

2nd Africa Co-operative Youth Conference Report

Theme: *"Harnessing Innovation among Youth through Co-operatives"*

Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo
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International
Co-operative
Alliance



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Abbreviations

ACP YPN	African, Caribbean and Pacific Young Professionals Network
AGPO	Access to Government Procurement Opportunities
ASOP	Action Sociale Et d'Organisation Paysanne
AU	Africa Union
BOLESWA	Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland Forum
Coop	Cooperative
Cooperar	Confederación Cooperativa de la República Argentina
CUK	The Co-operative University of Kenya
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EC	European Commission
EICCU	Easy Investment Co-op Credit Union Ltd
EU	European Union
ICA	International Co-operative Alliance
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
JWCU	Japan Workers' Co-operative Union
NCCR	National Co-operative Confederation of Rwanda
SANACO	South African National Apex Co-operative
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMME	Ministry of Small Medium Micro Enterprise Development
UCACO	L'union des Coopératives Agricoles du Congo-Ouest
UJCC	Union des Jeunes Congolais pour le Changement
UN	United Nations
UNFFE	Uganda National Farmers Federation
USADF	United States Foundation for the Development of Africa
YEF	Youth Enterprise Fund

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We extend our deepest gratitude to all our distinguished speakers and session moderators and facilitators for their commendable work during the material day of the conference. Finally, we acknowledge the important contributions of IHUSI Hotel for their assistance on transportation and accommodation for the conference participants.

1.0 Background and Introductions

The International Co-operative Alliance (The Alliance) continues to engage its 187 cooperative federations in 75 European Union (EU) partner countries and their regional and global umbrella organizations to promote, develop and advocate for the cooperative enterprise model. On way of such engagement has been through the multi-annual framework partnership agreement (2016-2020) signed with the EU to implement the project entitled **“Co-operatives in Development: People-Centered Businesses in Action”**, whose overall objective is to strengthen the Alliance, and their regional offices organized in four geographical zones: Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia & Pacific. Activities related to strengthening the Alliance network will contribute to reinforce the regional and global structures, facilitate the development of a common identity, support policy dialogue and advocacy, and thus promote greater impact of the co-operative movement worldwide on sustainable development.

To promote the co-operative enterprise model and enhance its visibility, the Alliance Africa with funding from the EU under the ICA-EU partnership project **“Co-operatives in Development: People-Centered Businesses in Action”**, collaborated with its member in DR Congo; COOPEC Nyawera to organize a one day open and free event themed **“Harnessing Innovation among Youth through Cooperatives”**. The theme responds to Goal 4 of the AU Agenda 2063 of Transformed Economies and Goal 8 and 9 of the UN Sustainable Development Goals whose priority areas include sustainable and inclusive economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; education and science, technology and innovation driven manufacturing, industrialization and value addition; as well as economic diversification and resilience. The aim of the conference was to provide the youth in Africa region with a platform to have consolidated policy dialogue, calling upon the AU, policy makers and other stakeholders to support an enabling environment that will propel youth participation in socio-economic development of Africa through co-operatives. Africa youth through cooperative have a great opportunity to take lead in the socio-economic transformation of their communities through leveraging technological, economic and social innovations.

The conference set out to achieve the following specific objectives;

- a. To identify specific youth cooperative enterprise opportunities and challenges and recommend appropriate policy interventions that African countries should implement to promote this cooperative enterprise model.

- b. Identify examples of and opportunities for effective youth engagement in cooperatives, with particular emphasis on issues of empowerment, employment and civic engagement.
- c. Explore the possibilities of leveraging technological, economic and social innovation for production and job creation by youth cooperative enterprises across Africa.
- d. Discuss on how innovation and social entrepreneurship strategies could be aligned with overall development strategy and other development strategies to ensure coherent and a coordinated policy interaction to create policy synergies.
- e. To showcase international and local case studies of successful youth cooperative enterprises which had meaningfully contributed to achieving inclusive growth, poverty reduction and job creation;
- f. To explore the factors that have enabled the successful youth cooperative enterprise initiatives as well as the challenges.

The 2nd Africa Co-operative Youth Conference

The conference took place on 21st September 2017 at IHUSI Hotel in Goma- Democratic Republic of Congo total of 104 participants representing Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Mauritius, Angola, Sweden, Ghana and DR Congo.

The theme of this conference, ***Harnessing Innovation among Youth through Cooperatives***, recognizes that the Alliance Africa, African governments and other stakeholders need to relentlessly continue engaging youth through the cooperative enterprise model for innovation, accelerated investment and job creation as enshrined within the framework for Agenda 2063. African youth through cooperatives have a great opportunity to take lead in the socio-economic transformation of their communities through leveraging technological, economic and other social innovations. The Alliance Africa is calling upon policy makers, governments, partners and other stakeholders to actively seek out and support the meaningful participation of youth in decision-making and implementation of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) to ensure that no one is left behind along the way. There is value in collaborating with the youth in cooperatives as partners in achieving the 17 SDGs and related targets because cooperatives have been duly acknowledged to play a significant role in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development goals.

The main objective of this conference was to engage in a policy dialogue that will trigger action among policy makers and recommend specific policy interventions to the AU that would encourage and propel youth participation in the socio-economic development of Africa through the cooperative enterprise model. Supporting and providing an enabling environment will encourage the youth to adopt an entrepreneurship culture as an important driver of inclusive growth through creation and expansion of job opportunities for youth and innovative solutions for sustainable development.

The Conference provided an open space for the Alliance Africa partners, youth, policy makers and other stakeholders to discuss and build on their respective experiences jointly identify how youth cooperatives can and have created work opportunities and cooperative enterprises; set recommendations for policy development and implementation for broad-based inclusive growth and sustainable development. Supporting and providing an enabling environment will encourage youth to adopt the cooperative enterprise model since it's an important driver of inclusive growth through creation and expansion of job opportunities for youth and innovative solutions for sustainable development.

1.1 Official Opening

COOPEC Nyawera Chairman; Mr. Faustin Lubala



Mr. Lubala took the opportunity to welcome all the participants to Goma and to the 2nd Africa Co-operative Youth Conference. As COOPEC Nyawera Chairman, he recognized the co-operative enterprise model as a means of job creation for young people in Africa.

COOPEC Nyawera has been able to encourage cooperative participation, ownership and empowerment. The cooperative provides youth with financial resources through micro-credits, financial saving services, training and other technical support. He added that, to make a business model more attractive to young people, African cooperatives need to be supported to harness technological innovations to better position themselves and take advantage of the existing business opportunities.

Alliance Africa Regional Director; Dr. Chiyoge B. Sifa (Mrs)

She congratulated the youth for attending the conference and stated that the Alliance Africa believes in young people in the cooperative movement to solve the challenges facing Africa. Noting that projections point to the African youth growing by 42% by 2030 making She continued by raising a concern on the rapid growth of Africa population and its struggles to educate, employ and provide decent work for many young people who are graduating from colleges which might double or triple from current levels by 2055.



The Regional Director acknowledged that young people are at the forefront of creativity and innovation and many have the spirit to make things happen. Their voices needed to be heard especially through the youth cooperatives where there is great opportunity. She recognized two young ladies (Hilda and Elizabeth) present who occupy some of the highest offices in the cooperative movement in Africa. This is a clear indication that cooperatives can offer opportunity for professional and career training hence a better future for the young people.

She urged the young people to embrace the cooperative enterprise model and showed the video (http://zaidan.unchusha.com/archives/index_e.html) of Dr. Kagawa who is the father of Japan's cooperative movement. Dr. Kagawa who became involved in cooperatives at the age of 21 years old believes that social revolution can combat poverty. The Regional Director added that social entrepreneurship – appears to be growing among young people and organizations are emerging that seek to promote youth entrepreneurship as a way to combat poverty, but few organizations have explored youth cooperative development as a possible approach. However, youth cooperative development presents many compelling opportunities for combating poverty, brain drain, generative leadership development and an engaged citizenship. We need a social and economic revolution in Africa to combat some of the challenges facing the continent and the cooperative enterprise model provides the needed platform.

African, Caribbean and Pacific Young Professionals Network (ACP YPN) Policy and Advocacy Officer – ACP-EU Youth Representative; Bora KAMWANYA



Mr. KAMWANYA started by giving a small history about ACP YPN and its importance as a platform where young people

have an active role in policy making at the national, regional and international level. He reiterated that the youth in Africa have a lot of responsibility to realize Agenda 2030 and they need to lobby for policy change at all levels.

ACP YPN is currently working in four continents in partnership with the European Union (EU) countries. and they organize events such as the Ambassadors' round table every month to debate and work on policies. The policies are shared with European Parliament, the Head of Delegation of the European ACP-EU Parliamentary Assembly and the Co-Presidents of the ACP-EU Parliamentary Assembly.

He suggested that after 2020 the role of youth theme will be a cross-cutting one and urged the young people to get involved because 'What is done for us without us is against us' and if we really think about our future, let us co-create it.

Alliance Youth Network President; Ms. Gabriel Buffa

The Alliance Youth Network President had an encouraging message for the Africa region and urged them to become promoters of change. Ms. Buffa who is currently based in Argentina shared a short history of her cooperative journey and some of the challenges she faced. Ms. Buffa encouraged participants to dialogue and learn from each other as young people are creating new cooperatives and inventing solutions to the world's challenges. There is need also to promote youth participation in cooperatives because create work and offer better working conditions in the long term.



She joined the Youth Committee of COOPERAR, the Cooperative Confederation of the Argentina Republic in 2012 and ever since the institution has created space where each member is given an opportunity to learn about different cooperative sectors such as housing, savings and credit, public services, industry, education and agriculture. This has helped the Youth Committee to organize youth activities at national level and have dialogue with government institutions on promoting youth policies.

She encouraged the youth to create awareness that cooperatives can help young people gain work experience. Also, when young people have the right tools, the space and commit their lives to collective projects, it is a vehicle that will transform the social and economic reality of communities.

Alliance Africa Youth Network President; Ms. Hilda Ojall



Ms. Ojall acknowledged the partnership between the Alliance Africa and the EU that enabled for planning of the 2nd Africa Cooperative Youth Conference. She noted that it was the first event to be organized by the Alliance Africa since she took office as the Alliance Africa Youth Network President. She appreciated the steps and activities that have been taken in harnessing innovation amongst the youth through co-operatives and for the relentless engagement of the youth network as reliable partners in pursuit of innovation, accelerated investment and job creation for the youth.

Ms. Ojall stated that the conference had provided an open space for policy makers, youth and other stakeholders to share and discuss their respective experiences and build their capacity. She challenged the participants with this quote “Truly Africa may be known as the continent of gold, oil, manganese, diamond but our true wealth lies in our people and unlocking the potential of this treasure by empowering the youth through capacity building will finally achieve the prosperity that our minerals have so far failed to bring in our continent.”

To conclude, she said that being together will jointly identify how youth cooperatives can, have and will create work opportunities and improve co-operative enterprises.

Alliance Africa President; Mr. Stanley Muchiri

The President welcomed the participants and applauded their involvement in the conference as a clear indication that the cooperative movement is a solution to the issues affecting the society. He mentioned to them that he started working in the cooperative movement when he was 24 years old and now he is 70 years old. This means that a long journey starts with one step. He encouraged the youth to think ahead and have a vision of taking leadership of the Alliance



On issues of the growing population and unemployment, the President explained that as many parts of the world witness a rapidly aging population Africa is likely to become the newest center for youth entrepreneurship globally. He therefore urged the youth to familiarize themselves with

the sustainable development goals especially those on poverty eradication if they are to unlock their potential. The youth need to be aggressive in creation of jobs for themselves which is actually an area that the cooperative business model has been acknowledged to have exceeded.

He also requested governments, civil societies, cooperatives and other stakeholders to pull forces together to assist the young people exploit their potential in a way that exemplifies what we believe in as a way of supporting Africa to reap huge economic dividends from its rapidly rising population of youths.

Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development - North Kivu; Mr. Christophe BYEMERO



The Minister represented the Governor and thanked the youth for attending the conference. He said that the Governor was convinced that after the conference the youth will pledge to actively participate in solving the security and socio-economic challenges in Africa. This conference reminded him of a USA President back in 1961 who said 'do not ask what the country can do for the you but what you can do for the country'. Similarly, the youth should not ask what African countries can do for them but what the youth can do for the African continent.

Further, he called upon the youth to make efforts to restore peace and co-existence by fostering team spirit, cohesion and harmony without which sustainable peace cannot be achieved.

He emphasized the need for the youth to respect and promote human rights since socio-economic development largely depends on youth attitude. He recommended to the Alliance Africa to make effort for autonomous cooperatives in DR Congo.

The Minister then declared the 2nd Africa Youth Conference officially open.

2.0 Conference Sessions and Presentations

2.1 Session One: The ICA-EU Partnership Project Brief

Dr. Rose Karimi, the EU Project Manager at the Alliance Africa gave a brief overview of the “Co-operatives in Development: People-Centered Businesses in Action” project. She stated that planned activities were all meant to lead to a strengthened International Cooperative Alliance which gives increased visibility and a stronger voice to co-operatives at global, regional, national and local level, increased engagement in dialogue and strategic partnerships with international institutions and stakeholders and recognition as far as sustainable co-operative development and growth is concerned.

Targeted activities are groups along 7 activity streams as follows:

1. Institutional strengthening and development – strengthening capacities of ICA staff at both the global and regional office levels in order to enable them serve the members better.
2. Enabling environment – This result area focuses on research, within which the mapping of co-operative actors will fall – here the focus will be on finding a means to collect and collate accurate data on a regular basis in order for the movement, as well as stakeholders in the public and private sector to be able to make decisions to support the movement. It is important that co-operatives continue to think about how they can use data to create value. Also under this activity stream, a legal framework analysis will be undertaken whereby supportive legal frames will be analyzed through a comparative analysis, and promoted by supporting policy dialogue. Thematic research on topical research on topical issues that will bring new knowledge to the co-operative movement.
3. Capacity building for members – here the focus is on capacity building on establishing and strengthening federations, capacity building on policy dialogue and co-operative related thematic, capacity building on functioning and advocacy towards EU delegations as well as on knowledge and experience sharing between members. Co-operatives’ skills and outreach will be reinforced through institutional strengthening and capacity building initiatives, which include in particular the development of trainings, tools, seminars, knowledge sharing, and networking activities.

4. Co-op networking through regional co-operative development meetings
5. Advocacy and political dialogue – where ICA and members monitor policy processes at the global and regional levels, following and participating in the Policy Forum on Development, following policy events at global and regional levels (EU public consultations and roadmaps), as well as bilateral dialogue meetings and conference engagements with the aim of enhancing the role of co-operatives in the development agenda.
6. Alliance building with CSOs – targeting new CSO networks at global and regional levels
7. Visibility and communication – ensuring that the EU's contribution is acknowledged and visible across the region. Visibility is enhanced by initiatives such as the mapping of cooperative actors, the development of cooperative tools based on quantitative and qualitative research, the organization of visibility events, and the implementation of multiple communication tools - using for instance social media.

The Global Youth Research Brief

Mr. Erick Obongo, the Research Officer briefed the participants on the critical role young people are expected to play in the Framework for Partnership Agreement (FPA) with the EU under the research output.

Research in the cooperative movement has not given much focus to the youth and their inclusion in development activities is just a drop in the ocean. In the FPA with EU, the Alliance has planned a global research focusing on the youth; to try to understand how best young people can be empowered and included in cooperative related developmental issues. Mr Obongo emphasized that the study will broadly focus on Employment, Education and Training, Innovation and identification of hindrances to the full participation of youth in cooperatives. This 2nd Africa Cooperative Youth Conference is one avenue to engage the young people and see how best they can be involved in the research process to assist in shaping the literature review for the study Mr. Obongo encouraged the youth present to consider this study an opportunity to provide content that will make it successful.

2.2 Session Two: Co-operative Enterprise in Economic Transformation

Indira Panta, ICA Asia-Pacific

Indira is a Member of the International Co-operative Alliance – Asia and Pacific Committee on Youth Cooperation in Nepal. Indira pointed out the importance of cooperatives in coping with disaster citing the case of the earthquake catastrophe in Nepal in April 2015.

The youth population in Nepal is 40.3% of the population and 47% of these are unemployed. This is a great opportunity for the cooperatives to tap the youth resource and involve them in cooperative activities. The bulging youth population in educational institutions also presents an untapped opportunity by cooperatives.

Cooperatives have the opportunity to work extensively towards economic prosperity by addressing the challenges of the youth population such as rising unemployment rates, migration to foreign countries in search of employment, out of reach from financial institutions and lack of financial literacy not only in Nepal but also in Africa.

Educational institutions could be developed as resource centers for cooperative skills training and awareness creation since existing rural cooperatives have not been able to address financial education literacy effectively. The Youth need to be sensitized on making savings a daily habit (just like brushing teeth) and also making savings a lifestyle.

Nepal has initiated financial literacy programs in educational institutions focusing on personal finance such as planning, budgeting, saving, loans, investment, shares and insurance. Student saving clubs have been formed in education institutions where various activities like debate, quizzes, health camps, tree planting are promoted.

National workshops to engage with government ministries, lawmakers, cooperative leaders, the youth and other stakeholders and advocate for financial literacy policies and financial support have also been organized.

The result has been the financial literacy campaigns have attracted many other sectors to the financial literacy program and major stakeholders like Ministers, Governor of Central Bank are now collaborating with ICA-Asia Pacific for financial inclusion and entrepreneurship for youth. This has led to the financial literacy program being highlighted for the first time in Nepal's year 2016-2017 budget and a financial literacy policy being drafted.

Also, the financial literacy curriculum for school and college students is under discussion with

Universities ready to start cooperative education.

Involving youths in cooperative enterprises empowers them through provision of knowledge, skills and awareness; offering employment and civic engagement; opportunity to develop youth friendly development plans/strategies/policies/programs.

Cooperatives may include youth and student financial literacy programs in their annual programs. Therefore, it is important for cooperatives to continue lobbying and advocating for youth engagement with governments and other stakeholders to strengthen the cooperatives to achieve the sustainable development goals.

2.3 Session Three: International Case studies of successful youth enterprises: Leveraging Technological, Economic and Social innovation for production and job creation.

Guy Tchami- ILO Coop Unit

Mr. Guy works with the ILO Coop Unit of International Labour Organization in Geneva. Africa, the world's youngest region continues to be confronted with high levels of unemployment, vulnerable employment and working poverty. Mr. Guy cited an ILO study indicating that the number of poor working youth has increased by as much as 80 percent for the past 25 years. Poor job quality job opportunities to remain a pressing issue on the African continent. This coupled with an elevated unemployment rate are among the key factors shaping young people's decision to migrate abroad.

However, although the impressive pool of youth in Africa represents a challenge they can be a driving force for change and improvement on a continent where innovation has always existed. Technological advances are taking place rapidly during this era and if harnessed properly, the youth dividend can provide more productive and decent jobs for African men and women.

Cooperatives can create work opportunities and better working conditions at a time like this when the youth are disproportionately affected by unemployment and lack of decent work. Africa has recently witnessed a cooperative revival with a focus on youth in many countries. In the past decade, Africa has witnessed clear signs of a cooperative revival with a focus on youth in many countries. This has led to emerging forms of cooperatives ranging from social care cooperatives in Kenya, energy cooperatives in Uganda, recycling cooperatives in South Africa to graduate cooperatives in Morocco.

The main obstacles to participation of young people in co-operatives is lack of knowledge of the co-operative model, lack of access to credit, the absence of cooperative incubators and unfavorable co-operative legislation. ILO through its member states is responding to these challenges. For example, in Kenya and Zimbabwe ILO is working with financial institutions to increase their credit line favors for youth cooperatives. While in Northern Africa ILO is collaborating with the government to improve the legal environment so as to provide technical and financial support to youth cooperatives at the community level. The ILO is also working on other collaborations with trade unions and domestic workers cooperatives.

Osamu Nakano - Japan Workers' Co-operative Union (JWCU)

Japan Workers' Co-operative Union (JWCU) is the National Federation of worker co-operatives in Japan. JWCU had a turnover was almost 300 million USD in 2015.

The cooperative does various kinds of businesses including elderly care (day care, home and personal care, home delivered meals, preventive care etc.), services for children and parents(nursery school, after-school program, children's center, childcare support etc.), care and support for people with disabilities(daycare, after-school program-for children with disabilities, vocational training, job assistance), support for the youth (youth support station, job assistance, internship), operation of public facilities(senior center, community center, hot spring, funeral home etc.), building maintenance, hospital cleaning, street/park cleaning among others.

JWCU define their working style as 'associated work' which is defined as follows in the newest edition of "Principles of Cooperatives of Associated work 2015": "It is a new way of working to create enterprises in which each person could be a master of his or her own life. It is a way of linking the needs of human life, local communities, and their difficulties such that everybody jointly contributes to building capital, managing businesses democratically, and sharing responsibilities".

In 'associated work' there are three layers of cooperation among members, with users, with communities i.e. workers cooperate with each other, users and communities. The difference between associate work and employed work is the following: In employed work the capital contribution, work and management is split from each other while in associated work the working members are doing everything therefore they contribute capital, work and manage.

The most fundamental aim of cooperatives of associated work (worker cooperatives in Japan)

is to create a local community in which no one is excluded or isolated through job creation and good decent work by cooperating closely with local communities.
JWCU hopes to achieve social inclusion.



JWCU hopes to achieve social inclusion and to this end they are developing projects on social inclusion and work integration. An example is the BDF clean energy project in Tokyo Japan which has four different plants and is managed as worker cooperatives. Some of the members of these cooperatives are youth who have recovered from psychological problems.

Mr. Nakano believes that cooperation and solidarity of the youth in the regions will enable the implementation and achievement of the sustainable development goals.

Mr. Hans Lind Regional Director of We Effect, East Africa region.

In his presentation, Mr. Hans focused on the We Effect Strategy 2017-2021 which gives priority to equality first and the engagement of young people in cooperatives and how young male and female can be encouraged to access resources such as land by 2021. He further noted that cooperatives should ensure that there is equal participation from both genders in income generating activities, participation in decision making organs, acquire mentorship and leadership skills, change mind-sets on agribusiness, and lobby for increased national budget allocation towards youth economic programs.

On average, 12 million young people enter the African workforce each year with only 3 million jobs available to them. Lack of decent work has precipitated internal migration to urban centers and other countries like South Africa, Middle East and Europe for quick monies. In addition, he quoted Jennifer Blanke from African Development Bank who stated that *“As long as youth are provided with skills to create new businesses and an underlying policy environment to make it*

easier to create businesses, you are capturing more of the value add and that's where the jobs are going to be".

In the present age, young people disinterest themselves from agricultural activities for the obvious reasons that agriculture is not profitable. Through the Fair Resource Allocation criteria, We Effect is encouraging partner organizations to allocate project resources to its beneficiaries on half basis criteria.

2.4 Session Four: DR Congo Case Studies of Successful Youth Enterprises: Leveraging Technological, Economic and Social innovation for production and Job Creation.



Nicole MENEMENE – ASOP

ASOP (Action Sociale Et d'Organisation Paysanne) is a non-governmental organisation based in Kivu DR Congo that promotes entrepreneurship, food security, disaster management and improves access to primary care, access to water and family planning. ASOP and its partners came up with a program known as Youlima a platform that promotes agricultural entrepreneurship. The program has had a number of experiences sharing session starting with the International symposium that was held in 2016 followed by a boot camp in August 2017 that saw 68 young entrepreneurs present their successes and challenges. The program also supports agricultural cooperatives in partnership with USADF (United States Foundation for the Development of Africa) that is currently supporting four cooperatives in production and marketing of potatoes and onions. Youlima has also helped members like Africa Best, Grabent,

Green Africa and Buhanga Producers to have an on-line store application for marketing thus creating jobs for young people along the value chain.

ASOP runs very many activities that support young people in DR Congo. The challenges encountered while implementing programs include: absence of a national network of young entrepreneurs, low access to resources, fewer successful models in the field of co-operatives and youth entrepreneurship and unfriendly taxation young entrepreneurs.

Ir Augustin KABAMBA – OSRNaC

OSRNaC is made up of young technicians specialized in the field of geographical information system, remote sensing and environmental monitoring. They usually provide trainings, advice and research in different sectors using intensive imagery and field data. With the potential of natural resources in DRC, and the agitation to work towards sustainable management of resources with regard to the impact of climate change, called for the creation of OSRNaC thus availing thematic maps and data necessary for sustainable management of resources.

Currently, OSRNaC has led to the employment of 14 young people who help the community establish working relationship between agricultural production and climatic parameters. The organization has also created a digital platform to allow for registration of cooperatives in agricultural sector with the aim of reducing the effects of climate change.

Kambale KATSONGO T. Baylon Director of Cooperative COOCENKI

Agricole (COOCENKI), specializes in rabbit and guinea pig breeding, business development opportunities and future prospects related to them. COOCENKI is an agricultural cooperative in North kivu with the motive of supporting the community and families in agro pastoral production, ensuring processing and marketing of agricultural agro-industrial products and carrying out co-operative training.

COOCENKI ensures that young breeders are chosen through co-operatives, they then organize and conduct capacity building on rabbit and guinea pig breeding, technical and therapeutic support by veterinaries.

In his presentation, Baylon noted that the initiative has brought young people together and some of them have shares in the cooperatives and able to access short-term financial loans from the cooperative. Farmers can also access organic matter for their farms.

Jean-François David ALAUWA - Black Box Asbl

The Cooperative Business Model sector provides an enabling environment for young people to thrive. Through cooperatives young people can acquire practical skills to assist them be independent, and create employment for themselves.

Black Box project promotes agriculture to combat the rural exodus, stimulate savings and other socio-economic activities, helps farmers in selling of their produce with the aim of reducing on middlemen exploitation. ALAUWA stated that the eastern part of DR Congo enjoys the advantages of the bordering countries that have developed youth in one way or another unlike the North part of DR Congo which is struggling. Thus, there is need for experience sharing from others and training to motivate young people to work in the cooperative societies and be creative to create their own jobs. Black Box Asbl, thinks in terms of perspectives, seize opportunities that will solicit the implementation of training projects in cooperative and entrepreneurship skills for young people.

Mukenge B. TOTORO – UJCC (Union des Jeunes Congolais pour le Changement)

Mr. TOTORO shared the history of UJCC as a movement that was formed with a desire to change the way of life of many youths who have lived under dictatorship where their voice could not be heard. UJCC initiative to mobilize and organize youth for change was boosted by other countries in the region like South Africa. UJCC focusses on young people with no age limit, who are loyal and love their country and understand that they have a responsibility and contribution to make to prosper the country. Hence UJCC is convinced that youth are the engine of positive change.

UJCC encourages young people to join cooperatives as it is the model to better their future. Mr. TOTORO gave the case of Artisanal Miners which comprise of more than 5000 diggers who formed a cooperative and were able to collectively bargain and protect their rights. The other case he gave was of Cocoa Farmers' Co-operative that helps farmers in organizing their markets and also improving their productivity and quality of cocoa.

UJCC faces a number of challenges from finances, corruption, unfavorable legal frameworks, political instability, de-motivated young member and lack of proper organization structures. As a result, UJCC have been conducting coaching and orientation to members so that the youth can also hold their leaders accountable.

Mabala Bayita Fulbert - UCACO

UCACO (L'union des Coopératives Agricoles du Congo-Ouest) is a non-profit association operating in Kwilu Province with a vision of developing small agricultural producers. Mabala explained that UCACO seeks to increase agriculture production in Kwilu by providing seeds and modern farming techniques. A number of activities have been done to ensure that the organisation strives to their set objective. Creating public awareness, calling for participation in community development activities and capacity building of farmers in agriculture have been the main activities for UCACO.

Currently UCACO is working with 43 member groups located in different villages that carry out different farming activities. Through the initiative, Mabala noted some of the achievements they have witnessed that have actually led to increased production and job creation. They have seen production in crops, fish pond farming, construction of training centers for livestock farming and also having training sessions in Lusekele.

2.5 Session Five: Cases from Africa: Panel Discussion on Youth Achievements in Co-operatives, Challenges and Recommendations.

Lawrence Monyahi – South Africa National Apex Cooperative (SANACO)

Having been in the movement for quite some time, Mr. Monyahi represented the South sub-region and also as a representative from South African National Apex Co-operative (SANACO) which coordinates all co-operative activities in South Africa and lobby national and international bodies to support cooperatives. With the establishment of the Ministry of Small Medium Micro Enterprise Development (SMME), South Africa has managed to start youth cooperatives and also provide training to young people involved in cooperatives. In his presentation, he noted that cooperation and inter-trade in the sub- region and among co-operatives have been hampered by lack of infrastructure networks, and expensive flights to various destinations, political instability and lack of coordination among youth cooperative movements in the region.

In his conclusion, he recommended for enhanced coordination in cooperatives and diversified funding opportunities, speed uptake of Information and Communication Technologies and creation of a harmonious environment to facilitate continuous engagement and active participation of young people in cooperatives development in the sub-region.



Patrick BUSERUKA – National Co-operative Confederation of Rwanda (NCCR)

BUSERUKA shared the case of Transportation cooperatives in Rwanda which is now a sector that has attracted the majority of youth. The sector has attracted 80% of their members being youths aged between 16-30years. The sector has not only created employment but also encouraged young people to join cooperatives. The other achievement brought by transportation cooperatives is development of the community at large where more than 15 modern tax parks have been build country wide.

Nevertheless, there are challenges that youth co-operatives in Rwanda face starting from lack of members' awareness, negative attitude about cooperatives due to the historical background and bad examples of some existing cooperatives, mismanagement of cooperative property and finances, access to financial resources, access to the market for their produce and the climate change.

He noted that introduction and usage of ICT in cooperative that might assist link cooperatives to markets and at the same time give space for creativity and innovations. In his view, he noted that development partners need to encourage National and International Organization to increase youth support in their programs for greater inclusion.

Mr. Jeremiah Mugo – Cooperative University of Kenya (CUK)

Mr. Mugo echoed cooperatives as an important bridge for economic empowerment for the less privileged people who otherwise would hardly be able to attain reasonable levels of economic security. Giving a Kenyan case, Mugo stated that majority of youth about 72.1% do not belong to a cooperative with different reasons depending on the areas where they are based. All the same youth groups from counties like Nyamira, Machakos, Nakuru and others, have proved to create employment for themselves with no financial support from development partner and others with little support from the government initiatives like the Youth enterprise fund (YEF), the Uwezo fund and the access to government procurement opportunities (AGPO) program.

Financial Institutions find it hard to trust youth groups and cooperatives with the perception that co-operatives are corrupt and poorly managed thus could not be trusted with resources for development, hence making it hard for them to access finances. Challenges from portfolio of products of co-operatives not resonating with most of them, lack of sufficient knowledge on how co-operatives work and the urge as well as peer pressure to spend makes it difficult for them to join cooperatives.

In his closing remarks, he noted that youth should come up with multipurpose cooperatives so that it kills some of the perceptions about cooperatives, big cooperatives should provide mentoring, guidance and advisory services to their young members so that they can become equipped and leaders of cooperatives.

Michele CHIKOMOLA - COOPEC Nyawera

Ms. Michele highlighted that promoting innovation among youth is one of the objectives that should be reflected in the business plans of cooperatives. In her case, she explained how they have been assisting young people with bankable business ideas by supporting them financially through saving and credit services as well as technical support.

She spotted that some of the challenges faced by COOPEC Nyawera is the inability to meet the needs of young entrepreneurs since most of their resources are made up of members' savings.

As an organisation, COOPEC Nyawera fears that young entrepreneurs' savings are short-term which have more risk of non-payment than long-term loans. She therefore recommended that the young people should be helped to get the long-term loans or grants to enable them to progress and compete effectively.

David Kofi Afful– Easy Investment Coop Credit Union (EICCU)

Mr. Kofi a representative from Easy Investment Co-op Credit Union Ltd (EICCU) from Ghana and also representing the West sub-region acknowledged that cooperative business model is the way to life as it promotes the welfare of its members for instance through joint ownership of assets such as farm machinery. West Africa cases, starting with Ghana, youth agro-base cooperatives acquired land and then distributed the land to their members who are mainly young people. The Agro base Coop also provide young people with agricultural extension services while their counter parts in Nigeria run student farms, consumer shops, barber centers and food canteens that has resulted to community cohesion, reduce violence and increased access to nutritious food. He also added that in their credit union about 60% of its members and 95% of its staff are youth.

Young people in West Africa like other regions face challenges including exclusionary attitudes of cooperative elders from engaging young people, lack of effective dialogue mechanisms for youth involvement within cooperatives, difficulties in engaging with youth due to lack of resources, capacity and supportive environment. He further added that the issues may be solved through promoting a collective entrepreneurship platform as a viable option for youth engagement and setting up cooperative incubators and support services as part of business development services.

3.0 Way Forward

Dr. Rose Karimi, the Project manager the Alliance Africa, guided a discussion session where all participants engaged constructively in forging the way forward for the conference. In the discussion, the participants highlighted the following recommendations:

- Call upon our governments to go beyond policy making and ensure enforcement of laws that allow funding for the youth to capacitate their cooperatives in order to support co-operative development in Africa;

- Call upon our governments to redouble their efforts in retracting laws that demand too many requirements and bureaucracy to enable the youth start their own cooperatives;
- Call upon our governments to provide a legal and policy environment that will allow young co-operators to explore new co-operative sectors such as health service, consumer and worker co-operatives in Africa;
- Call upon our governments to curb some restrictions that are put on country policies hindering the creation of an enabling environment for co-operatives to do business
- Call upon our governments to work and engage with cooperatives to avoid interference in policies implementation by cooperatives.
- Call upon the Alliance Africa to avail means for youth to own their cooperatives
- Call upon the Alliance Africa to design projects for youth to benefit the youth through capacity building in order to gains skills and knowledge.
- Call upon the Alliance Africa to identify thematic areas at national/regional/sub-regional level for advocacy.
- Call upon the Alliance Africa to organize annual periodic for thematic and policy issues that will influence decisions for policy makers.
- Call upon the Alliance Africa together with other development partners to do more advocacies especially in marketing of youth cooperatives since youth are competent to improve their engagement in cooperative development.
- Call upon all youth co-operators present to get involved and engage in conversations around lobbying policy makers and government officials to ensure that support and the interests of the co-operative movement are secured;
- Call upon cooperatives to ensure that their youth members are exposed to best practices, lessons and new innovations so that the movement remain relevant and economically sound

4.0 Conclusion

The participants in the conference agreed that there is a low representation of youth in cooperatives in Africa despite recognizing the socio-cultural, economic and technological facilities that promote co-operative development. State of progress and struggles were elaborated in the case studies showing that there is a vast potential of engaging youth in co-

operatives sector and more so in the agricultural sector which has the potential to absorb many young people.

As a vehicle that will ensure no one is left behind, young people should be actively in cooperatives to gain from its vast universal comparative advantages.

Governments across Africa should be actively encouraged to support young people by providing reasonable platforms to engage with them, allocate budgets to fund youth activities, create favorable policies and rules to promote youth activities. The efforts made by governments, civil society and development partners in training, implementing and promoting programmes aimed at engaging more youth in cooperatives to alleviate poverty is commendable.

Finally, the young people present in the conference pledged to intensify their efforts to work towards realizing the Sustainable Development Goals as they are too partners in their implementation.

The Regional Director the Alliance Africa, Dr. Chiyoge B Sifa (Mrs) in her concluding remarks, thanked the participants for their commitment and sacrifice to make the conference a success and wished international participants safe travel as well as safe stay for the local participants



Annex 1 : Meeting Communiqué

End of Meeting Communiqué

COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 2ND AFRICA CO-OPERATIVE YOUTH CONFERENCE, ORGANISED BY THE ALLIANCE AFRICA AND COOPEC NYAWERA WITH FUNDING FROM THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION UNDER THE PROJECT “CO-OPERATIVES IN DEVELOPMENT - PEOPLE CENTRED BUSINESSES IN ACTION”, ON THE OVERALL THEME: **“HARNESSING INNOVATION AMONG YOUTH THROUGH COOPERATIVES”**, HELD ON 21ST SEPTEMBER, 2017 AT THE IHUSI HOTEL IN GOMA, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO.

INTRODUCTION

The theme of this conference, ***Harnessing Innovation among Youth through Cooperatives***, recognizes that the Alliance Africa, African governments and other stakeholders need to relentlessly continue engaging youth through the cooperative enterprise model for innovation, accelerated investment and job creation as enshrined within the framework for Agenda 2063. African youth through cooperatives have a great opportunity to take lead in the socio-economic transformation of their communities through leveraging technological, economic and other social innovations. The Alliance Africa is calling upon policy makers, governments, partners and other stakeholders to actively seek out and support the meaningful participation of youth in decision-making and implementation of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) to ensure that no one is left behind along the way. There is value in collaborating with the youth in cooperatives as partners in achieving the 17 SDGs and related targets because cooperatives have been duly acknowledged to play a significant role in the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development goals.

The main objective of this conference was to engage in a policy dialogue that will trigger action among policy makers and recommend specific policy interventions to the AU that would encourage and propel youth participation in the socio-economic development of Africa through the cooperative enterprise model. Supporting and providing an enabling environment will encourage the youth to adopt an entrepreneurship culture as an important driver of inclusive growth through creation and expansion of job opportunities for youth and innovative solutions for sustainable development.

The conference discussions were opened up by a presentation from ICA-Asia Pacific Committee on Youth Cooperation from Nepal which demonstrated the link between engagement and empowerment of youth in cooperatives and the economic transformation of a country.

International case studies of successful youth enterprises were presented from Japan Workers' Cooperative Union (JWCU), ILO Coop Unit and We Effect. This exposed participants to the different options available for youth cooperative enterprises. We believe that the participants will explore the new ideas in their communities.

The conference drew participants and representatives of youth cooperatives from Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Mauritius, Angola, Ghana, India, Japan, Alliance Africa Cooperative members and partners (We Effect).

During the course of our deliberations, we the participants at the conference noted that:

Cooperative Enterprise in Economic Transformation

- Cooperatives have the opportunity to work extensively towards economic prosperity by addressing the challenges of the youth population such as rising unemployment rates, migration to foreign countries in search of employment, out of reach from financial institutions and lack of financial literacy not only in Nepal but also in Africa.
- The bulging youth population in educational institutions presents an untapped opportunity by cooperatives.
- Educational institutions could be developed as resource centres for cooperative skills training and awareness creation.
- Existing rural cooperatives have not been able to address financial education literacy effectively.
- Youth should be sensitized on making savings a daily habit (just like brushing teeth) and also making savings a lifestyle.
- There is need to initiate financial literacy programs in educational institutions focusing on personal finance such as planning, budgeting, saving, loans, investment, shares and insurance.
- Student saving clubs can be formed in education institutions where various activities like debate, quizzes, health camps, tree planting could be promoted.
- There is need to plan national workshops to engage with government ministries, lawmakers, cooperative leaders, the youth and other stakeholders and advocate for financial literacy policies and financial support.
- Involving youths in cooperative enterprises empowers them through provision of knowledge, skills and awareness; offering employment and civic engagement; opportunity to develop youth friendly development plans/strategies/policies/programs.
- Financial literacy campaigns in Nepal have attracted many other sectors to the financial literacy program and major stakeholders like Ministers, Governor of Central Bank are now collaborating with ICA-Asia Pacific for financial inclusion and entrepreneurship for youth.
- This has resulted in the financial literacy program being highlighted for the first time in Nepal's year 2016-2017 budget and a financial literacy policy being drafted.
- Also. the financial literacy curriculum for school and college students in under discussion with Universities ready to start cooperative education.
- Cooperatives can include youth and student financial literacy programs in their annual programs.
- It's important for cooperatives to continue lobbying and advocating for youth engagement with governments and other stakeholders to strengthen the cooperatives to achieve the sustainable development goals.

International Case Studies of Successful Youth Enterprises: Leveraging technological, economic and social innovation for production and job creation

- Africa, the world's youngest region continues to be confronted with high levels of unemployment, vulnerable employment and working poverty. For example, the number of poor working youth has increased by as much as 80 percent for the last 25 years.
- Poor job quality job opportunities remain a pressing issue on the continent. This coupled with an elevated unemployment rate are among the key factors shaping young people's decision to migrate abroad.
- Although, the impressive pool of youth in Africa represent a challenge they can be a driving force for change and improvement on a continent where innovation has always existed.
- Technological advances are taking place rapidly during this era and if harnessed properly, the youth dividend can provide more productive and decent jobs for African men and women.
- Cooperatives can create work opportunities and better working conditions at a time like this when the youth are disproportionately affected by unemployment and lack of decent work.
- Africa has recently witnessed a cooperative revival with a focus on youth in many countries.
- Interesting forms of cooperatives emerging in Africa range from social care cooperatives in Kenya, energy cooperatives in Uganda, recycling cooperatives in South Africa to graduate cooperatives in Morocco.
- In their 2017-2021 strategy, We Effect focus on youth because of the aging members of cooperatives and the ticking youth unemployment bomb.
- On average 12 million young people enter the African workforce each year with only roughly 3 million jobs available to them.
- Access to affordable financial services alleviates poverty
- To foster financial inclusion, the following support is needed: producer cooperatives to facilitate financial literacy, savings groups formed, savings groups linked to financial institutions, financial institutions to promote financial literacy, policy advocacy and deliberate initiatives aimed at accessing finance to women and young people.
- Japan Workers' Cooperative Union(JWCU) had a turnover was almost 300 million USD in 2015.
- JWCU does various kinds of businesses including elderly care (day care, home and personal care, home delivered meals, preventive care etc.), services for children and parents(nursery school, after-school program, children's centre, childcare support etc.), care and support for people with disabilities(daycare, after-school program-for children with disabilities, vocational training, job assistance), support for the youth (youth support station, job assistance, internship), operation of public facilities(senior center, community center, hot spring, funeral home etc.), building maintenance, hospital cleaning, street/park cleaning among others.
- JWCU define their working style as 'associated work' which is defined as follows in the newest edition of "Principles of Cooperatives of Associated work 2015": "It is a new way of

working to create enterprises in which each person could be a master of his or her own life. It is a way of linking the needs of human life, local communities, and their difficulties such that everybody jointly contributes to building capital, managing businesses democratically, and sharing responsibilities”.

- In ‘associated work’ there are three layers of cooperation among members, with users, with communities i.e. workers cooperate with each other, users and communities.
- The difference between associate work and employed work is the following: In employed work the capital contribution, work and management is split from each other while in associated work the working members are doing everything therefore they contribute capital, work and manage.
- The most fundamental aim of cooperatives of associated work (worker cooperatives in Japan) is to create a local community in which no one is excluded or isolated through job creation and good decent work by cooperating closely with local communities.
- JWCU hopes to achieve social inclusion.

On DR Congo case studies of successful youth enterprises: Leveraging technological, economic and social innovation for production and job creation

- ASOP(Action Sociale Et d’Organisation Paysanne), a NGO based in Kivu, DR Congo promotes entrepreneurship, food security, disaster management and improving access to healthcare, access to water and family planning.
- One of their programs is Youlima which is a platform that promotes agricultural entrepreneurship. The program has supported four agricultural cooperatives in production and marketing of potatoes and onions.
- Youlima also enabled members like Africa Best, Grabent, Green Africa and Buhanga producers to have an online store application for marketing their produce. This has created jobs for young people though out the chain from production to final consumption.
- ASOP has created 14 jobs in the collection and recycling paper and waste.
- Some of the challenges ASOP face include the absence of a national network of young entrepreneurs, low access to resources, very few successful models (in the field of cooperatives, youth entrepreneurship) and a taxation system that is not favourable to young entrepreneurs.
- OSRNac is a natural resource and climate observatory made up of young technicians specialized in the field of geographical information system, remote sensing and environmental monitoring.
- They provide short training courses, advice and research.
- Through research they make recommendations to people and cooperatives on how to mitigate the risks of climate change.
- OSRNac has an industrial sector project that involves mapping out types of industry and cooperatives in the agricultural sector are allowed registration in this digital platform.

- Coopérative Agricole Coocenki (COOCENKI) is a union of cooperatives that work in agriculture in North Kivu.
- COOCENKI started with 10 cooperatives and has grown to 26 cooperatives registered by the government and 15 cooperatives not yet registered.
- It supports the community in agro pastoral production, processing, marketing and training in skills to improve the productivity standards.
- COOCENKI supports youth and women to start their own businesses.
- They have distributed 3070 guinea pigs and 3470 rabbits.
- Some of the challenges include old and aged membership in the cooperatives, a mindset that guinea pigs and rabbits are meant for the poor.
- Black Box Asbl operates in Northern part of DR Congo where it has been promoting agriculture to combat the rural-urban migration, stimulate savings and help cooperatives market their produce bypassing the middlemen.
- The cooperative sector gives the youth an opportunity to create employment through the cooperative enterprise model.
- Union des Jeunes Congolais pour le Changement (UJCC) presented two case studies of artisanal miners and cocoa farmer cooperative.
- The artisanal miners are over 5000 diggers who were able to form a cooperative and collectively bargain for protection of their rights.
- UJCC has helped cocoa farmers get organized and improve productivity and quality of cacao.
- Some of the challenges identified by UJCC include lack of mentors to coach and orient new members, political instability, low access to finance due to legal aspects and corruption, demotivated young members, lack of a conducive environment and proper organization to confront challenges.
- L'union des Coopératives Agricoles du Congo-Ouest (UCACO) is an NGO operating in Kwilu province and develops small agricultural producers by provision of seeds and modern farming techniques to increase agricultural productivity.
- UCACO currently works with 43 member groups located in different villages.
- Achievements to date include palm tree farm established, agricultural & veterinary school established, fish farming and training centres for livestock farming.
- UCACO identified the following challenges: people lack courage to farm due to lack of market access, lack of storage facilities for farmers, lack of technical advice to identify good seeds, lack of standardized weight measures and lack of certified products

Panel Discussion: Youth Achievements in Cooperatives, Challenges and Recommendations

South Africa

- South Africa with the establishment of the Ministry of small medium and micro enterprises has started youth cooperatives and provided training to young people involved in cooperatives and out of school youth.
- A lot of lobbying has also been made to amend the cooperative act.
- Cooperation and inter-trade in the SADC region has been hampered by poor infrastructure networks, expensive flights, political instability and lack of coordination among the youth cooperatives.
- Though cooperative financial institutions are critical they are not well spread in the SADC region. The region could draw lessons from Kenya and Tanzania.
- There is need to have a more coordinated interaction among cooperatives in South Africa where there are competing apex bodies.
- Cooperatives need to create their own funding to harness technology.
- There is need for collective advocacy and lobby decision makers to be able to benefit African cooperatives engage the youth in cooperative development in the region.
- In Rwanda, transportation and artisanal cooperatives have attracted majority of the youth-around 80 percent aged between 16-30 years.
- These cooperatives have created jobs, expansion of income generating activities, access to assets and contributed to community development activities
- In Rwanda, some of the challenges facing youth cooperatives include: lack of members awareness, negative attitude towards cooperatives, limited access and skills in ICT for rural youth, lack of access to finance and climate change impacting on agriculture.
- Cooperatives should leverage on ICT use to link to markets and at the same time provide a platform for innovation and creativity.
- There is need for cooperatives to be encouraged to increase the support of youth in their program activities and offer trainings to cooperative leaders and members in order to reduce the human resource gaps.

Kenya

- Over 10 million people in Kenya belong to a cooperative but most of the youth do not join cooperatives for various reasons such as insufficient funds to save in cooperatives, lack of knowledge and a lack of flexibility on the part of the cooperatives to accommodate the youth.
- Cooperatives remain an important bridge of economic empowerment
- Youth groups from counties like Nyamira, Machakos, Nakuru and others, have proved to create employment for themselves with no financial support. from development partners and others with little support from the government initiatives like the
- Youth enterprise fund (YEF), the Uwezo fund and the access to government procurement opportunities (AGPO) programs specifically focus on enabling youth access affordable credit to start businesses and facilitate access to markets for their products and services.

- Financial institutions find it difficult to trust the youth groups and cooperatives with the perception that co-operatives are corrupt and poorly managed thus could not be trusted hence making it hard for them to access finances.
- Challenges also arise from the portfolio of products offered by co-operatives not resonating with most of the youth, lack of sufficient knowledge on how co-operatives work.
- Youth could be encouraged to form multipurpose cooperatives to alleviate some of the perceptions
- Established cooperatives should provide mentoring, coaching, guidance and advisory services to their young members so that they can become leaders' entrepreneurs to overcome the constraints.

Democratic Republic of Congo

- Promoting innovation among youth is one of the objectives that should be reflected in the business plans of cooperatives.
- COOPEC Nyawera has been assisting young people with the ideas of businesses by supporting them financially through saving and credit services as well as technical support.
- Some of the challenges faced by this cooperative is the ability to meet the needs of young entrepreneurs since most of their resources are made up of members' savings.
- COOPEC Nyawera fears that young entrepreneurs' savings are short-term which have more risk of non-payment than long-term loans.
- Young people should be supported to access the long term loans or grants to enable them to progress with their activities and carry out various developmental projects

West Africa

- Easy Investment Co-op Credit Union Ltd (EICCU) from Ghana acknowledged the cooperative model as it promotes the welfare of its members, sometimes through joint ownership of assets such as farm machinery.
- Youth membership has increased from 30 to 60% at EICCU.
- Youth agro-base cooperatives acquire land and then distribute the land to young members to farm and also provides them agricultural extension services
- In Nigeria youth agro-based cooperatives run student farms, consumer shops, barber centers and food canteens
- In Liberia cooperatives provide school materials to the students
- In Gambia, there are credit cooperatives consisting only of youth
- The result has been community cohesion, reduced violence and increased access to nutritious food.
- Youth cooperatives face a number of challenges that can be categorized into:

- o Engagement: exclusion attitudes of cooperative elders with dialogue and advocacy lacking for effective involvement
 - o Legal challenges: In Ghana for instance starting and registering a cooperative is very involving and one needs to be 21 years to engage in any professional contract
 - o Capital: limitations around access to finance exist
 - o Education: Youth lacking the requisite knowledge to effectively engage in cooperatives
 - o Capacity and supportive environment: The cooperatives lack capacity and resources to provide an enabling environment to youths in cooperatives.
- Suggested recommendations include promotion of collective entrepreneurship as a viable option for youth; facilitate the creation of youth only cooperatives; imposition of youth leadership, but be based on qualification/qualities, capacity and trust; and setting up coop incubators and support services as part of business development services.

RESOLUTIONS

In the light of the observations made during the conference, we the participants:

AWARE of the low representation of youth in cooperatives in Africa;

RECOGNISING the socio-cultural, economic and technological facilities that promote co-operative development;

ACKNOWLEDGING the vast potential of engaging youth in co-operatives, worker co-operatives, agricultural co-operatives and other forms of cooperatives;

COMMITTED to actively getting involved in security and socio-economic challenges of Africa through engagement in cooperatives;

HONOURING the efforts made by governments, civil society and development partners in training, implementing and promoting programmes aimed at engaging more youth in cooperatives to alleviate poverty;

COMMITTED to encouraging all stakeholders to redouble their efforts to work towards realizing the Sustainable Development Goal 1: “To eliminate extreme poverty in all its forms”, as well as the Africa Agenda 2063 that calls for “A Prosperous Africa Based on Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development”;

EXERCISING our sovereign and inalienable right to participate in lawful influencing of policy-making processes:

DO HEREBY:

- Call upon our governments to go beyond policy making and ensure enforcement of laws that allow funding for the youth to capacitate their cooperatives in order to support co-operative development in Africa;

- Call upon our governments to redouble their efforts in retracting laws that demand too many requirements and bureaucracy to enable the youth start their own cooperatives;
- Call upon our governments to provide a legal and policy environment that will allow young co-operators to explore new co-operative sectors such as health service, consumer and worker co-operatives in Africa;
- Call upon our governments to curb some restrictions that are put on country policies hindering the creation of an enabling environment for co-operatives to do business
- Call upon our governments to work and engage with cooperatives to avoid interference in policies implementation by cooperatives.
- Call upon the Alliance Africa to avail means for youth to own their cooperatives
- Call upon the Alliance Africa to design projects for youth to benefit the youth through capacity building in order to gains skills and knowledge.
- Call upon the Alliance Africa to identify thematic areas at national/regional/sub-regional level for advocacy.
- Call upon the Alliance Africa to organize annual periodic for thematic and policy issues that will influence decisions for policy makers.
- Call upon the Alliance Africa together with other development partners to do more advocacy especially in marketing of youth cooperatives since youth are competent to improve their engagement in cooperative development.
- Call upon all youth co-operators present to get involved and engage in conversations around lobbying policy makers and government officials to ensure that support and the interests of the co-operative movement are secured;
- Call upon cooperatives to ensure that their youth members are exposed to best practices, lessons and new innovations so that the movement remain relevant and economically sound;

This communiqué was issued by We, the undersigned, on behalf of all the participants, representing youth co-operators from across the Africa region, at the Alliance Africa 2nd Africa Cooperative Youth Conference on 21 September 2017 at the Ihusi Hotel, Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo.

Annex 2 : Programme

“Harnessing Innovation among Youth through Co-operatives”

Time	Event	Presenter / Facilitator	Moderator
08:00 - 08:30	Registration		
08:30 - 10:00	Welcome and Introduction Key note address: Youth Engagement through Co-operatives in the AU Youth Charter 2006	-COOPEC Nyawera -Local Authority -Dr. Chiyoge Sifa – Alliance Africa; Regional Director -Hilda Ojal ; Alliance Africa Youth Network President -Gabriel Buffa ; Alliance Youth Network President	Coopec Nyawera –
10:00 - 10:30	The ICA-EU Partnership Project brief presentation and status of implementation (Global Youth Research)	Dr. Rose Karimi and Mr. Erick Obongo, The Alliance Africa	
10:30 – 11:00	Health Break		
11:00 – 11:30	Presentation: Co-operative Enterprise in Economic Transformation	Indira Panta	
11:30 - 12:30	Round Table Discussion: Case studies of successful youth enterprises using technology for production and job creation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Indira Panta Gabriela Buffa, COOPERAR ASOP, IITA and COOPEC Nyawera Jean-François David ALAUWA - Black Box Asbl Mr. Osamu Nakano - Japan Workers' Co-operative Union (JWCU) Mr. Mukenge B. TOTORO – UJCC (Union des Jeunes Congolais pour le Changement) Ivan Kardum - Young European Cooperators Network (YECN) Ir Augustin KABAMBA - 	
12:30 – 13:00	Questions and Answers		

13:00 - 14:00	Lunch Break		
14:00 - 15:00	Round table: to discuss about youth achievements in co-operatives, challenges and possible recommendations.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. South/BOLESWA –Mr. Francis Noko; President BOLESWA 2. East – Mr. Patrick BUSERUKA; NCCR 3. Central – Mrs. Michele CHIKOMOLA; COOPEC Nyawera 4. West – Mr. David Kofi Afful; EICCU 5. ILO – Mr. Guy 6. FAO – 7. We Effect - Hans Lind 8. EU Delegation in DRC 9. Congolese Youth Groups 	
15:00 - 15:30	Questions and Answers		
15:30 - 16:15	Small group discussions; to identify opportunities, recommendations and social entrepreneurship.		
16:15 - 16:30	Health Break		
16:30 - 17:15	Group Presentations; Conclusions and Summary and Evaluation;		

Annex 3 : Participant List

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/5wipewhwqnfwazs/2nd%20Youth%20Conference%20Attendance%20Sheet.pdf?dl=0>

Annex 4: Evaluation of the Conference

The theme of this Conference was clearly defined.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	12	29.3	29.3	29.3
Valid Agree	28	68.3	68.3	97.6
Valid Neutral	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Participation and interaction were encouraged.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	1	2.4	2.4	2.4
Valid Agree	14	34.1	34.1	36.6
Valid Neutral	20	48.8	48.8	85.4
Valid Disagree	3	7.3	7.3	92.7
Valid Disagree	3	7.3	7.3	100.0
Total	41	100.0	100.0	

The topics covered were relevant to me

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	14	34.1	34.1	34.1
Valid Agree	22	53.7	53.7	87.8
Valid Neutral	5	12.2	12.2	100.0
Total	41	100.0	100.0	

The content was organized and easy to follow

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	2	4.9	4.9	4.9
Valid Agree	6	14.6	14.6	19.5
Valid Neutral	23	56.1	56.1	75.6
Valid Disagree	6	14.6	14.6	90.2
Valid Disagree	4	9.8	9.8	100.0
Total	41	100.0	100.0	

The materials distributed were helpful.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Agree	1	2.4	2.4	2.4
Valid Agree	12	29.3	29.3	31.7
Valid Agree	18	43.9	43.9	75.6

Neutral	9	22.0	22.0	97.6
Disagree	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
Total	41	100.0	100.0	

This Conference experience will be useful in my work

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1	2.4	2.4	2.4
Strongly Agree	16	39.0	39.0	41.5
Valid Agree	18	43.9	43.9	85.4
Neutral	6	14.6	14.6	100.0
Total	41	100.0	100.0	

The presenters were knowledgeable about the conference topics.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1	2.4	2.4	2.4
Strongly Agree	11	26.8	26.8	29.3
Valid Agree	25	61.0	61.0	90.2
Neutral	3	7.3	7.3	97.6
Disagree	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
Total	41	100.0	100.0	

The presenters were well prepared.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	15	36.6	36.6	36.6
Valid Agree	13	31.7	31.7	68.3
Neutral	11	26.8	26.8	95.1
Disagree	2	4.9	4.9	100.0
Total	41	100.0	100.0	

The Conference objectives were met.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	3	7.3	7.3	7.3
Strongly Agree	7	17.1	17.1	24.4
Valid Agree	14	34.1	34.1	58.5
Neutral	15	36.6	36.6	95.1
Disagree	2	4.9	4.9	100.0
Total	41	100.0	100.0	

The time allotted for the conference was sufficient.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
--	-----------	---------	---------------	--------------------

Valid	Strongly Agree	4	9.8	9.8	9.8
	Agree	11	26.8	26.8	36.6
	Neutral	12	29.3	29.3	65.9
	Disagree	8	19.5	19.5	85.4
	Strongly Disagree	6	14.6	14.6	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

The meeting room and facilities were adequate and comfortable.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Agree	19	46.3	46.3
	Agree	19	46.3	92.7
	Neutral	3	7.3	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	

12. What did you like most about this Conference?

- The speakers
- Theme of the conference
- Experience sharing
- The topics discussed
- The venue of the meeting

13. What aspects of the Conference could be improved?

- Time allocation
- Next meeting should allow exhibitions of products from youth coops

14. How do you hope to change your practice as a result of this Conference?

- Implement the positive issues raised during the conference
- Engage with policy makers on youth issues
- Advocate and encourage youth to join co-operatives

15. This Conference is best suited for which position in your organization?

- Youth leaders
- All youth in co-operatives
- Youth representatives
- Managers

16. What additional topics would you like to have in the next conference?

- Establishment and management of SACCOs
- Case study on successful policy processes managed by a co-operative
- Financial risks reduction in co-operatives
- Results of the implementation of this meeting's discussions

Annex 5 : Conference Photos

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/149964868@N02/page3>



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