results on the figure show a high unemployment rate among young people (16-30 years) compared to old people (31+years) in the year 2019 quarter one, two and three.

Table 1. Share of youth not in employment, education or training by sex and area of residence

Age group		Feb-2019 Q1	May-2019 Q2	August-2019 Q3
16-30 years	Male	26.1	26	27.2
	Female	42	39	43.5
	Urban	25.5	23.5	24.1
	Rural	36.6	35.8	39.2

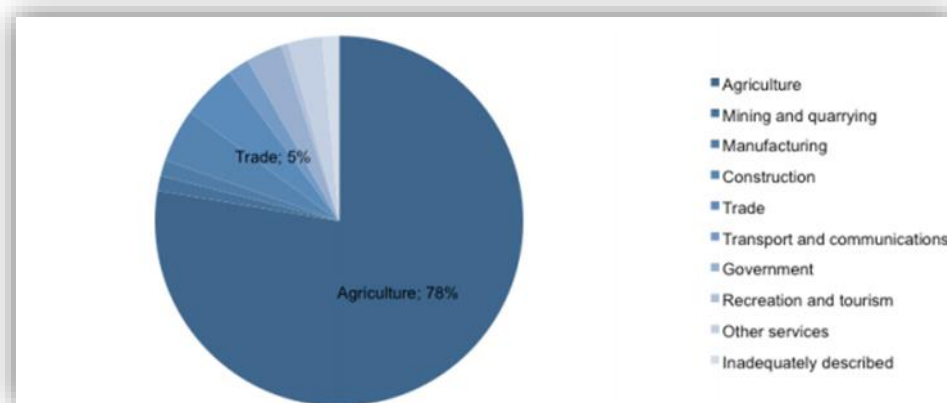
Source: National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda (NISR), Labour force survey (LFS)

Table 1 shows the share of youth not in employment, education and training at a national level. It shows that in 2019 quarter 1, 2 and 3 the number of female young people not in employment, education and training are high than male young people both in urban and rural areas. On other hand, the number of females in rural areas are high than female in urban areas throughout quarter 1, 2 and 3. Moreover, the number of male unemployed, not in education and training is higher in rural areas than in urban places. Generally, the figures in the table

shows in 2019 young people in rural areas were the ones with a high number of unemployment, not in education or training.

Agriculture holds the first place in providing employment in Bugesera district with 78 percent of the population surviving by practicing farming. That could be the reason why some people think agriculture can employ many young people.

Figure 2: Main jobs in Bugesera district



Source: National Institute of Rwanda (NISR), Labour Force Survey (LFS)

As shown by the data above and discussed Bugesera District is experiencing a high unemployment rate among young people and it has the highest unemployment rate among all the other district (NISR 2019). In Bugesera district many young people have acquired 12 years of basic education (80% in 2019) and tertiary education (8 % in 2019). Thus, educated young people hope to get white-collar jobs in line with their education, but they highly outnumber the existing white-collar job opportunity as indicated in table 1, in August 2019, 20 % were not in any employment. And it is believed that the number of educated young people job seekers will keep increasing whereas there are no tangible facts that the job opportunity will increase to meet the young people employment demand (Bayisenge 2016).

Therefore, as the result of white-collar job scarcity and educated young people job seekers increase the government of Rwanda and non-governmental institutions encourage young people to get involved in agriculture with a belief that agriculture has the potential to accommodate a high number of unemployed young people. Thus, different initiatives and programs have been implemented to attract young people into farming, for instance, an Initiative called “agricultural is cool” has been implemented from 2017 to 2019 in Bugesera district to raise awareness of farming opportunities among young people and attract them into farming. That initiative targets the young people between 16-30 ages, some who are still in school and other out of school searching for the job.

During the campaign conducted in implementing that initiative two questions emerged from young people, young people were interested in getting into farming but worried about where get the capital for investment and land ⁵. That concern raised by young people has also influenced this study, that is why in the following section we will explore in which way young people access to land while they are interested in becoming next generation of farmers, how

⁵<https://www.baltoncp.com/rwanda/agribusiness/farming-is-cool-africa>

the challenges of access to land affect the young people interest in becoming farmers. To understand how the public law, provide the right of young people to access land, the land law, matrimonial law will be critically analysed.

3.1. Young people and access to farming land

Young people need resources such as capital for investment and land for farming to set up their farm, but the land is an important asset for young people interested in engaging in farming practice. On the other side, in Rwanda, they have been a continuous change in land law and land institutions which altered access, use and possession of the land. The change in land law and institutions has mostly been triggered by land conflict among family members, parents and children (intergenerational land conflict) and community members (intragenerational land conflict) (Musahara 2005; Leegwater 2015; Bayisenge 2016). Thus, the government decided to reform land law for securing land ownership and peace⁶. Therefore, to improve the security of tenure the land right has been clarified in land laws and all land has been registered.

However, though the land law reform has opted in the interest of all Rwandan people including young people (16-30 years) the continuous land reform has affected young people's access, use and possession of land (Sommers 2012; Bayisenge 2016). And as argued by Wolf (1996:73) in White (2020), "the laws governing the inheritance, the passage of resources and their control from old to young generation are of importance". He also said:

"to understand how young people are included in or excluded from entry into farming, we need first to understand how access to agrarian resources is structured in different societies and also how the intergenerational transfer of these resources is regulated, with or without tensions and contestations" (White 2020:27).

Thus, this section explores historically the reform that has happened in the land tenure system since the pre-colonial period and how it has affected young people's access to land resources. It includes discussion on gender to highlight the gender-based structure exclusion that was in the land tenure system and the change that has happened with the land tenure system to resolve gendered land issues. Moreover, matrimonial property law, a law which govern the family succession, and donation will be analysed to show how it affects the young people's access to family farming land⁷. Therefore, this section will help to understand the current context of intergenerational resources transmission modes in Rwanda. Which is important to understand how young people interested in becoming young farmers get access to land for farming. As argued by Cassidy et al. (2019:222),

"To understand how young people are included in or excluded from entry into farming, we first need to understand the widely differing ways in which access to agrarian resources ("ownership" and "access") is structured and their transfer regulated in different societies with or without contestation"

The Pre-colonial, colonial and after independence periods have been characterised with various land tenure system changes in Rwanda. Before colonization, the land was managed by

⁶ http://www.fao.org/tempref/agl/agll/kageradocs/09strategies_policies/rw_land_reform.pdf

⁷ https://minijust.gov.rw/fileadmin/Law_and_Regulations/Official_Gazette_no_31_of_01.08.2016.pdf

a clan chief who usually owned very big land. The chief had the right to lease land under what was called “ubukonde” and he had also right to give his land to many families under “abagererwa system” (Musahara 2005). During that period a grown-up young man (18 years and above) would have access to land through ‘ubukonde’ system without paying fees (Musahara 2006). But the young female child could not have access to land same as a young male child, as during pre-colonial and colonial period land system was governed by patriarchy structure (Burnet 2003; Musahara 2006, Bayisenge 2016). A “structure with an institutionalized hierarchy of male power over female” (White 2020). And the parent’s inheritance was a vertically male partible line, means inheritance could only flow vertically among male children in the same family (Bayisenge 2016, White 2020).

Later around eighteen century the Germany colonizer reform the land management system. The colonizer took the customary chief’s authority over land and provide colonial administration with a great power to control the land (Musahara 2005). The colonial administration got the right to use and allocate land as they wish. The colonizers took power over land to control and profit from agriculture in the colonies (Musahara 2005; Boudreaux 2009). This colonial appropriation of local people’s land happened in many places under colonial rules as confirmed by (White 2020:26), “in places where the colonizers defeated the local people, they took over power over land and introduce Western concepts of property that legitimize the exploration of land and wealth”. In Rwanda, the colonizers’ land reform has affected both old and young people, no one could have the right to use the land for his chosen crops, the colonizers dictate which crops to farm and mostly cash crops like coffee and tea introduced by the Western under forced labour regime was promoted (Boudreaux 2009). The forced labour regime is defined by Bernstein (2020) in (White 2020:27), “way of recruiting/mobilizing compulsory labour service and organizing it in production or imposition of tribute or tax in kind of land”. The local people were forced to farm Western introduced coffee, tea and other cash crops which were exported by Western colonizers. During that period young people participated as forced labour in colonial farm and they could mix colonial target crops with their crops for subsistence (Bayisenge 2016).

Rwanda got its independence in 1962, after independence, Government released new land tenure “decree No. 09/76 of 04/03/76” related to purchase and sale of traditional land rights on land (GoR 2004). The decree dictated that no one should sell land below two hectares and land should be sold under permission of the Minister in charge of lands (Musahara 2005). This decree gave more power to the government to control land use. But during this period young people could access family land and common village land when interested in farming, but they could not buy land less than two hectares. Later this decree limiting sell of land below two hectares became ineffective as Majorite of the people had land less than 2 hectares (Musahara 2005).

In June 2004, the government of Rwanda decided to again reform land policy with a purpose of resolving the issues of land ownership, tenure and access triggered mostly by land scarcity (Musahara 2006; RoR 2013). With that reform, the land policy was altered and the state took all the power over land as stated in land law, the state has the supreme power over land and the right for land requisition not being used in the ways stipulated in the agriculture policy, land-use masterplans and other government plans ⁸. The citizen could get the right to use land according to the state’s guideline and those who do not follow the state’s guideline could lose right to land use(RoR 2013). Moreover, the new land policy state that “*The minimum surface area of a homestead property should be fixed at 1 hectare for it to be economically*

⁸ <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/Rwa182098.pdf>

profitable” (RoR 2013) and new land law in article 30 prohibits divisions of the agriculture plots if the result of such subdivision leads to parcels of land less than one hectare (RoR 2013). And according to the law majority of land in Rwanda can not be partitioned because rural family farm owns on average 0.72 hectare of farmland (MINAGRI 2015). With this change in land policy and land law, children of a farmer could not access land through partitioning though it has been found that 61% of young people are single and live with their parents and only 21% are regularly employed (Dushimimana 2007). And Dushimimana(2007) asserted that unskilled children need land more for farming when they are not depending on parents for surviving. And he found that there is an increasing demand for land for farming among the youth of 25-30 ages as a fact of many young people get married at that age without other means of income. And one respondent during the Dushimimana (2007) field studies said:

“I came to the commercial centre to look for a job because I have no land to farm and I do not expect to own land because my parent’s land is not sufficient for all the children, besides I have no money to buy one”.

This narrative by one of the young people shows how land is a very important factor for youth aspiring to become farmers. And this young man shares the same feeling and experiences with young people interviewed during field data collection of this research as presented in Chapter 4.

Land policy and law are not the only laws that govern the legal access, use and possession of farming land. As discussed at the start of this section, matrimonial property law is also the important law that dictates the succession and donation of family land between members of a family (wife, husband and children). In 2016 the government of Rwanda reformed the former matrimonial property law n° 22/99 of 12/11/1999 replaced by current law No27/2016 of 08/07/2016. In the former law, the parents were required to give land inheritance to their children when they attain the age of maturity if parents failed to do so; children had the rights to bring the case to court ⁹. In the new law, it is no longer an obligation for parents to give land inheritance (Bayisenge 2016) ¹⁰. Therefore, children of landowners may only get land through either buying land or legacy left by deceased parents. And the parents have the right to sell and lease land without passing it to the next generation or seeking the consent of the children ¹¹(Bayisenge 2016).

Thus, the parents’ right to Sell land may close off the opportunity for the next generation young people of landowners who may want to farm in absence of other livelihood opportunities (White 2020:48). As expressed by one of the young people during Bayisenge (2016) study, he said:

The change in new matrimonial property law is in the interest of the parents and do not do justice to youth’s survival. My parents have land but I do not have right on that land as they are still alive, thus I have to completely struggle for myself to get land for farming.

This narrative confirms Quan’s argument in White (2020:57), he said:

“Limitation in young people’s access to land, land concentration, and land sales and allocation outside the kin group by older generations can become highly problematic where alternative livelihoods are not available and can trigger wider social conflicts. these tensions are further

⁹ <https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/bitstream/handle/2152/5448/2740.pdf>

¹⁰ <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/Rwa175330.pdf>

¹¹ <https://canvas.eur.nl/courses/29746/assignments/86949> author’s own unpublished essay

aggravated by land commodification, as parents have the right to sell, lease land without passing it to next-generation”

3.2. Conclusion

Chapter 3 has presented the context of this study by highlighting national context, and the context of Bugesera district. It has been discussed and shown that the unemployment rate among young people is high in a rural area compared to urban places and the female unemployed number is higher than male unemployed both in rural and urban places. Therefore, agricultural was thought of as a sector that can help create more employment for young people. But, for some people, young people are not interested in farming and for others, they say young people are interested in farming but facing various challenges to access resources such as land while trying to establish their farm. Thus, this chapter discusses important laws and policy that govern the access, use and possession of the land as an important asset for farming. The discussion shows how land policy and land law reform has affected the young people's access, use and possession of farming land. The land law did not provide the right of young people to access land. Moreover, matrimonial property law reform has also been discussed and reveals that the reform has mostly affected the young people's access to land as is indicated in a law parents are not obliged to give land inheritance to their children. Parents have the right to sell and lease land without passing it to the next generation. Thus, some young people think the reformed matrimonial law is in favour of the parents. Also, the study conducted by Bayisenge (2016) has confirmed the effect of this reform. where young people asserted that land is out of their reach. Thus, the next section which will explore the pathways that young people take to become farmers will also present the challenges young people face while trying to access land for farming. Moreover, young people's aspiration to become next generation of young farmers will be discussed, as presented in chapter 2, not all young people find their pathways into agriculture but some young people aspire to become farmers at an early age. Thus, the following section will also look into how young people's aspirations to become farmers are shaped.

Chapter 4 . Empirical Observations on Pathways to Becoming Young Farmers

In 2017, I decided to venture into farming. I then approached two of my friends to discuss the idea of becoming farmers. My friends agreed on the idea, and we put money together, around 4 Million Rwandan Francs(around 4 thousand euros) for investing in agriculture. None of us had the land; thus, we rented two hectares in one village. We were young people living in an urban area and farming in a village, around 150 km from where we lived. We used to go to that village once a week to visit the farm and follow up on farming activities. We hired labour for land preparation, planting and harvesting. We grow potato for two seasons, and the next season we were out of business due to market price fluctuations and bad weather. Due to low rainfall, we harvested very low potatoes, and in that period, the price of potatoes decreased very drastically. Thus, the capital we invested ended like that without return, damaging our hope and efforts in becoming farmers. From this, one could say becoming successful farmers is not a smooth path. There are challenges young people face to become farmers and some of them may end up going out of business the same as the experience of my friends and myself. With this personal note, this chapter discusses the pathways to becoming farmers, looking at the experiences of young people who are currently farmers and the challenges they face. It is a study based on a method followed by Cassidy et al. (2019:224), in which:

“young people themselves talk about their involvement in farming and rural life, give an idea of the great variety in patterns of young people’s involvement in, exclusion from and sometimes aversion to, farming and rural life”.

During the field data collection, we interviewed 12 young people who are already farmers, and in their narratives, two stories stand out shared by most of them. Therefore, we choose the story of Sylvia and Patrick.

Sylvia is a 26-year-old girl who is currently farming. During the interview, she was still in a university studying hospitality and also has a job as an administration officer in one organization. Sylvia recalls her childhood memories when she used to help her mother in farming activities. She said:

I remember since my childhood (when I was 10 years), I used to accompany my mother on our farm and help her to sow seeds. I also had a very small plot on the farm, which I considered it mine, where I could farm my preferred crops. Later, when I grew up, my mother used to send me to the farm to supervise the casual workers. That is how I got to love farming (Interview, 26 July 2020, Bugesera district).

Later in 2014, Sylvia quit the village to study at a university in a city. Before finishing her university courses in 2017, she started growing her crops in a village vicinity to her school but not her family village. During that time, she was constrained by access to good land for farming as she was renting a small plot of land. Later in 2018, she decided to go back to her family village, where she started to farm her family land.

Patrick, interviewed on 27 July 2020 in Bugesera district:

I grow up in this village but I do not remember helping my parents in farming activities during my childhood. What I remember is during my childhood, my dream was to become a physics teacher, and my parents didn't let me have anything to do with farming, but as you see now, I am practising farming though I was not interested in it. In high school I studied physics and mathematics, hoping to get admitted to a science college where I could study physics and later become a teacher. But I did not get the admission to a college of science, but I got admitted to a college of agriculture where I studied crop production. In 2016, I got an opportunity for an agriculture professional internship in Israel, where I earned some money. Getting a job is not an easy thing currently; therefore, I decided to go back to my village, use the money I earned to set up my farm, and help other farmers modernize their farm by giving them advice. I earn some money by selling the crops I grow on my farm.

According to Cassidy et al.(2019), young farmers are categorised into two groups according to their pathways towards becoming farmers. There are those young farmers who come from a family with a farming background (“continuers” who take over their family farms), and those who do not come from a family with a farming background (“newcomers” who found their pathways to farming). They also make a differentiation between “early continuers” (those who directly took over the family farm) and “late continuers” (those who first leave their family to find other jobs and return later to take over the family farm).

Among the young people interviewed, continuers young farmers emerged as the most represented group. And among the continuers group, most of them were found to be late continuers who first find another job and later come back in rural areas to take over family farms or set up their farm. For instance, the case of Sylvia presented above shows a young late continuer farmer who grew up in a rural village, who later went to study in the city and found a job there, but came back to the village to take over the family farm.

As the cases of Sylvia and Patrick suggest, young people's aspirations and pathways into farming are shaped by various factors and highlight “the importance of a life-course perspective in the study of young people's aspirations and they move out of, or into farming” (Cassidy et al. 2019:226).

4.2.How are the Aspirations to Become the Young farmers get shaped?

According to Zipin et al.(2015), there are two different ways of understanding aspiration as discussed in Chapter two. First, the *doxic logic* of aspiring, which are formed by unquestioned mainstream propaganda propagated through media (mass media and social media) and policies. The second one is the *habituated* logic, “grounded in biographic-historical conditions” (Zipin et al.2013:232). And constructed by daily life conditions for a given individual position in a certain social-structure and “embody the possibilities within limits of a given social-structural position” making young people eliminate the possibilities of some futures thinking are not for young people like them (Zipin et al.2015: 231; Huijsmans et al.2020: 5). These two types of aspiring have emerged in narratives of young people interviewed during our field research while investigating what shapes the aspiration of young people towards farming and their pathways to becoming young farmers.

The stories of Sylvia and Patrick's narratives of the pathways they took to become young farmers and how they got inspired to get involved in the farming show some differences and similarities. As for similarities, both Sylvia and Patrick are rural young people whom their

parents were farmers but at their young age Sylvia was allowed by her mother to help with farming activities and she could own her small plot. In contrast, Patrick was not allowed by his parents to help with farming activities, his parents wanted him to only focus on his education. They all studied high school and university.

Sylvia mentioned that she got interested in farming while she was young, whereas Patrick at a young age he was not interested in farming. Sylvia got interested in farming due to her mother who introduced her to farm work while she was still a child. Sylvia's farming aspiration depict the aspiration formed through mother-daughter interaction and confirm what Zipin et al.(2015) called 'habitus aspiration', an aspiration which is formed by daily life conditions in a certain social-structure. It is also confirming Arjun Appadurai(2004) claim that aspirations are formed in an interaction. Whereas, Patrick's interest in getting into farming was triggered by his undergraduate studies. He said:

When I was a child (12-18 years), my dream career was to become a physics professor, just like my high school professor. My parents used to tell me that I have to work hard in high school to get good grades, which would allow me to get admitted to a college of science and technology so that my dream to become a physics professor would become a reality so that I would not be a farmer. But later, I failed the high school state exam, which could have allowed me to the college of science to study physics. As a result, I ended up in a college of agriculture. While studying agriculture, I got interested in farming and decided to become a professional farmer. (Interview with Patrick, 27 July 2020, Bugesera district).

In the above Patrick's narratives, two kinds of aspirations emerged: childhood aspiration to become a teacher and aspiration to become a farmer that Patrick got during his university studies. As argued by Zipin et al.(2015), aspiration can be shaped, reshaped, and transformed at any point in life trajectories, which would, in turn, shape young people's decisions in moving into or moving out of farming.

Patrick's farming aspirations, which he got when he was studying agriculture at the university, exemplifies '*doxic aspiration*', defined as mainstream populist ideology propagated through social channels and mainly reproduced in schools as argued by Zipin et al. (2015) and also discussed in Huijsmans et al.(2020). Whereas Patrick's narrative of childhood aspiration to become a teacher shows how school teachers and the parents direct children away from farming career due to parents' perception of farming as backwards and teachers regarded as an example of successful rural people (Morarji 2010; Huijsmans et al. 2020). Moreover, Patrick's childhood aspiration to become a teacher presents an example of the power of doxic logic shaping young people's aspirations away from farming futures, and the influence parents have on children's farming aspirations.

The case of Patrick depicts an example of parents having the idea that educated children should not go into farming but should get white-collar jobs like becoming a teacher. His case also shows parents wishing their children not to become farmers just like the parents themselves but wish for achieving upward mobility. This case is similar to what Huijsmans et al. (2020) presented on a case of a young man called Rudi from Indonesia mocked by classmates while he was asked by his teacher about his dream career and said he would become a farmer. Thus, Patrick's childhood illustrates how "school as a social space works to direct young people away from farming futures" (Huijsmans et al.2020:8). Moreover, Huijsmans et al. (2020:8) added that "parents also played a role in maintaining the idea of schooling and farming as opposites". Therefore, Patrick's parent wanting him to focus on studies while not

allowing him to take part in farming activities depict the power of a doxic logic in which schooling is regarded as the “pathway out of farming, towards a future of non-manual, salaried employment”(Huijsmans et al.2020:1)

The case of Patrick also holds an example of seemingly vanished childhood aspiration and new aspiration coming up during university studies. Patrick’s dream was to become a physics teacher but became a farmer as his aspirations later got shaped during his time at university.

Here one may ask how and why this childhood aspiration vanished, and new aspiration emerged? Huijsmans et al.(2020) asserted that young people’s aspirations might emerge, transform, or disappear throughout the life-courses. This can be seen in Patrick’s case, which shows the disappearance of childhood aspiration and the emergence of new aspirations later at university.

It is important to analyse how Patrick’s childhood aspirations disappeared to understand what could be the barrier to achieving childhood aspirations. As presented earlier, failure to pass the high school state exam put an end to Patrick’s childhood aspiration of becoming a teacher, and he found himself in a college of agriculture, which he was not initially interested in it. This example shows how institutions like state rules and the policies can hinder someone from realizing his/her aspirations and a new one emerges in the process.

More stories of vanished childhood aspirations like the one of Patrick have emerged during our field research, and participants express how unhappy it was to abandon their childhood aspirations. Moreover, participants described how they blame themselves or their parents for not achieving their childhood aspirations.

For instance, a participant called Manzi said:

“When I was a child, my dream was to become a doctor, but my parents could not afford the fees for a medical school, and I was not genius enough to get a medical state scholarship, so I had to give up on my dream to become a doctor”

Manzi’s narrative shows clearly what Zipin et al.(2015) called the dark side of doxic logic, which causes someone to self-blame for failure. Zipin et al.(2015:7) added that “students and parents from less powerfully positioned families are lured into complicity with the symbolic violence of doxa, seeing themselves on the deficit side of the meritocratic assumption that talent, hard work and focus win the prize”. Instead of recognizing that this failure is due to ‘structure unfairness’ in which people like Manzi and his parents belong to a low economic class that had constrained accessing medical schools.

Overall, the narratives of Sylvia and Patrick show how a family as a social institution influences on shaping one’s aspiration through habitus logic of aspiration. Either aspiration to farming or other careers can be shaped in the family at an early age when a child is interacting with parents and participating in farming activities. Whereas Patrick’s aspiration to become a farmer that emerged when he was in the university shows that aspirations can vanish, and new ones emerge throughout one’s life-course. It also shows the power of schools in shaping someone’s aspiration through Doxa logic of aspiration. Moreover, the story of Patrick shows how someone’s aspiration can be constrained by social structures like state rules and policies.

4.3. Class and Gender differences in Becoming a Young farmer

Rwanda is a country that has highly promoted gender equality, where men and women are given equal opportunity in leadership and other sectors. For instance, in the chamber of

parliament, 61.3% are women¹². In 2016, Rwanda reformed its matrimonial property law No22/99 of 12/11/1999, replaced by current law No27/2016 of 08/07/2016. The former law excludes girl child from inheriting property and from having the right on property such as land, but the new law provides equal inheritance and possession rights to men and women.

Therefore, currently in a household, the wife and the husband have equal rights on family land, and girl child and boy child have equal rights on the inheritance of land in case of parents' death. But the matrimonial law does not provide children with the right to access land or possession while the parents are still alive. When a child is interested in farming, he/she has to struggle to get his/her land, but parents can give access to family land willfully, not by law (Bayisenge 2018).

During our interview, we noted that parents give their children access to land-based on the relationship he/she established with the parents and the feeling they have that a particular child will take care of them at old age. Moreover, class differences also play a role in establishing child-parents early relationships in helping them with farming activities. Girl child seems to establish that relationship at an early age as she is expected to help parents in farming activities, whereas boy child tends to distance himself from farming due to social expectations and the gendered division of labour where a man is expected to earn money through other jobs while a woman is expected to engage in farming.

For instance, as a young girl, Sylvia grew up helping her mother in farming activities before moving to the city to study, and later she came back to her village to farm on the family farm. She got access to the family farm due to the relationships she had already established with her mother while she was a child helping her in farming activities. Moreover, Sylvia, as a girl child, she was expected to help her mother in farming activities from an early age. Whereas Patrick, a young man born in a rural area, does not recall his memory helping his parents with farming, but he was expected to focus on his studies.

Patrick, born in a middle-income family, his parents envisioned a different future for him from farming. As teachers were regarded as people successful in the community, Patrick also was being prepared to become a teacher. The differentiated gendered division of labour and economic status that dictate one's childhood experience was discussed in the existing literature. For example, Bayisenge (2016) argued that the Rwandan society is characterized by differentiated gendered farming experiences, where females are expected to do most of the farming and household activities while males are expected to do wage jobs to gain direct money. And it also confirms Huijsmans et al. (2020) claim that children's restriction to farming practices by the parents are gendered.

As discussed above, Sylvia was expected to help her parents with farming activities, that later enabled her access to the family land since she was expected to take care of her parents. In contrast, Patrick was not expected to help his parents with farming activities but to study hard so that he can take different future careers from farming, thus reduce his chance to access the family farm as his parents were expecting him to become someone, not a farmer, unlike his parents. Therefore, as argued by Cassidy et al. (2019:223) "In looking at these patterns of inheritance we must carefully distinguish "law", "custom" and actual practice, and be aware that all of these may change over time". By matrimonial property law children have no right to inherit property while parents are still alive, but by practical, children like Sylvia inherit land from her parents while they are still alive.

¹² <https://www.statistics.gov.rw/statistical-publications/subject/gender>

4.5. Becoming a Successful Young farmer

During the field research, every participant interviewed showed a desire to become a successful farmer, and they defined success in farming as farming that could give them financial benefits that can meet their daily expenses. On the other side, not all young people who engage in farming become successful, even some of them end up quitting due to the challenges they face on their pathways to become successful farmers. This section discusses some of the challenge's young farmers face.

During the field research, a young farmer named Canisius was interviewed, and he narrated his pathway towards becoming a farmer as follow:

I grew up in a village. My parents are farmers. Later, I went to school in high school, where I studied physics and Mathematics; after that, I joined a college of agriculture where I studied crop production. After graduating, I got an opportunity for an agriculture apprenticeship in Israel. In Israel, I spend one year and managed to save some money. When I returned to my country, I decided to go back to the rural area where I was born to set up my farm. Therefore, I rented a piece of land (2 hectares) that I farm. My family had a big land in the past, but they sold it to help us with education. Currently, they own a small plot of land; they rely on it for their household food production. For me, I want to do a farming business for profit. One of the challenges I face is getting access to big and fertile land because I do not have enough money to buy a big land. The only land I can access is rented land and sometimes is expensive and not fertile. In the first period, I lost my crops due to low land fertility (Interview, 28 July 2020, Bugesera District).

Canisius's narrative, which also reflects the experiences of some other young people illustrating the pathways young people go through to become farmers, shows two important elements. One, Canisius had emigrated to Israel, where he did an apprenticeship and managed to save some money that he invested in farming. Therefore, migration within or outside the country emerged as an opportunity for young people to get financial means and later invest it in farming. Second, though Canisius had managed to get some money to invest in farming, access to land becomes a challenge to him. He has no enough money to buy big land for investment, and his parents are also farmers; he can not take over their farmland, and the rent he can afford to rent is small land and not fertile. This challenge appeared to have affected his success in farming. According to Cassidy et al. (2019), Canisius can be categorised as a *non-heritage, early converter* who join the college of agriculture after high school and later set up his farm. Therefore, he hurdle to access land as old farmers are reluctant to release land to the young farmer.

Another account is from Aurore, a 25 years young girl currently engaged in farming. She narrated:

I was born here in a rural area, grew up helping my parents on a farm. Later, I went to school in an urban area. After graduating, I got a job in the city but it was not a permanent job. As a result, I decided to save some money so that I could come back to my village to start farming because I loved farming since my childhood. When I came back, I approached my parents and discussed the idea of becoming a farmer. They allowed me to use our family farm. I am not struggling with renting land, and I get a profit with my agri-business.

The two accounts illustrate different examples: one child from parents who sold a family land, and another example of landowning parents who provided farming land to Aurore. Aurore is happy with practising farming; she is not spending money on renting land, while Canisius has mixed feelings about practising farming. He likes practising farming, but he cannot access enough land, and good fertile land is expensive to rent or buy. The two

accounts show that Aurore's pathway to becoming a farmer is more likely to be successful, while Canisius is constrained by a lack of access to land and expensive rented land. Canisius's account also shows how selling family land affects the next generation of young farmers who may be interested in becoming farmers.

Selling land without passing it on to the next generation is the right that the parents (land-owners) have been granted by current matrimonial property law, in contrast to former matrimonial law discussed in chapter 3. In a former matrimonial property law n° 22/99 of 12/11/1999, the children had the right to get the land inheritance from parents, thus the parents could keep land for their children. But in a current matrimonial property law No27/2016 of 08/07/2016, it is not an obligation of parents to give inheritance to their children while they are still alive, children can only inherit parents' property when they are dead (Bayisenge 2016) Also, with the current land law gives the parents the right to sell land without children consent, means land is a private property which belongs solely to the owner, and the parents are not responsible to pass it to the next generation. In Bayisenge's (2016:12) study in Bugesera district, young people presented mixed feelings about the land law and matrimonial property law reform; one participant, for instance, said:

The new law is a threat to young people who worked with their parents on the farm and those who see their future depend on the land. At least those who went to school may get a job but Young people who did not go to school must claim their right on the land.

Moreover, as the study by Bayisenge (2016) shows, most young people asserted that land is important for all, whether you have been to school or not, because attending school does not mean you would get a job, but with land, one can survive on it. This narrative is very similar to the feeling young people expressed during our field study. Most of them said they do not have access to land, and land the belong to old people and elite classes. Below is Canisius example:

Q: As a young farmer, what are the challenges you are facing?

Canisius: The big challenge I am facing is access to land. Good and fertile land belong to old farmers and elites' people.

This example highlights two important points that most of the young people shared during the field study. One, land belong to old farmers, which confirm what White (2020) called gerontocracy, "the structured power of the elderly (often elderly men) [have] over younger generations" (White 2020: 141). It is also similar to the point argued by Glover and Sumberg (2020), that most of the young people do not own agriculture resources such as land and capital. Second point, land belong to elite people. This confirms what Huggins (2014:367) indicated, the land reform in Rwanda has facilitated the accumulation of land by political elites and foreign investors. These two points indicate the institutional challenges hindering young people from accessing land easily and confirm a 'structural exclusion in intergenerational resources transfer' due to various reason as indicated by White:

Young men and women, even if interested in farming, are confronted by the narrowing and sometimes complete closure of access to land. This may be due to corporate or absentee acquisition of community land; the micro land grabs and 'intimate exclusions' resulting from local processes of everyday accumulation, land concentration and social divisions that are inherent in agro-commodity production; or simply local gerontocratic structures which give the older generation control of land resources, and make them reluctant to transfer this control to the next generation (White 2012:10).

Access to land is not the only constraint young people face while trying to establish themselves as the next generation of young farmers. As we discussed at the start of this section, besides access to land and other capitals, practical farming knowledge, lack of access to market and poor rural infrastructure are the challenges they face while trying to become a successful next generation of young farmers. The next chapter will discuss other challenges young farmers face, how they use their agency to come up with own solutions and what they wish could be done on a different level of national policy and by development organizations to support young farmers.

Chapter 5 .Supporting Farming Futures for Young People in Rwanda

5.1. The Role of NGOs and Public Institutions

Young people interviewed for this study show an interest in farming, and most of them are currently practising farming. But, their hope and success in farming are still hampered by different problems, some of which, such as access to land, have already been discussed in the preceding chapter. Apart from stressing on problems they are facing, these young farmers have shared how they are trying to use their agency to come up with solutions, like forming farming collectives to pull together the required investment capital and forming online platforms to share practical agriculture knowledge. They also show a concern that some problems need to be resolved at a higher level, such as at the level of policy-makers and through support by development organizations. This section presents those challenges in young people's voices, contexts, and how young people suggest different NGOs and public institutions may help address the challenges.

This study contends that policy and academic discussions and debates on youth employment and agricultural development in Rwanda and across Africa must take into account the lived experiences and perspectives of young people on the challenges they face and what is to be done in addressing them. As discussed by Sumberg et al.(2012:1)

“The problems of young people and agriculture in Africa are hampered by a lack of research and evidence that is theoretically and historically informed, conceptually sound and context-sensitive”.

In this regard, young people's voices and contexts are indeed key elements not only for addressing youth employment problems but also developing policy agendas for broader structural changes whereby issues of employment, in general, could be addressed. Also, White (2012: 8) emphasized that,

“If visions of a future based on smallholder-based agriculture are to be realised, and if young people are going to have a place in that future, young people's problems in agriculture have to be taken seriously and given much more attention than has been the case in recent policy debate, and a recent research” (White 2012: 8).

The following sections discuss how young people view the role of NGOs and the state towards ensuring that young people in Rwanda have a future in agriculture.

5.1.1. Role of NGOs and the government to support young farmers

Non-governmental organizations, either international or local, and various governmental bodies, are considered principal players supporting young people's farming involvement. In this study, the government's agriculture policy has been scrutinized to see what it says about young people. Also, representatives of two non-governmental organizations that support young farmers have been interviewed to understand how they support young farmers.

The fourth pillar of Rwanda's national agriculture policy is about Inclusive Markets and Off-Farm Opportunity. Its sub-section specifically outlines “Promoting off-farm opportunities –

especially for women and youth”¹³. The National agriculture policy seeks to promote off-farm activities to create more jobs for women and youth, acknowledging that the youth are less likely to own land and generally have more education relevant for off-farm employment sectors. The off-farm activities include agriculture value addition businesses. Moreover, sub-section 4.9 of the policy states that the government should develop projects that support youth employment in the agriculture sector.

For this study, government officials at the district level in charge of youth affairs have been interviewed to assess how they have been implementing the national agriculture policy, particularly regarding supporting youth in the agriculture sector. Peter, a district youth officer, says:

We have a program to support young farmers by building their capacity. We train them on how to grow different crops and try to link them to the market.

When asked about how they support young people to get access to land for farming and inputs, he explained:

Young people should strive to find land. The land is very scarce in our district. We do not have any support for land or inputs special for young people.

In his responses, it was very clear that what they offer young people is skills training, not material things, which is one of the elements young people wanted to be supported in, as will be discussed in the next section.

Moreover, to explore what non-governmental organizations are offering to young farmers as support, two officers from two NGOs (One Acre Fund and Help a Child) were interviewed. Below are their responses:

Help a Child in our thematic we have a program for youth employment. We believe that youth are the parents of tomorrow and at a critical point in determining whether they will escape the trap of poverty. Help a Child Rwanda empowers marginalized youth to prepare them for decent work opportunities and to be able to grow out of poverty. Therefore, in our activities, we support youth in learning modern farming techniques and exploiting agriculture as an income-generating opportunity. (Bosco, Help a child, interview, 25 August 2020, Bugesera district).

From the above account, the provision of modern farming techniques skills emerged as the support they provide to young farmers.

One Acre Fund is an international organization that supplies smallholder farmers with the financing and training they need to grow their way out of hunger and poverty. Instead of giving material things, we invest in farmers to generate gains in farm income. In our programs, we have a program that focuses on building the capacity of young farmers. We partner with young farmers’ association and provide them with the knowledge they need in agriculture. (Paul, One Acre fund, 25 August 2020, Bugesera district).

In the accounts of both NGO representatives interviewed, they emphasized that the support they provide for young farmers is in line with the capacity building where they train them on different modern agriculture practices. Also, that is similar to what the government official in charge of youth at the district level expressed regarding their support to young farmers. And it is in line with national agriculture policy guidelines. But one would wonder whether

¹³ https://www.minagri.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/documents/National_Agriculture_Policy_-_2018___Approved_by_Cabinet__3_.pdf

building the capacity of young farmers by providing them with needed skills in agriculture is actually enough to resolve the challenges they face, as expressed in Chapter 4 of this study. To understand and identify what young farmers need as support from government and NGOs, young farmers have been asked for their views, as presented in the next section.

5.2. Support young farmers to ensure their future in agriculture

Building young farmers' capacity through training that provides them with modern farming practices and skills emerged as the principal support provided by the NGOs and government bodies, as indicated in the interviews above with the informants. But there are also issues that young people interviewed emphasized where support is needed. These include:

Making land available to young people interested in farming.

Young farmers interviewed during this study narrated how access to land is a problem affecting them and hindering them from realizing their farming aspiration as the next generation of successful farmers. In Canisius' account presented in chapter 4 section 4.1, he said that good fertile and big land for farming is owned by old and elite people and farming very small unfertile land is not profitable for young people looking for surviving on farming. His account is an example of how lack of access to enough land for farming may discourage young people from considering agriculture as an employment option. When asked what can be done to help young people get access to land, he explained:

The government has some land that can be avail to young people but accessing that land requires to fulfil difficult conditions, like having a certain amount of money to be considered as investors, but young people do not have that money. The government should make it easier for us young people to get access to that land. (Canisius, 28 July 2020, Bugesera district).

Canisius's narrative is shared by other young people interviewed and is similar to what Richard (2010) argued that there is a need to avail land to young people interested in farming and 'free from control by a local gerontocratic order' (Richard 2010 in White 2012). The study by Cassidy et al.(2019) shows that young people asked what might make farming a possible option for them, they asserted land and inputs must be available and access to a good market. Indeed, young people need access to a range of assets (such as land, modern technology and access to credit) and opportunities to develop their capabilities. These consist of training in business and entrepreneurship, internships, vocational training, and career advice services(IFAD 2011; Gichimu et al.2014; Bayisenge 2016).

Providing young people basic farming knowledge and skills, starting in primary schools.

Lack of basic practical farming knowledge and skills emerged as a problem young people interested in farming face while trying to establish their farm. Sylvia, a 24-year young female, interviewed said:

Farming knowledge is very important for everyone who wants to venture into farming and more important for all these young people who had not been into farming before. I remember when I started farming, I lost my harvest two times due to a lack of knowledge on how to spray.

Regarding the lack of farming knowledge and skills, some attach it to biased school curricula void of farming knowledge, while others attach it to labour policy restricting children to work at an early age (Biriwasha 2012; White 2012). This means children will get farming knowledge neither in a school nor at home if labour policy is to be followed. It may also push away young people from farming (White 2012). That is why schools and training centres have to consider providing agricultural education at the early age of children (IFAD 2010 in White 2012). It is similar to what a former Rwanda Minister of agriculture, Ms Kalibata, recommended that agricultural education should begin at a younger age than it is now. This could potentially help efforts to improve the image of agriculture (IFAD 2011).

Subsidising farming inputs

Agriculture inputs such as seeds and fertilizers are important, and with modernised agriculture, seeds and fertilizers are continually improved to cope with the challenges of climate change and to increase productivity. However, improved seeds and fertilizers are expensive compared to traditional seeds and manure, and the price of modern agricultural inputs is becoming a burden for farmers (GoR 2003). For young people new to farming and interested in it as a business, high inputs prices are challenging, as narrated by Rosalie, a 29-year-old female. She said:

Improved seeds and fertilizers are expensive for me. I do not have other jobs to get money for inputs, and if I keep using these traditional seeds, my harvest will be low; thus, I will not get a profit.

Rosalie's account was shared by other young people interviewed. For them, they want the government and other development organizations to consider helping young people get agriculture inputs at affordable prices considering that most unemployed young people do not have other sources of income. Rosalie's point is in line with what FAO recommended to the government that "Funds need to be made available to help young people enter agriculture. Too often, here are large delays between money being granted and being made accessible. Funds should be provided directly to non-governmental organizations specializing in agriculture and young people, thus making the money more easily and quickly accessible" (IFAD 2011:4)

Helping young people farming collectively in the groups and accessing big markets

Ishimwe, a 24-year female, young farmer interviewed during fieldwork when asked what the solution could be to lack of practical farming knowledge and lack of access to the markets, she said:

It is better to farm collectively than individually. Collectively you share the expenses to rent big land, share knowledge, experience and encourage each other. When farming collectively, you can have much produce to sell on the market and share the responsibilities. Some can take responsibility for searching for market and sale while others are busy with production.

Ishimwe, like other young people, asserted that farming collectively is important to overcome institutional challenges such as difficulties in accessing farmland, deprived of practical agricultural knowledge, and access to finance. Ishimwe's narrative resonates with the examples provided by White (2020), about young people in Java/Indonesia who formed collective farming to learn basic farming practices and access state land for farming rice.

Moreover, Ishimwe's account shows that by farming collectively, young people could be able to tap into big markets for agriculture produce. Ishimwe indicated that farming collectively allows young people to share responsibilities and risks. The informants underscored the need

from the government and other stakeholders to help young people form groups for farming collectively.

Provide infrastructures such as roads, post-harvest storages, and internet access in rural areas

In Rwanda, rural areas are still characterised by poor transport infrastructure needed to transport agricultural harvest to the market, and post-harvest infrastructures such as cold rooms are barely available in rural areas (FAO 2020). Due to these challenges, it is hard for young people farming in rural areas to sell their produce on time. Alcade, a coordinator of Youth in Agriculture Network, narrated how poor rural infrastructures constrain young people. He explained:

Young farmers in our network are farming in remote areas, and transport connections are very poor. It takes more days and money to bring their produce to the market; thus, a lot of produce is wasted in that process. This challenge affects young farmers who invest their money in farming, hoping for a return.

During the interview, Alcade shared his personal story about being unhappy about losing his harvest due to poor infrastructure; his story echoes other young people interviewed. The young people interviewed added that it is in remote areas where they can get land to rent at an affordable price, but it is hard to get the product to the market from those remote areas. Therefore, as a solution, they suggested that the government consider infrastructure-related issues and construct new roads in rural areas. Moreover, they pointed out that post-harvest infrastructures, such as cold rooms, are necessary for remote areas where you cannot harvest crops and take them to the market on the same day. And those infrastructures are expensive for young people to have them. Their descriptions are in line with what the Executive Board of the World Food Programme, Mr de Luna, recommended that the prospects for small-holder agriculture will be bleak if governments do not provide the infrastructure necessary for it to thrive. He also pointed out that governments and other stakeholders working to support young farmers need to listen more to young people (IFAD 2011).

Chapter 6 .Conclusion

This study investigated young people's aspirations and pathways towards becoming farmers and the social structures and institutional challenges they face today in their pathways to become successful farmers and ensure young people have a future in agriculture in Rwanda. From the findings, young people's aspirations tend to emerge and are (re)shaped throughout a life course, and their pathways to becoming farmers are not smooth; it is a long, non-linear process. For some, aspirations start shaping during their childhood formed through relational processes within a family/household. For others, it is a journey they start later after finishing a certain level of education, such as high school or undergraduate studies. Rural young people may migrate to urban areas to complete tertiary education or search for employment, but later some tend to go back to the villages to take up farming. As such, the observations in this study echo the assertions by Cassidy et al. (2019: 226) that "young people's out-migration should not automatically be assumed to reflect a permanent abandonment of rural life and agriculture; it can equally be part of a cyclical life-course trajectory."

As shown in this study, aspiring to become a farmer is not enough to make young people successful farmers and ensure their future in agriculture. Young people who are interested and trying to establish themselves as farmers face various challenges and constraints, making the translation of aspirations into reality often difficult and discouraging. In the context of this study, the key identified difficulties young people face include access to land and agricultural inputs, poor rural infrastructure including internet access, lack of farming knowledge and skills, and lack of access to good markets for farm produce.

However, young people pursuing farming to become successful farmers get support from various governmental and non-government organizations. This study found that the support young people get is mainly focused on capacity building, which involves the training of young people to enable them to acquire needed farming skills. But as shown in this study, young people contend that farming skills are not sufficient to make them succeed in farming. They suggest that all stakeholders involved in supporting young farmers should consider resolving the challenges highlighted above that young people face.

Moreover, young people are not inactive; they apply their agency to find solutions to the social and institutional challenges they face. For instance, farming collectively in groups, pulling resources together to invest in farming and sharing practical farming knowledge on social media such as WhatsApp.

Overall, the findings of the study contribute to understanding the pathways young people take to becoming farmers and how their aspirations towards farming are formed, and the challenges they face to realize those aspirations. Consequently, the findings are useful for government and development organizations focusing on attracting young people to farming to solve youth unemployment and ensure young people's future in agriculture. If considered by policymakers, development organizations and young people's organizations, the findings will help identify what kind of support young people need to succeed in farming.

Nevertheless, the study has some limitations. For example, the study did not include the perspectives of parents regarding the transfer of land and their role in the social reproduction of farming communities. Including parents in the study could have helped deepen our understanding of the role of the family in shaping young people's aspirations in early childhood, how they impact young people's aspirations and pathways to farming, and what they think about the transfer of agriculture resources to the next generation. These are areas for future research.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: semi-structured online interview Questionnaire

Related to family background

1. Tell me about your family occupation?
2. Does your family practice farming or used to practice farming? On own land?

Related to personal background

3. Tell me about your school background and current occupation?
4. If you finish high school or university why are you practising farming instead of looking for other jobs?

Related to farming aspiration

5. What was your aspiration (dream career) during your childhood (primary school and secondary school)?
6. Why and how did you get that aspiration (dream)?
7. Why didn't you succeed to pursue your childhood aspiration? When and how did you get interested in farming?

Related to access to agricultural resources

8. What are the resources you need in farming and how do you access them?
9. What are the most challenging resources to get?
10. What do you do to get access to those resources?

Related to what could be done to help young farmers succeed

11. What could be done by NGOs to support young farmers?
12. What could be done by the government to support young farmers?