

**To Farm or Not to Farm? Rural Youth Perceptions of Farming and their Decision of Whether or Not to Work as a Farmer: A Case Study of Rural Youth in Kiambu County, Kenya**

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## **Abstract**

The present study examines rural youth perceptions of farming and their decision of whether or not to work as a farmer by paying special attention to personal career aspirations, social (peer and parental) influences, and structural (land, finance, market, and agricultural education) constraints as the “push” and “pull” forces of farming. Interviews were conducted with 59 youth in six villages of Kiambu County, Kenya. Findings revealed that non-agricultural career aspirations, such as engineering and teaching, may create the desire to migrate away from farming. While many youth held negative perceptions of farming, which were reinforced through peer and parental influence, a sub-set of youth expressed a passion for farming and considered farming an attractive career path. However, the existence of structural barriers and the difficulties in overcoming them, especially access to land, limited their participation in farming.

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## **Table of Contents**

<b>CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>Deagrarianization and the Reorientation of Rural Livelihoods .....</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Thesis Outline .....</i>	<i>3</i>
<b>CHAPTER TWO – THE ‘YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE’ DISCOURSE: A KENYAN PERSPECTIVE.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>Kenya’s Demographic Transition and its Implications on Agriculture.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Research Questions.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Theoretical Framework .....</i>	<i>12</i>
<b>CHAPTER THREE – RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<i>Data Collection Tools and Method.....</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Sample of Participants.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Sampling Methodology .....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Demographic Characteristics of Sample .....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Limitations .....</i>	<i>17</i>
<b>CHAPTER FOUR – MAPPING OUT KIAMBU COUNTY VILLAGE SITES.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<i>Economy.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Agricultural Prospects.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Research Sites .....</i>	<i>21</i>
<b>CHAPTER FIVE – YOUTH CAREER ASPIRATIONS.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<i>Personal Career Aspirations .....</i>	<i>24</i>
<b>CHAPTER SIX – THE ROLE OF SOCIAL INFLUENCES.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<i>Peer Influence .....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Parental Influence.....</i>	<i>32</i>
<b>CHAPTER SEVEN – OVERCOMING MAJOR STRUCTURAL BARRIERS .....</b>	<b>38</b>
<i>Renting/Leasing Land.....</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>High Cost of Input Supplies .....</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>Low Profit Margins and Unpredictable Market Prices.....</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>Insufficient Vocational Training Programs .....</i>	<i>50</i>
<b>CHAPTER EIGHT – CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>61</b>

## **List of Tables**

Table 1 – Constraints limiting youth participation in agriculture in East Africa.....	11
Table 2 – Distribution of sample participants by economic activity, gender, age and education..	18
Table 3 – Number of participants from each village .....	23
Table 4 – Distribution of career aspirations by participants .....	24
Table 5 – Most frequently first ranked barrier.....	38
Table 6 – Ranking of access to land .....	39
Table 7 – Land size of youth presently farming .....	40
Table 8 – Ranking of access to market .....	45
Table 9 – Monthly income earnings from farming (KSH) .....	46
Table 10 – Most popular crop/livestock products grown by the participants.....	48
Table 11 – Ranking of access to agricultural education .....	50

## **List of Figures**

Figure 1 – Youth and Adult Unemployment Rates (Percent).....	8
Figure 2 – Kiambu County Population Pyramid.....	20
Figure 3 – Map of Kiambu County (Shaded in Yellow) .....	22
Figure 4 – Snapshot of the Form Four agriculture textbook.....	52
Figure 5 – Snapshot of the Form Four agriculture textbook.....	53
Figure 6 – Snapshot of the Form Four agriculture textbook.....	54
Figure 7 – Snapshot of the Mkulima Young webpage .....	55

## **List of Acronyms**

ASDS:	Agricultural Sector Development Strategy
EAFF:	Eastern Africa Farmers Federation
FAC:	Future Agricultures Consortium
FAO:	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
IFAD:	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFPRI:	International Food Policy Research Institute
ISSER:	Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research
KIHBS	Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey
MGD:	Millennium Development Goals
NYP:	National Youth Policy
SRA:	Strategy for Revitalization of Agriculture
WB:	World Bank

## **Swahili Words**

Dania:	Coriander
Jembe:	Hoe (Agricultural Tool)
Matatu:	Minibus
Mkulima:	Farmer
Shamba:	Farm
Sukuma wiki:	Kales

## CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

*“Smallholder or peasant farming is the backbone of the African rural economy. It concerns the manner in which about 280 million people in sub-Saharan rural Africa, 50-55 million families, earn their living from year to year. The overwhelming majority of these people (about 85-90 percent of the total population of this area) are peasant farmers. Their activities – crop production and livestock herding – play a major role in feeding the rural and urban populations, acting as the main source of employment and earnings, and providing the principal basis of exports and often of government revenues as well” (Krishna, 1977, p. 13).*

Krishna’s observations from 1977 still hold true as we ponder over them in 2014. Today’s major development institutions continue to emphasize the link between smallholder farming and issues of food security and rural development. Consider for instance the following statements by The World Bank and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO):

### *The World Bank*

“Improving agricultural performance is the most powerful tool we have available to reduce global poverty and hunger. Seventy-five percent of the world’s poor are rural, most are involved in farming, and agriculture remains fundamental in the 21st century for poverty reduction, economic growth, and environmental sustainability” (The World Bank, 2014).

### *FAO*

“Eighty percent of the farmland in sub-Saharan Africa and Asia is managed by smallholders (working on up to 10 hectares)...Women comprise an average of 43 percent of the agricultural labour force of developing countries up to almost 50 percent in Eastern and Southeastern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Should women farmers have the same access to productive resources as men, they could increase yields on their farms by 20-30 percent, lifting 100-150 million people out of hunger” (FAO, 2012).

These statements are reflective of the contemporary strategies concerned with the economic and social development of African agrarian economies. The rest of the chapter briefly reviews how these strategies have evolved throughout the past decades leading to certain transformations of rural areas and the agricultural sector.

## Deagrarianization and the Reorientation of Rural Livelihoods

The title of this sub-section is inspired by Deborah Bryceson's 2002 paper titled "The Scramble in Africa: Reorienting Rural Livelihoods." Bryceson situates the on-going transformations of African rural areas within the historical experiences of colonization and the waves of post-colonial urbanization thereafter. These on-going transformations are marked by a process called 'deagrarianization,' which is defined as "a long-term process of occupational adjustment, income earning reorientation, social identification and spatial relocation of rural dwellers away from strictly agricultural-based modes of livelihood" (Bryceson, 1996, p. 726). Bryceson argues that with the advent of colonialism in sub-Saharan Africa began the phase of peasantization. During this phase, African labour was used to produce agricultural commodities for export to Europe, and in many other cases, male labour was directed to urban areas thus laying the foundations for circular migration. Inspired by the 19<sup>th</sup> century Western urbanization, the beginnings of the post-independence era ushered in Africa's own wave of urbanization. However, without industrial job availability and without a secure domestic food supply, it was not long before the tables turned on the optimism that was voiced by African governments on behalf of urbanization. African economic policies came under scrutiny and were widely criticized by the international community.

Many African countries started to adopt what Bryceson calls the "turning point" policies, ones that "chip away at peasantries' economic viability, social coherence and class position" (Bryceson, 1996, p. 727). For Kenya, the imposition of structural adjustment programs in the 1980's marked the beginnings of their "turning point" policies. A brief but broad analysis of the implications of SAP policies on Kenyan society as a whole is given by Joseph Rono (2002) in his article "The impact of the structural adjustment programmes on Kenyan society." For the purposes of this study, it is sufficient to acknowledge that the SAP policies threatened to drastically change the face of Kenyan smallholder farming. Market uncertainties and increasing capital costs were among the many side-effects of SAP policies that resulted in reduced incomes from farming, which in-turn led to rising incidences of non-agricultural income diversification. As Bryceson concludes, "African peasant agricultural commodity production was increasingly losing its place in the world division of labor" (Bryceson, 1996, p. 729).

Deagrarianization is an ongoing process, and perhaps the best evidence of this is the continual growth of the non-agricultural rural economy. The conclusions of the present study

will add valuable insights to the literature that is concerned with understanding the complexities associated with the process of deagrarianization. A few decades after the SAP policies, attention returned to the agricultural sector, and more specifically, on the need to improve smallholder incomes. While the challenges of smallholder farming now may be exactly the same as they have been during the past decades (i.e. weak land access, market uncertainties, etc.), smallholder agriculture is being branded with a new language, the language of ‘farming-as-business.’ It is a language that reflects a sense of neoliberal modernism, embedded within which is the message that farming, if done using modern methods and techniques, can be high-income generating activity.

The need to include smallholder farming in a sustainable, food secure Africa’s future, have led to an increased attention towards rural youth, the next generation of farmers. Studies that examine rural youth decisions of whether or not to participate in farming are starting to become an integral part of discussions related to agricultural development. Who amongst the rural youth aspire towards a farming career? What influences their decision to engage in, or migrate away from a farming business? What kind of support do they need to succeed as 21<sup>st</sup> century farmers? These are among the many questions that laid the foundation for my thesis study. I specifically wanted to understand young people’s attitude towards farming, and the different factors that inform their decision of whether or not to work as a farmer.

### Thesis Outline

The rest of this paper consists of seven chapters. Chapter two discusses the youth in agriculture discourse, specifically from a Kenyan context. Particular emphasis is placed on Kenya’s demographic trends, which point to a consistently high proportion of youth in the population, and its implications on the country’s economy. The chapter concludes by presenting the research questions and the theoretical framework that will guide the analysis of the data.

Chapter three presents the study’s research design and methodology. The chapter begins by explaining the data tools and method, the study sample, the sampling methodology, and concludes by presenting the limitations of the study.

Chapter four illustrates Kiambu County, the study site of the research. The six different villages where fieldwork was carried out are identified, as well some general characteristics of Kiambu County's population, economy, and agricultural prospects.

Chapters five, six, and seven present the main findings of the paper. Chapter five is concerned with the research questions that deal with the personal career aspirations of the youth, and their perception of farming as a business. Chapter six is concerned with the research questions that deal with the social factors that influence youth perceptions of farming and their decision of whether or not to engage in a farming business. Chapter seven is concerned with the research questions that deal with the perceptions of structural barriers that might make farming an unappealing economic activity.

Chapter eight presents the conclusions and provides some important learning points that contribute to the understanding of the complexities of the process of deagrarianization

## **CHAPTER TWO – THE ‘YOUTH IN AGRICULTURE’ DISCOURSE: A KENYAN PERSPECTIVE**

Globally recognized as a significant producer of tea, coffee, horticultural products, and dairy and meat products, Kenya’s agricultural sector makes up 25 per cent of total GDP, and accounts for 65 per cent of national exports, while providing a livelihood to about 80 per cent of the population (Poulton & Kanyinga, 2013, p. 3). Kenya is largely a trade deficit country, with its two main export items being horticultural produce and tea. It is also a food deficit country which, even in a good harvest year, must import up to 20 per cent of its annual cereal requirements (International Fund for Agricultural Development [IFAD], 2014, para. 4). According to its MDG report, Kenya continues to be plagued by high poverty, which is closely linked to food insecurity. The latest World Bank data on poverty in Kenya indicates that the poverty headcount ratio of \$1.25 a day (expressed as a percentage of total population) stood at 43 per cent in 2005. Poverty in Kenya is mainly a rural phenomenon, with 68 per cent of the poor living in the rural areas (50 per cent of the rural population) and the remaining 32 per cent in the cities (34 per cent of the urban population) (FAO, 2013, p. 29). Rural households rely on agriculture for most of their income. The rural economy in turn depends mainly on smallholder farming, which produces the majority of Kenya’s agricultural output (IFAD, 2013, p. 1). The average smallholder farmer, especially in the high potential crop areas, owns about one acre of land, which is often cultivated and subjected to significant soil erosion (Irungu, 2009, p. 4). The high incidence of rural poverty is hardly a surprise considering the majority of the population works in agriculture while agriculture contributes to only 25 per cent of total GDP. There is therefore strong reason to believe that the growth of the agricultural sector is a key factor for the overall performance of the economy, and for poverty reduction in general.

After listing Kenya under the category of agrarian economies (i.e. majority of the population lives in rural areas and is engaged in agriculture), the 2013 World Development Report on Jobs suggests that for agrarian economies a growth in agriculture leads to more poverty reduction than growth in other sectors, because poor people are concentrated in the sector and because they participate more in the growth of agriculture than in the growth of other sectors (The World Bank, 2013, p. 191). A 2013 report by IFAD titled “Enabling poor rural people to overcome poverty in Kenya” confirms that “Evidence shows that agriculture-led

growth in Kenya is more than twice as effective in reducing poverty as growth led by industry. The key to better performance in agriculture lies in boosting smallholder productivity and developing non-farm activities” (IFAD, 2013, p. 3). The government of Kenya has followed suit with these reasonings first by identifying agriculture as a key sector of focus in their 2008 blueprint for economic and social development, *Kenya Vision 2030*. Vision 2030 was then followed by a revision of the *Strategy for Revitalizing Agriculture* (SRA) which was first adopted in March 2004 to create improved agricultural legislation. In 2010 the SRA, originally intended to run from 2004-2014, was superseded by the *Agricultural Sector Development Strategy 2010-2020* (ASDS). The ASDS foresees a food secure and prosperous nation by 2020 and aims to achieve a paradigm shift from subsistence to commercial agriculture. The country has also increased budget allocation to the agriculture sector Ministries, reaching a record high of over 10 per cent in the 2011/2012 budget year (FAO, 2013, p.43). Emphasizing agricultural growth and smallholder productivity as a pathway out of poverty raises a couple of key questions, especially given the ageing farmer population: who are the next generation of farmers and do they have the resources they need to be successful?

#### Kenya’s Demographic Transition and its Implications on Agriculture

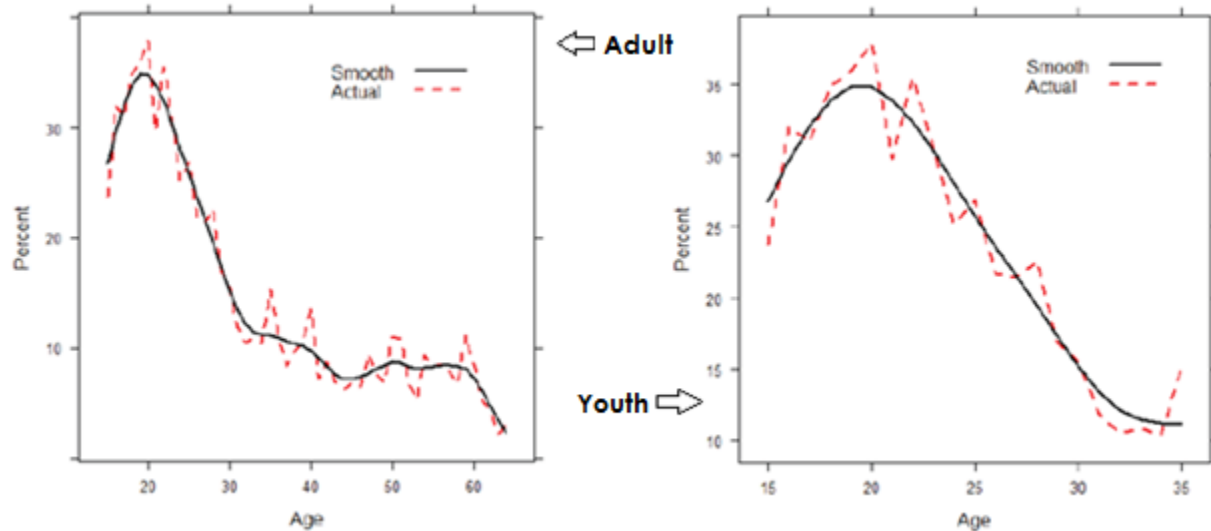
The Future Agricultures Consortium (FAC) and the Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER) held an international conference in Ghana on March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2012 titled “Young People, Farming, and Food.” A couple of facts that emerged from the papers presented at the conference were hard to ignore. The first was the high rates of youth unemployment in many countries around the world. Ben White, Professor of Rural Sociology at the International Institute of Social Studies in The Hague, in his paper “Agriculture and the generation problem: rural youth, employment and the future of farming” pointed out that “almost all countries in the world face serious problems of mass youth unemployment and underemployment, with unemployment rates much higher in rural than in urban areas” (White, 2012, p. 1). The second eye-opening fact that was much discussed in the conference papers was the disinterest among rural youth to work in agriculture. Yisak Tafere and Tassew Woldehann, both of whom dedicate their research time to youth studies, in their paper “Rural youth aspiring to occupations beyond agriculture: Evidence from Young Lives Study in Ethiopia” observed that “in developing African countries like Ethiopia, where there is a serious food insecurity, getting young people with an ambition of becoming farmers is emerging as a challenge. Young people

are being raised up with career aspirations by far beyond agriculture putting the farming enterprise at risk” (Tafere & Woldehann, 2012, p. 4). Both of these facts, namely high youth unemployment rates and youth disinterest to work in farming, hold true for many African nations, including the main study site of this paper, Kenya.

Kenya, well recognized as an agricultural based economy, is one among the many African countries that is trying to get a grip on the issue of youth in agriculture. The country’s demographic trend points to more young people in the population than ever before. In 2012 the total population of Kenya was estimated at 43,013,341 inhabitants, with 42.8 per cent of the population being under 14 years of age and 54.6 per cent being between the ages of 15 to 64 years; the median age of the Kenyan population is 18.5, compared to 29.2 years for the world (FAO, 2013, p. 29). The Kenyan constitution defines youth as all individuals in the republic who have attained the age of 18 years but have not attained the age of 35 (Njonjo, 2010, p. xvi). This definition is largely based on the understanding that ‘youth’ is a phase between childhood and adulthood which is characterized by processes of sexual maturation and growing social and economic autonomy from parents and caregivers (Leavy & Smith 2010).

High rates of population growth in Kenya, particularly the ones witnessed during the mid-80’s, have brought about increasing pressure on the country’s resources, and more specifically, have created significant challenges for decent livelihoods and employment among the youth. Figure 1 shows calculated youth and adult unemployment rates based on the KIHBS 2005/06 micro records. A closer look reveals that 80 per cent of Kenya’s 2.3 million unemployed are young people between the ages of 15 and 34, while the largest number of unemployed youth are between 18 and 25 years (Zepeda et al., 2013, p. 16).

**Figure 1: Youth and adult unemployment rates (percent)**



**Source: Zepeda et al. (2013)**

More than anything else, these youth are in need of policies and programs that focus on positive engagement and appropriate empowerment, ones that deliver effective social and financial support. This will require moving beyond the longstanding perceptions of African youth as idlers at best or perpetrators of crime at worst who are unprepared to make any contributions to society. In his analysis of Rwandan young men, Marc Sommers warns that the ample of theories that single out African male youth as elementally dangerous may merely be making a dire situation much worse (2006, p. 14). In the Kenyan context, Muthee observes that Kenyan youth have often been viewed as a problem in the society, “which the government and other non-state actors need to ameliorate” (2010, p. 18). She goes on to note that this has led to their marginalization in national policies and has given them a weak legal standing. The 2006 Kenyan National Youth Policy (NYP) sought to address these concerns by recognizing Kenyan youth as integral actors of society. It is perhaps befitting to quote the following paragraph from the foreword of the NYP document to illustrate the importance and urgency of its adoption:

*This National Youth Policy represents an important milestone – not only for young women and men, but for our country as a whole...In the past, no recognition was given to the needs and concerns of young men and women, who were instead, left to find their own way in a difficult and ever changing society. Today we can celebrate the vision of the roles young women and men play in our country. Where young people contribute to the development the country and realize their full potential (Ministry of Youth Affairs, 2007, p. iv)*

Brooks et al. argue that African countries can harvest the “youth dividend” by employing policies that simultaneously raise productivity, reduce real food prices, boost rural incomes, and create jobs (2013, p. 2). Tapping into the “youth as future farmers” debate, Anyidoho et al. note that Kenyan documents point towards policies aimed at framing farming as a viable commercial business in an effort to attract youth towards agriculture (2012, p. 10). While the agricultural sector can certainly benefit from youthful energy, Brooks et al. point out that the youth will need to see agriculture as profitable, competitive and dynamic (2013, p. 2). A National Youth Survey in 2003 revealed that the largest proportion of Kenyan youth (40.9 per cent) aspired to work in the service sector, while only 4.7 per cent showed an inclination towards agriculture (Institute of Economic Affairs, 2003, p. 3). It is no secret as to why the youth shy away from agriculture. In fact, this is a global challenge and a reality that haunts many African economies. “Farming is a difficult life and offers no attraction to the youth. It is considered high risk as it is dependent on rainfall and has marginal returns” and is commonly associated with notions such as “low income, drudgery, low societal standing,” all of which fail to meet the aspirations of the youth (Proctor & Lucchesi, 2012, p. 29).

Leavy and Smith (2010) explain that aspirations are not just about economic opportunity – status is important: agriculture is unappealing to young people because it does not bring status regardless of economic outcomes. In Kenya the vibe around agriculture is clear: It “is not the thing to do, i.e. if all else fails go into farming ... doing agriculture is a sign of failure” (Proctor & Lucchesi, 2012, p. 29). Similarly, a study on Kenya’s prospects for agriculture revealed that agriculture is no longer perceived by many to be an activity that provides a good standard of living (Proctor & Lucchesi, 2012, p. 31). Evidence also shows that in East Africa the status of agriculture as “a poor man’s job” is further reinforced in schools when students are sent to dig the school farm as a form of punishment for a mistake. Instead, salaried employment in the formal sector is promoted and portrayed as a prestigious occupation with high esteem (Proctor & Lucchesi, 2012, p. 29).

Aspiring to achieve a standard of living not typically associated with agricultural livelihoods, migration among youth to urban centres has been rapidly increasing. Most of the migrants to urban centres come as young adults (the highest age group is 25-29), usually sometime shortly after leaving or completing secondary with employment as the primary

motivation (Njonjo, 2010, p. 12). Non-agricultural careers promise to be less back-breaking, more stable and more remunerative (Swarts & Aliber 2013). This is not surprising considering the barriers youth have to overcome to have any hopes of succeeding as a farmer. These include access to land, finance, and a viable market. As Leavy and Smith (2010, p. 10) note, “Young people’s interest in making farming an important element of their livelihood will likely be positively related to their ability to put together or gain access to the resources needed to farm on a “commercial” basis (i.e. land, credit, labour...).” In the Kenyan context, lack of access to land has been found to be a major barrier limiting youth participation in farming. In their study of small-scale farming and youth, Proctor and Lucchesi discovered that with perennial crops such as tea, coffee, cotton and industrial crops, farmers in Kenya are generally in their 50s and 60s (2012, p. 32). They own the land and the title deeds, and are unlikely to relinquish control of it, except through inheritance.

The contemporary studies that focus on youth as Kenya’s next generation of farmers repeatedly emphasize the need to take into consideration youth perspectives and experiences. This requires a shift from traditionally viewing the youth merely as ‘human capital.’ “Young men and women are busy in the here and now, developing youth cultures and identities in their own right, i.e. trying to be successful as youth and in the eyes of their peers, besides (or sometimes instead of) preparing themselves to be successful adults” (White, 2012, p. 3). Studies examining future relations between young people, farming and food must also incorporate the intergenerational tensions that manifest themselves in almost every rural community. These include “young people’s problems in getting access to farmland and other agriculture-related opportunities in societies where gerontocracy, agrarian inequality and corporate penetration of the agrifood sector, in varying degrees, are the order of the day” (White, 2012, p. 2). The present study aims to highlight some of these tensions and personal youth perspectives using a social migration framework.

### Research Questions

*Main research question: **How do personal aspirations, social (peer and parental) influences, and structural (land, finance, market, and agricultural education) constraints influence rural youth perceptions of farming and their interest to work as a farmer?*** In

November of 2009 the East Africa Farmers Federation (EAFF) held a youth consultative

workshop in Uganda. The objective of the workshop was to identify factors constraining youth involvement in agriculture in the region. Findings revealed that negative attitudes towards agriculture and poor support from elders, combined with structural constraints such as lack of access to land, finance, agricultural knowledge, and market accessibility were among the many obstacles that limited youth participation in farming (see table 1). Based on the findings by EAFF, three independent variables, namely personal aspirations, social (peer and parental) influences, and structural (land, finance, market, and agricultural education) constraints, were postulated to influence youth perceptions of farming and their interest to work as a farmer. The dependent variables examined are perceptions of farming and the decision to farm or not to farm. By relating output variables to input variables, the study aims to tease out the influence of possible input variables on youth perceptions of farming and their decision of whether or not to farm. Three sub-questions were developed:

- What do personal career aspirations reveal about youth perceptions of farming and their interest to work as a farmer?
- How does parental and peer influence shape youth perceptions of farming and their interest to work as a farmer?
- What role do structural barriers, i.e. access to land, access to finance, access to agricultural education/information, and access to a market, play in informing youth perceptions of farming and their interest to work as a farmer?

**Table 1: Constraints limiting youth participation in agriculture in East Africa**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shortage of production resources – land, finance</li> <li>• Negative attitude about agriculture</li> <li>• Limited agricultural knowledge and skills as well as leadership and managerial skills</li> <li>• Limited youth groups and associations/cooperatives</li> <li>• Youth involvement in decision-making still low</li> <li>• Attraction of quick gains especially from white collar jobs</li> <li>• Lack of youth policies</li> <li>• Lack of support from elders for youth in agriculture</li> <li>• Lack of experience and skill sharing</li> <li>• Lack of market accessibility</li> <li>• Lack of supportive social services and infrastructure</li> <li>• Unwillingness of educated youth to engage in agriculture</li> <li>• Absence of youth departments in national farmer federations</li> </ul>
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**Source: Sumberg et al. (2012)**

## Theoretical Framework

Migration studies have been a part and parcel of development studies for decades. Sumberg et al. (2012, p.2) note that there are some important similarities between how the young people and agriculture problem is framed and the early ‘push-pull’ models of migration. Some of the factors ‘pulling’ young people away from agriculture, and more specifically farming, may include increased educational opportunities and higher paying jobs in the cities. Considerable evidence also points to ‘push’ factors such as lack of access, or restricted access, to land, which is a common theme in many rural areas due to high population densities.

The present study examines rural youth perceptions of farming and their decision of whether or not to work as a farmer by paying special attention to personal career aspirations, social (peer and parental) influences, and structural (land, finance, market, and agricultural education) constraints as the push and pull forces of farming. The conceptual theory of migration presented by Everett S. Lee (1966) is used to guide the analysis of the data. The theory proposes four general factors which influence migration decisions:

1. Factors associated with the area of origin.
2. Factors associated with the area of destination.
3. Intervening obstacles.
4. Personal factors.

*Origin and Destination Factors:* In every area there are some factors which tend to attract people toward it (the “pull” forces), and there are other factors which tend to repel them from it (the “push” forces). In the context of this study, the area of origin is the village, where the primary, and in some cases the only means of sustenance can be gained through farming. The area of destination is the city, which is marked by industry and service-oriented careers. Since this study is concerned with youth attitudes towards farming, it primarily examines the push and pull forces operating in the area of origin. Positive perceptions of farming and the desire to work as a farmer would be an indication of pull forces at work, while negative perceptions of farming and the desire to work in non-farming careers would be an indication of push forces at work.

*Intervening Obstacles:* A comparison of the push and pull forces does not paint a complete picture of the decision to migrate, consideration must be given also to ever present natural inertia

and structural or systemic obstacles between origins and potential destinations. These include physical as well as sociocultural distances. Physical distance is related to the time and cost of traveling to urban areas. Sociocultural distance includes differences between origins and destinations with respect to language, degree of modernity, religion, values and social behavior systems. Lack of information concerning opportunities and characteristics of potential destinations is also related to sociocultural distance. In the context of this study, youth who desire to work in the city but end up working as a farmer may be facing intervening obstacles such as low education levels, lack of support in searching for urban jobs, or insufficient funds to meet the city living costs. The present study may highlight some of the possible intervening obstacles youth face, however, since this is not the major area of the study's focus, it does not delve into the nature and extent of their influence on decisions of whether or not to migrate.

*Personal Factors:* These are perceptions of origin and destination factors and of intervening obstacles. These factors vary from individual to individual and in the context of this study may include positive or negative attitudes towards farming developed through peer influence, media, and other social outlets. As the present study's research findings will reveal, the decision to move away from farming in preference for city life is not always a rational decision.

Lee's theory of migration provides a basic framework for guiding the analysis of the data. However, some findings presented in this study traverse the many different approaches taken towards understanding rural-urban migration. For example, Barratt et al. (2012) explore youth migration in Uganda through the lens of shifting identities. One of their arguments is that the success stories of migrations may paint a picture of urban superiority in the minds of the youth. As a result, as risky as migration to urban centres might be, many youth may nevertheless decide to migrate so that they can fulfill their aspirations just like many before them. Hence the findings of this paper which establish the existence of social influences in informing youth decisions to seek for employment outside of farming may very well have a much deeper meaning than just acting as push factors. Parental and peer influences which create negative perceptions of farming by hailing the urban life as more praiseworthy than the rural life may in effect be fostering a new sense of urban identity among youth. Youth who are moved by these influences may end up migrating in search of jobs that they perceive to carry a higher status and prestige than farming.

Another important approach taken towards understanding rural-urban migration is one which contends that migration is not necessarily an individual decision – families usually engage in a collective decision-making process about who will stay or leave. For instance, Agesa (2004) explores rural Kenyan household characteristics (such as rural household size and family member education levels) which may lead to families deciding on the most appropriate migration pattern. He cites evidence which reveals that in any given rural household, the patriarchal customs and traditions may dictate that a male member (in most cases the husband) will migrate and the female member(s) will stay back to engage in domestic work (which includes subsistence farming). Hence, while the findings of this study reveal that certain structural barriers (such as lack of access to land) can be labelled as push factors, it is important to acknowledge that other factors (such as gender) may play a bigger role in decisions of migration.

Whereas many of the migration studies focus on income maximization as the primary motivation for rural-urban migration, especially the early influential studies by Harris and Todaro (1970), this study makes an important contribution to the migration literature by incorporating youth aspirations as a possible motivation. In his study of child migrants in Burkina Faso, Dorte Thorsen demonstrates that adolescent children make decisions about migrating not only for economic reasons, but also to have more autonomy, to acquire new skills, and above all, to increase their social status (2006, p. 1). Studies like Thorsen's, which establish that urban areas are associated with perceptions of a higher social status than rural areas among young adolescents, make the research questions and findings of the present study even more important.

## **CHAPTER THREE – RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

The main goal of the study was to reveal the personal, social, and structural factors that encourage or discourage rural youth from engaging in a farming (crop/livestock) business. In order to gain an understanding of these factors, I conducted interviews in six different villages of Kiambu County, near to Nairobi, Kenya. A more detailed description of Kiambu County, along with a map of the village study sites, is provided in the next chapter.

### Data Collection Tools and Method

Since I wanted to capture quantitative as well as qualitative data, I used a structured questionnaire and a semi-structured questionnaire as my data collection tools. The structured questionnaire was short and asked participants for specific answers by circling one alternative. It also captured general information such as gender, age, education, land size, etc. The semi-structured questionnaire, which permitted participants to provide more flexible answers in an open-ended manner, allowed participants to explain in detail the influences that guided them towards, or prevented them from, engaging in a farming business. These tools were administered through individual interviews. The interviews were conducted in one sitting spanning roughly 45-60 minutes and were voice recorded depending on the participants' consent.

Once the first version of the tools was developed, I conducted pilot interviews with 5-10 youth in rural Kiambu. Since I had very limited experience in conducting field research, the pilot interviews helped me gain some confidence as I became more comfortable with the material. Furthermore, I was able to pinpoint and address the weaknesses that existed in my questionnaires. For example, my first version of the structured questionnaire consisted of scaled questions. However, after testing out the questions and receiving feedback on the process and the content of the questionnaire, I changed the scaled questions to the ones where participants would be required to circle one alternative choice. Similarly, I revised my semi-structured questions using simpler words and sentences to avoid receiving vague responses. I re-tested the tools once again with a smaller sample of participants, completed any further revisions, and drafted the final version. It took me about 2-3 weeks to complete this process.

### Sample of Participants

My study sample consisted of a total of 59 youth (see table 2), all of whose primary residence was in the rural areas of Kiambu County. Originally I had planned to have a gender balance with the total sample (50% men and 50% women), however, the sample ultimately did not include as many women (n=15) as men (n=44). For a variety of reasons, more women cancelled interview appointments and it was challenging (if not impossible) to reschedule these due to time constraints. Participants were chosen based on the following two criteria:

- Age: 18-35
- Primary residence is rural

I received a considerable amount of support and guidance from Farm Shop, a social enterprise that has opened up franchise shops in different villages of Kiambu County with the goal of supplying agricultural input to small-scale farmers. In the beginning stages I worked very closely with the staff from Farm Shop, who gave me a tour of the different villages where Farm Shop operated. Since this was my first time doing research in a rural area, the tour gave me a good understanding of the activities that take place in the villages, how to approach people in the villages and how to get to the villages alone using public transport. I then randomly picked 6 villages to conduct my field work in, based on close proximity to where I resided (to save on travel time).

### Sampling Methodology

Selection of participants was based on convenience sampling and snowball sampling. I chose these two methods of sampling to maximize the relevance of my case study, while also taking into consideration the time restrictions and my financial limitations. Once at the village, I used two approaches of convenience sampling to recruit participants. The first was talking to potential participants at the Farm Shop outlets. I would speak to every 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> customer that would walk into the shop. I would begin by introducing myself, and then explaining my research, and eventually inviting the individual to participate in the study if he/she met the criteria.

Meeting potential participants at the franchisee outlet served an additional advantage of being able to engage in informal conversations with older small-scale farmers and exploring their views of the challenges young farmers face. The second method was taking a walk through the village and engaging in conversations with the youth who were sitting around, or engaging in some sort of work (e.g. construction). Many of the youth were very friendly and welcoming, as

our conversations often ended at their home over a drink of tea. This second method helped avoid sampling bias, as I was able to recruit participants who did not have any connection with Farm Shop.

Once the participants agreed to participate in the study, I would arrange a time and location for our next meeting to carry out the interview. The interviews were conducted at one of three locations: at the participant's home, at the participant's farm, or at a small coffee place in the village. Participants were asked about their personal career aspirations, their perception of farming as a business, and the social and structural factors that influence their perceptions. All of the participants were required to partake in both the structured questionnaire as well as the semi-structured questionnaire. Upon completion of the full interview, I would ask the participants for the contacts of any friends or family who they believe would be interested in partaking in the study. Many times the participants would agree to introduce me to their friends and/or family the next day at the same location.

#### Demographic Characteristics of Study Sample

Of the 59 participants, 56 per cent were presently engaged in a farming (crop/livestock) business, while the remaining 44 per cent either held informal jobs or were engaged in non-economically active tasks (see Table 2). The sample consisted of 75 per cent males and 15 per cent females and was spread across four age groups. I was not able to accomplish the set out goal of having 40-50 per cent female participation due to various reasons, a major one being participants not being able to make it for interviews at the agreed time and location, and the inability to re-schedule interviews due to time constraints. Nevertheless, the young women who could participate provided excellent interviews that enriched the analysis of the study.

#### Limitations

While I tried my best to avoid selection bias, it is necessary to acknowledge that all of my interviews took place in villages where Farm Shop existed. This was primarily due to safety and security reasons, since I felt comfortable working in areas with which I had gained familiarity. Since all of the Farm Shop outlets exist in the Southern part of Kiambu County, one major disadvantage of limiting myself to these areas was not being able to get the perspectives of youth who lived further away from Nairobi. Living in close proximity to a well-established city like Nairobi gives smallholders an exclusive advantage of a vibrant market. In addition, due to

increasing urbanization, the areas of Kiambu County that are closer to Nairobi also boast lively rural towns, and thus ready markets. As a result, the youth living in these areas are more likely to see smallholder farming as profitable economic activity. Nevertheless, numerous interesting and potent findings emerged from the interviews conducted with the chosen participants.

**Table 2: Distribution of sample participants by economic activity, gender, age and education**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency (n)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Economic activity</b>		
Farming	33	56
Non-farming	26	44
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	44	75
Female	15	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age</b>		
18-20	11	19
21-24	20	34
25-30	16	27
31-35	12	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Education</b>		
Primary	8	14
Secondary	35	59
Tertiary	16	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Author's Interview Data (2014)**

Among the biggest challenges I faced was trying to come up with questions that could accurately measure social influences. For instance, as I carried out more interviews, I realised that the indirect effects of social influences can sometimes play a bigger role than direct influences. For example, when participants were asked about whether their parents prefer for them to work in the city or in agriculture, some participants stated that their parents never explicitly stated either position. However, later on during our conversation the same participants would go on to explain that their parents tried their best to educate them so that they would not face the same struggles they faced as farmers. This shows how indirect parental influence can

sometimes play a major role in youth decisions of whether or not to engage in a farming business. While I did not make any major changes to my questionnaire during this learning process, I tried my best to pinpoint these influences by listening carefully to the interview recordings while I was conducting my analysis.

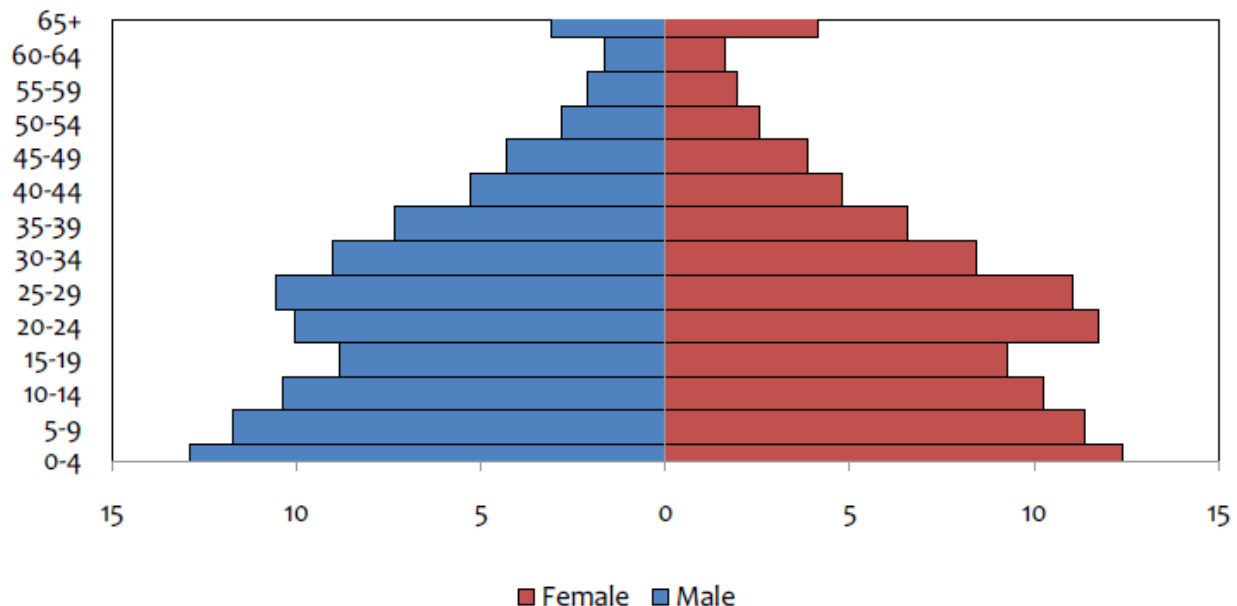
The study could have also benefited from secondary interviews with parents, local government officials, and various community leaders to gain a better understanding of the social influences that encourage or discourage youth from starting a farming business. Since many of the youth introduced me to their family, I had fruitful informal discussions with parents and older siblings. There was also one occasion when I stumbled across the Chief's Office (local government official) while taking a walk in the village of Kiamumbi. While the Chief himself was not present, I had an interesting discussion with his representative. However, due to time restrictions, I could not conduct formal interviews with these segments of the population.

Lastly, a minor was the language barrier. Since I did not speak Kikuyu, the local language, I had to limit my focus on youth who spoke English. Many of the youth who spoke English with confidence belonged to the younger age brackets. Nevertheless I managed to complete interviews with at least 13 youth who belong to the older age bracket of 31-35.

## CHAPTER FOUR – MAPPING OUT KIAMBU COUNTY VILLAGE STUDY SITES

Kiambu County is located in the Central highlands of Kenya in the former Central Province, close to Kenya's capital, Nairobi. Majority of the people living in Kiambu County are ethnically Kikuyu - the most populous tribe in Kenya. Kiambu is a predominantly rural county, but its population is getting rapidly urbanized due to Nairobi city's growth. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics report of 2009, the latest population count stands at 1,623,282 (Male – 49%, Female – 51%). The age distribution is as follows: 0-14 years (34.5 %), 15- 64 years (61.9 %), 65+ years (3.6%). The large youth population (figure 2) has contributed to the high working age population of 62 per cent in the county.

**Figure 2: Kiambu County population pyramid**



**Source: Ngugi (2013)**

### Economy

Kiambu County's economy is dominated by agriculture which employs approximately 75 per cent of the population (Okello et al., 2010, p. 5). Most farmers practice mixed farming (crop and livestock) for both subsistence as well as commercial purposes. Coffee and tea are the major cash crops that are grown in the area; the yield are locally processed and consumed, while the surplus is exported to other countries. More recently, the poor performance of tea and coffee markets has led to a shift to livestock among smallholders, especially dairy and poultry production (*ibid.*). This shift is also driven by the high demand for milk and poultry products in

surrounding urban centers, notably Kiambu and Nairobi. Crops such as maize, beans, assorted vegetables and sweet potatoes are also popular among smallholders and are usually transported by road to other towns such as Nairobi and Thika. Opportunities for residential and commercial businesses are also growing in southern Kiambu thanks to Nairobi's influence. Furthermore, the considerable growth of urban centres has brought to Kiambu County many manufacturing factories and major industrial assembly plants (Mwathane, 2013). For instance, Ruiru, one of the major towns, hosts several industries including Devki Steel Mills and Brookside Dairy amongst others. Overall, with the right policies and programmes, the County has the potential to bring in excellent sources of revenue, both from agriculture as well as its growing urban development.

### Agricultural Prospects

One report holds that given its suitable climate and close proximity to Nairobi, numerous smallholder farms have the potential to not only feed the county but also to supply Nairobi, Kitui and Kajiado with dairy products, green vegetables and fresh fruits (Mwathane, 2013). Far from being overly optimistic, Kiambu is one of the counties in the country that is blessed with evenly distributed high rainfall throughout the year. The average amount of rainfall received is 989mm per year, and the temperature ranges between 12.8 degrees Celsius during the cold month (June) and 24.6 degrees Celsius during the hot seasons (January-March). The soil quality is also excellent as it provides good water holding capacity as well as all the major nutrients required by the crops for optimal growth (The Institute of Social Accountability, 2013). These favorable climatic and soil conditions give farming households many choices as to how to best allocate their land. In a nutshell, they can plant maize or other cereal crops, beans or other legumes, a range of horticultural or cash crops, Napier grass or other animal feed crops, and/or trees for fruit, fodder, or soil fertility (or a combination).

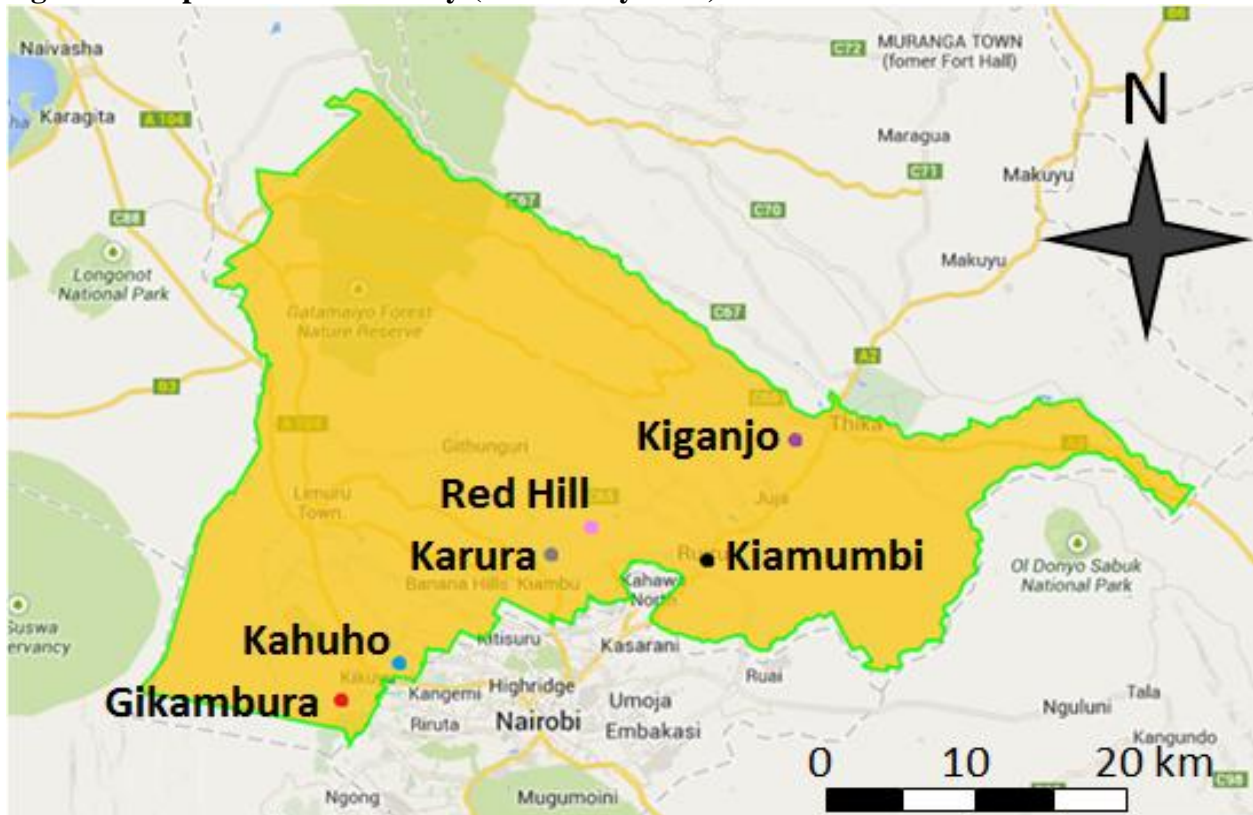
### Research Sites

Research was conducted in six villages of Kiambu County. The map on the next page identifies the approximate locations of these villages which are represented by the colored dots, and the table below it lists the number of participants from each village.

I visited a different village every week with the goal of completing 10 interviews by the end of each week. However, it was difficult to get an equal number of participants from each village for varying reasons. For instance, some of the Farm Shop franchisee outlets had only

recently opened up, and therefore the customer base was relatively smaller compared to the shops that had opened up earlier. This limited the number of people I met at the shops. In addition, I also encountered times when the participants would not show up at the agreed time and place because of unforeseen circumstances. Furthermore, there were instances when the weather did not cooperate due to the rainy season, and thus it became difficult to travel from my residence to the rural areas. Despite these challenges, I managed to complete interviews with a minimum of 3 participants from each of the six different villages.

**Figure 3: Map of Kiambu County (shaded in yellow)**



Source: City Population (2013)

**Table 3: Number of participants from each village**

<b>Village</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
Kahuho (Blue Dot)	22
Gikambura (Red Dot)	9
Karura (Grey Dot)	9
Kiamumbi (Black Dot)	3
Red Hill (Pink Dot)	12
Kiganjo (Purple Dot)	4

**Source: Author's Interview Data (2014)**

## CHAPTER FIVE – YOUTH CAREER ASPIRATIONS

In their analysis of the processes and challenges of becoming a young farmer in Ethiopia, Tadele and Gella (2014) speak about the the unfavourable attitudes many young people hold towards a future in agriculture. They point out the increasing popularity of working in non-agricultural sectors of the economy (service and industrial sectors) among youth. I started my semi-structured interviews with an open ended question about personal career aspirations. Participants were asked what kind of a job or career they wanted to have as they were growing up.

### Personal Career Aspirations

The most popular career aspiration was engineering (Table 4). Second in line was farming, followed by accounting and medicine (doctor/nurse).

**Table 4: Distribution of career aspirations by participants**

<b>Career Aspiration</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Engineering	16	27
Farming	11	19
Accounting	4	7
Medicine (Doctor/Nurse)	4	7
Other	24	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Author's Interview Data (2014)**

The vast majority (more than 80 per cent) of the participants showed aspirations of working in fields other than farming. Many of the youth preferred professional careers, especially engineering. Aspirations of working as a farmer were unpopular among both young men and young women. Of the 15 female participants, only two (13 per cent) identified farming as a career aspiration, while nine of the 44 male participants (20 per cent), identified farming as a career aspiration.

An analysis of the qualitative data related to personal career aspirations gives more insight as to the kinds of negative perceptions of farming that may influence youth aspirations of working in a non-farming career. Listed below are extracts from interviews that shed light on some of the negative aspects of farming that exist in the minds of the youth, as well as some negative attitudes towards the nature of working as a farmer.

*Everyone...there in school think about how to get a big job in the city. In agriculture you **have to sacrifice yourself** and you have to think harder and you have to be a man of great faith (Participant 4095).*

*Most young people are discouraged by farming because they think **it's a shady job, something done by people who didn't go to school**, people who didn't make it to university (Participant 2208).*

*Youths tend to think farming is making yourself tired. They...picture I'm going to the farm using a jembe and I'll dig, I'll dig, I'll be seen like...**a dirty person, someone who doesn't care about his/her age** (Participant 9655).*

*They hate to go into the soil. Touching the soil...they don't like soil. They are discouraged [by] other [friends]...they discourage each other telling each other...**it is very tiresome**, and they don't want to get tired (Participant 1077).*

*Some think the work is so hard for them. They think **it's for old people**. They want a white collar shirt for any [job] like office. They don't want to farm because they think **farming is a dirty job** (Participant 0524).*

*Sometimes they see farming as **not a productive business** and they want maybe to go to those big businesses and maybe they see farming as **for those people who are not educated** (Participant 0517).*

*Sometimes you can plant and the crops fail. They want something that will give them money soon...**they want money which comes easy and fast** (Participant 0333).*

The 11 participants who chose farming as a career aspiration considered farming to be a good income generating activity, and enjoyed spending time in the field growing crops and taking care of livestock. Nine out of these eleven participants were presently engaged in a farming business. As noted in table 2, from the total of 59 participants, 33 (56 per cent) were presently engaged in a farming business. Some of these participants shared their motivations behind starting a farming business, which provide important insights of the positive perceptions of farming and its pull factors. Listed below are some of the varying reasons they gave for starting a farming business.

### **Good climate**

*"...the climatic condition of this place is suitable for farming so I preferred to do it" (Participant 7978).*

## **Parental Influence**

*“Where I come from there's these big shambas so actually our dads you'll see them cultivating so were just interested...It's a good business” (Participant 4007).*

*“My mother used to do small scale farming at home, she is the one who mentored me” (Participant 3482).*

*“My father is a good example for me...he has educated us through farming and I can also know I can educate myself and my children through farming” (Participant 1741).*

*“With time after I went to high school I realized agriculture because I've been brought up in a culture of agriculture. My parents were farmers since I was young, they kept poultry since I was young, so I realized maybe I can do something concerning agriculture” (Participant 9558).*

## **Profit**

*“You can make a lot of money in farming” (Participant 9361).*

*“Because I saw it was well rewarding. You have land...you have rain, manpower, and market for the produce. It's better than being employed and then just depend on the salary. You don't have to wait until the end of the month. If the produce is ready now you sell it and get your cash. It increases, it is not actually static like a salary. If your salary is 20,000, its 20,000. With an increment you increase only 200 or 500. But with agriculture depending with weather...if you have enough rain and all that...you get more. For me it is more rewarding and better than monthly employment” (Participant 9080).*

## **Self-employment**

*“I thought I could earn as much money as I wanted because in farming alone instead of being alone...because when you're employed you have limited income according what your employer thinks you should earn, but when you farm you limit your own income, since your efforts determine how much you can have” (Participant 2208).*

*“It is hard to be employed. Farming is better. You're being harassed every morning. When you have your own job, you'll have your maximum time to do this and that” (Participant 1371).*

*“One it's a self-employment. You are your own boss. If let's say you get like 4k, it's your own. Tomorrow let's if you're employed, you can work for about 4 days then you are sacked. But if you are farming you can farm and you are sure of what you are doing. If you work hard you get more money” (Participant 6636).*

Not all participants who were presently farming had the desire of working as a farmer. For some it was the circumstances, such as the lack of other work opportunities, that dictated their entry into farming.

*“It is because **I didn't have anything [else] to do** and that's the only thing that brings us the small income” (Participant 8042).*

*“Because **there was no[other] job**” (Participant 7072).*

*“I had **no other option**. Farming it’s not very good job” (Participant 4716).*

*“...**I don’t get the [engineering] jobs as much as I want**. So I decided to do farming” (Participant 9929).*

*“I wanted to be an engineer, but **I failed my examination so I got into farming**” (Participant 1741).*

*“The life we are living now, you can’t go into the town to find the money that you can help even your child to...go to school. You know **in town the life is very hard**. So I say that I can start farming so...I can get some income from it. I’m looking for the future of my children” (Participant 8953).*

In addition to personal aspirations, participants were also asked to identify role models, who were defined as people who they perceived to be successful. A majority of the participants identified family, friends, or neighbors as role models. Of the 57 participants that responded to the question, 16 (28 per cent) identified a farmer as a role model. The majority of these 16 participants (87 per cent) were presently engaged in a farming business. These participants further indicated that if they had any questions related to crop/livestock maintenance, they would resort to the knowledge of their family members, friends, or neighbors. Other popular role models included engineers (12 per cent), businessmen (9 per cent), and teachers (7 per cent). Farmers who were identified as role models were considered successful because they were high income earners, owners of big land, and owners of high end farming equipment (such as greenhouses and irrigation systems).

The findings above suggest that while negative perceptions of farming might be prevalent among youth, there nevertheless are young people genuinely interested in farming, and who gravitate towards living the life of a farmer. For the youth who do not aspire towards farming, many may end up working in cities or taking up other informal jobs in rural towns. However, it is important to acknowledge that this may not be a viable option for all these youth. Factors such as insufficient education and a scarce amount of jobs in rural towns/cities may bring these youth back to the farm.

## CHAPTER SIX – THE ROLE OF SOCIAL INFLUENCES

Rural villages usually consist of tight knit communities where everyone recognizes each other. In the villages of Kiambu County, as a young adult, your neighbourhood is likely to consist of family members and long-time family friends whose children you grew up playing with and with whom you have established a close friendly relationship. It is therefore fair to assume that rural youth perceptions of farming as a business, and their interest to work as a farmer will be influenced to great degree by family and friends. During my conversations with participants, the primary group of people they often referred to as social influences in their lives were parents/uncles and peers. The rest of the chapter specifically focuses on how these two groups influence youth perceptions of farming and their interest to work as a farmer.

### Peer Influence

In the structured questionnaire participants were asked to agree or disagree with the statement: “My friends will consider me successful if I work as a farmer.” Out of the 58 participants that responded to the question, 23 (40 per cent) agreed and 35 (60 per cent) disagreed. Furthermore, an analysis of the qualitative data reveals that many participants had friends who held negative views about farming as a business. While it is difficult to measure to what extent these views influenced the participants’ own decisions of whether or not to start a farming business, the interview responses broaden our understanding of the perception of farming as a business among rural youth.

The biggest factor that contributed to the negative peer perceptions of farming was the tedious and monotonous lifestyle of a farmer. One has to agree that working as a farmer requires, probably more than in any other job in any other field, hard work and patience, the two most important qualities of physical and mental toughness. Farming is not a 9 to 5 job, and as the participants expressed their peers’ views of farming, it was clear that signing up for a job that is 3am to 10pm everyday is not something that all youth are interested in. Then there is the issue of slow returns, and at times, very little returns, making the farming life unattractive. Many youth want more out of life than just getting fed; they want to earn enough to send their kids to college, to be able to afford a television, and to be able to show their friends their new mobile phone which just arrived in the market. Above and beyond all this, in the minds of many youth a farmer is perceived as someone who is dressed in old overalls that have torn and dirty patches due to

contact with farm tools and soil. Presented below are extracts from nine different interviews on the subject of peer perceptions of farming, all of which suggest that the views discussed above are prevalent among many rural youth.

*Sometimes people say [in] farming you have to be dirty. Sometimes they do not have an idea of what agriculture is. They think agriculture is the normal thing because they are used to it. There was this debate at school [between] business people and agriculture people. So they are debating which subject is the best. So I participated in that debate. And sometimes you will see business people are winning [against] agriculture people. Sometimes agriculture people are just keeping quiet **because they don't know much about agriculture**. They can see a smart person walking to Nairobi in [a] suit, [and] they say and what about the agriculture students walking in overalls and a jembe (Participant 3953).*

*Probably **my peers in school think it's a dirty business** whereby you have to get soil and get chicken poo and cow poo...they don't think of it as the best business you can do (Participant 3288).*

***They say it's a waste of time...**and makes you dormant because you're always there on the farm (Participant 9929).*

*It involves a lot of work. You get tired. Most would want to work in the city. **Life in the city most people think... seems more simple as compared to life here**. You wake up, you shower, you go to work, you come back. But here you wake up you have to walk a long distance to board a vehicle, sometimes it's raining and you see our roads are not [paved] especially here (Participant 7037).*

*Yeah sometimes they discourage me. **They say as if I'm doing the stupid things in the shamba...**sometimes I plant the crops, no rain, so they discourage me. In a shamba at the end of the day you have something (Participant 9926).*

*When you are doing farming, you have to wait for the money...for some three months, four months. Some of them **they want to get...income immediately, and in farming you can't get it** (Participant 8953).*

*To be a farmer you must sacrifice yourself. You go to the shamba, digging is very hard. The general preparation of the farm, which take maybe about less than a month. Then when you plant you have to wait for about 3 months for the crop to mature. That's why they prefer being employed than farming (Participant 6636).*

*There are others that **don't see farming as a good business**. They say most of time it's consuming a lot of time, and it takes a lot of money to buy most of the machineries, and it makes you get a lot of headache some times...It takes a lot of time from the day you plant to the day you sell your commodity before you get money, so **they look for other ways that you will get money quickly** (Participant 9669).*

A common understanding that existed among the participants' peers was that farming was for old people. It was perceived to be a perfect retirement activity that one can engage in once their time and work in the city had come to an end. Presented below are extracts from three different interviews on the subject of peer perceptions of farming that illustrate the image of farming in the minds of youth as less of a business and more of a recreational activity for old folks.

*They used to say that **farming is for old people, those people who have retired**. The people who work in the city, they are the ones who are supposed to work now in the farms, because they have finished their work in the city (Participant 1661).*

*They say it's tiresome...it doesn't make a lot of money. They see it as **outdated**. They see it as **something that is supposed to be done by grownups, or old people**. That's why they don't venture into farming (Participant 6787).*

*Most people think farming is not good, especially the ones who know very little about it. **They think farming is for people who retire after doing their careers**. When people criticize you and they don't really know what you go through, it's a bit discouraging (Participant 2208).*

It was interesting to discover that a number of participants disagreed with their peers' negative perceptions of farming. An older participant in Gikambura between the ages of 31-35 disapproved of the convenient lifestyle that many of the youth dream of having. He wished that the youth would understand the importance and value of farming.

*They ignore it. Youth in our days, many of them they don't want to get weary. They want to play pool. I wish we are going to stretch this knowledge to them. **Farming is not wearing yourself, in fact it is benefiting yourself**. It is healthy to your bones. **I disagree with them** (Participant 4624).*

A participant I met in Red Hill who was between the ages of 21-24 and renting 1/4 acre of land for his farming business explained that while his peers' descriptions of farming may be true, they do not serve as excuses for not wanting to farm.

*...they see it as tiresome, exhaustive and some even say it doesn't earn much...**[but] you must get tired to have the money...you have to be captivating to achieve...they just don't like farming** (Participant 7978).*

Similar views were expressed by a participant in Gikambura who was dealing mainly with crop farming. Her peers' viewed farming as hard work and described it as "tiring." However, she felt that hard work is a prerequisite for success.

*They don't like getting tired...if you want to farm you have to...work hard so that you can...succeed, and they don't want to get tired. **I don't agree with them because these days you have to work hard so that you can have a good life** (Participant 8042).*

Another participant in Kahuho whose strawberry farming had just recently picked up after much hard work, explained that those of his peers who did consider farming a good business still preferred not to venture into it because of all the hard labour that is needed to be successful. He disagreed with their mindset and promised that he would not let their views discourage him.

*They say it's a good thing but they think it's so hard to practice agriculture. Some of them they don't want to do that dirty work. They say agriculture is a good business, but tiresome. **I don't agree with them. No pain no gain** (Participant 9513).*

While the majority of the responses related to peer perception of farming held farming as an unappealing source of income, findings also indicated the fact that "peers" are not a homogenous group. Some participants had peers who were farming and in the process inspiring them to consider farming a worthwhile endeavor. For example, one participant in Kahuho, who had completed tertiary education and worked as an accountant, was impressed by his peers' successful farming business.

*I have some friends who are doing farming. They are doing good. I have a friend [who] had some poultry layers. In the first round he brought around 400, all of them they died. After maybe six months he got back to his feet again. He learnt something, and now he is supplying eggs, actually he has about 1000 now. He had a government job somewhere in Mombasa. He quit the job. Because he farming back here at home and the parents are sending him the proceeds of what they have just sold in one week and he looks at his pay slip and he is just disappointed. Now he's farming, he's doing good. I'm going to turn 29 this May. I don't want to be 50 and I'm still stuck to my job, same same salary or a little bit higher, and I'm told to go home, I'll have nothing to go back home to. At the end of the day, in a country like this, [agriculture] is the backbone (Participant 8688).*

The findings above suggest that for some youth, their peers' perceptions of farming may have discouraged them from working as a farmer, while for other youth, their peers' negative

perceptions of farming did not hold them back from working as a farmer. For this reason, it is difficult to measure the exact amount of influence peers have on each other's decisions to work as a farmer. Nevertheless, the above findings shed light on some of the aspects of farming that youth dislike, and in the process broaden our understanding of why some rural youth prefer not to venture into farming.

### Parental Influence

It is a common cultural phenomenon for youth in the village, irrespective of their age, to be living in the same house as their parents as one family. Hence positive or negative perceptions of farming as a business may very well have been formed in the minds of the youth while they were witnessing, from a very young age, their parent's life as farmers. Parental influence can be direct and/or indirect. In the context of this study, direct parental influence is when either one of the parent explicitly encourages or discourages their child to practice farming. Indirect parental influence is when the childhood experiences of living in a family that was dependent on farming influences one to think about farming in a positive and/or negative way.

I interviewed a participant in Karura whose family primarily relied on farming. Acknowledging that farming did not provide his family with much income, he went on to explain that from his experience parents prefer for their children to advance in their education and thereafter work in the city. Simply put,

*Every parents dream is for his/her child to work in a white collar job (Participant 8404).*

I visited the home of a participant in Kahuho who was engaged in dairy and poultry farming and was earning 21,000KSH/month. During our conversation about the influence of parents on youth, he related his own experience of facing some resistance from his parents when he informed them that he wanted to venture into farming rather than work in the city. When I asked him why this was the case, he replied that many parents believe:

*... that [to be] successful you have to work in the city. That is their mindset. Actually my mom thinks I'm jobless. Because that's what they know from when they were growing up...that successful people live in the city. And the ones who don't have money live here (Participant 1661).*

Another participant in Kiamumbi shared similar views about what called the ‘traditional mentality’ of parents.

*They will encourage me to get a good job, like be a lawyer or a doctor. I think it’s just the traditional mentality of parents who think that you can only do well in life when you become a doctor or a lawyer...these white collar jobs. I think it’s just the mentality within our old generation parents (Participant 3288).*

The professional-oriented mentality of parents can sometimes translate into a lack of support for their children who want to venture into farming, as mentioned by the respondent whose mother considered him “jobless” even while earning a respectable income from farming. Another participant in Kahuho who was grateful for having a 1/4 acre of family land to farm on acknowledged that many more youth could get involved in farming if their parents would give them a small piece of the family land.

*One thing that can encourage youths...if [we] get the support from our parents...if most of the youths are being supported by their parents, maybe the parents are giving them that shamba...I believe it can help. The challenge that youth [face] in farming [is that] their parents push them away. [When] they reach that certain age where they can exploit that agriculture business, that’s the time they are being told that you have to go to town and look for a job. Maybe it’s not even a good job, but you don’t have an option. You don’t have a shamba (Participant 9513).*

The challenges of smallholder farming have been well experienced by parents. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect for them to desire a better life for their children. Perhaps this is why parents placed a great emphasis on education. Presented below are extracts from three interviews where participants related the parental desire of wanting their children to obtain high levels of education so that they would not end up in farming.

*Well they would not like me to do the farming that they have done because they think that they have gone through a lot of struggles, **they don’t want me to go through the same struggle of farming**. So they would encourage me to go to school, to get a degree, to go a work in the city rather than come and stay at home and do farming (Participant 0378).*

*Sometimes they see farming as not a productive business and they want maybe to go to those big businesses and maybe they see farming as for those people who are not educated. Sometimes parents tell the youth to learn so that they cannot end up...farming (Participant 0517).*

*If you are at school, no parent can encourage you to be farming at an age from 18 up to 30. No parent can take you to school and encourage you take a farming course and be a farmer. What parents say is that **farming is only for the old and farming is for the part time if you have***

*nothing to do at that particular time. But if you are still a young person, you work toward the career of your choice (Participant 6636).*

Besides these direct statements quoted from the respondents' parents, indirect parental influences on the perception of farming as a business became clear when the participants explained the type of life they saw their parents living as farmers. Many youth associated their parents' life as farmers with different struggles and difficulties. One participant in Gikambura who is a housewife explained that a weak market and a lack of support (in terms of labour) on the farm were among the many challenges her parents faced. When asked whether this discouraged her from viewing farming as a good business, she replied in the affirmative.

*They were very very poor. They only had the farm to support themselves. Sometimes they would plant and by the time the crops are ready there is no market for the crops. Sometimes they would plant and the seeds would not grow. At times we were in school [and] there was no one to help out in the farm. They could not afford to pay another person to help out in the farm. Yeah it [discouraged me] a lot (Participant 8936).*

In Karura I interviewed a participant who expressed similar views when asked about the type of life his parents lived as farmers, and whether or not that discouraged him from going into farming.

*A normal life. The medium kind of life. Sometimes you plant sukumawiki's [kales] and all of them are being swept by flood and water. Maybe when you plant tomatoes, the weather does not go with the tomatoes...they end up vanishing. Cows dying because of the weather and poor feeds...I opted for another way of getting my own money (Participant 9669).*

Watching his mother struggle as a farmer led one participant in Red Hill to migrate and find a job in the urban area.

*Sometimes her products would go bad in the farm, sometimes the market would be flooded with the same type of thing she is farming, and maybe sometimes the seasons would not be as fruitful. At that moment I saw as if farming is prone to failure (Participant 2208).*

Another participant I interviewed in Red Hill, who strongly expressed his dislike for farming, connected his sentiments to the poor type of life he saw his parents living as farmers.

*There were ups and downs when I was growing up. **They [parents] really struggled to pay our [school] fees.** [There were] problems with money to buy fertilizers, seeds. They were expensive.*

*Actually I was discouraged and I hate farming, I don't like farming. I didn't like it, even when I was young. The work is exhausting. I simply don't like it (Participant 8757).*

A parent's struggles on the farm sometimes resulted in their inability to secure adequate amount of funds for their children's education. Parent's not being able to provide funds for education beyond primary school or secondary school left a question mark in the minds of the youth as far as farming as a profitable business was concerned. While in Gikambura I interviewed a participant who aspired to be a teacher but could not attend high school because of a lack of funds. Her family situation left only her mother to bring her up while depending solely on farming as a source of income. She attributed her inability to continue education to the poor returns her mother received while working as a farmer.

*It was not a sweet life as I wanted. Since my mother was left by my dad when we were still young, so she had to struggle to raise us...we were 4 kids and she was alone. **She wasn't well [off] because she was a farmer.** When you are a farmer you wait until what you planted [grows] so she had to suffer until the harvest time. **When we harvest the money wasn't enough. I wanted a different job rather than only farming.** Even if I could farm, I wanted another job to support my kids. I would want to have another job rather than farming (Participant 0524).*

Another female participant in Gikambura who aspired to become a nurse felt that if her parents had an actual job as opposed to farming they might have been able to help her continue her education beyond secondary school.

*[They lived] very poorly, because they don't have a job they rely on farming...we don't have a big land...**they did very poorly because they don't have job, they rely on that small land...**per year we rent 2500KSH. They are not very happy. I don't like it because my wish [was to] to help them when I grow up...[but] they could not be able to help me to continue with my education (Participant 8042).*

Some of the youth explained that their parents never saw farming as a business, but rather viewed it as a pastime. So as they were growing up, they saw farming just as a part of life, something which one does, but not necessarily as an income generating activity. One participant in Kahuho who had gone on to complete tertiary education and was now working as an animal health assistant explained that as he was growing up he had learned from his childhood experience that farming is mostly done for consumption.

*[My parents] still have the farm...they are only farming for food [for consumption] and at times it's not even enough. It discouraged me very much because **there's nothing I saw that resulted through that farming apart from feeding our stomach only** (Participant 7926).*

Another participant in Kiamumbi who was dealing with poultry farming explained that one of the biggest factors that discourages youth from going into farming as a business is the fact that many families continue to consider farming as only a pastime.

***Some guys see it as a hobby because they are used to seeing the traditional farming stuff, so they see it as something small, something traditional. Most people locally do it...just the prototype agriculture. You have a chicken there, you just let them roam around and feed. You have cows there which are underproductive but you consider yourself a farmer. But if you do it commercially...like a business...I know people who are making good money out of it and I'm hoping to get there** (Participant 9558).*

While the above analysis demonstrates how indirect parental influences can discourage youth from farming, other respondents provided examples of indirect influences which had sparked their interest in farming. For example, being brought up in a family that treated farming as a business inspired one participant in Kiamumbi (who initially wanted to become a lawyer) to venture into farming just like his parents. His role model was a family friend who was engaged in large-scale farming.

*[I] Probably wanted to do something like law...these big careers. With time after I went to high school I realized agriculture because I've been brought up in a culture of agriculture. My parents were farmers since I was young...so when I chose the course for university I took food science and agriculture...The surplus income they used to get from farming was what got us through...the levels of education. They used to keep pigs, cows, and even chicken. I think without it some of the comforts we were able to get may not have been there. In fact **they encouraged us a lot...taught us to milk when we were young, to slaughter...I think it's because of that foundation that I'm able now to appreciate farming** (Participant 9558).*

There were also other participants engaged in a farming business who appreciated their parents' support and encouragement. For these participants, their parents showed them the value of farming from a very young age. Presented below are extracts from three different interviews where participants linked their desire of farming to parental influences.

*"Where I come from there's these big shambas so actually our dads you'll see them cultivating so we [were] just interested...It's a good business" (Participant 4007).*

*“My mother used to do small scale farming at home, she is the one who mentored me” (Participant 3482).*

*“My father is a good example for me...he has educated us through farming and I can also know I can educate myself and my children through farming” (Participant 1741).*

The findings above suggest the importance of parental influences in either cultivating or suppressing youth interests of working as a farmer. They also indicate that the struggles associated with working as a farmer must be addressed if more parents are going to give social approval for their children to work as a farmer. These struggles are marked by certain well-known constraints, such as access to land, finance, a viable market, and agricultural education. The next chapter examines these four constraints and the role they play informing youth perceptions of farming and their interest to work as a farmer.

## CHAPTER SEVEN – OVERCOMING MAJOR STRUCTURAL BARRIERS

During my informal conversations with the youth, it was evident that certain structural barriers played a major role in influencing perceptions of farming and the interest to work as a farmer. The present study focuses on four such barriers, namely, access to land, access to finance, access to a market, and access to agricultural education. Henceforth, the influence of these barriers will be discussed in relation to each other. In the interviews participants were asked to rank these barriers from 1 to 4 with 1 being the one that serves as the biggest challenge to starting a farming business. Access to finance was the most frequently selected number 1 barrier, followed by access to land, market, and agricultural education (Table 5).

**Table 5: Most frequently first ranked barrier**

<b>Barriers to Farming</b>	<b>Frequency (n)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Access to Finance	36	61
Access to Land	14	24
Access to a Market	5	8
Access to Ag. Education	4	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Author’s Interview Data (2014)**

At first this finding was a bit surprising considering the exuberant growth of the microfinance industry. Getting access to a loan is much simpler now than it was for the previous generation. In Kenya, even the government has stepped into the microfinance industry, setting up loan schemes for youth such as the Youth Enterprise Development Fund. In partnership with Amiran Kenya Ltd, the Kenyan government recently initiated the ‘Agri-Vijana’ (literally “Agri-Youth”) loan under the umbrella of the Youth Enterprise Development Fund. The loan targets young people keen on undertaking agri-business and more specifically, green house farming. Why then would a majority of the participants most frequently select access to finance as the biggest challenge to overcome in farming? As I interviewed more participants on this subject, I realised that many of them felt that running a farming business is capital intensive due to the high costs of input supplies, such as seeds and animal feeds. One participant explained that high costs of input supplies may deter many youth from even trying to access loans. High costs of input supplies combined with low profit margins, despite having access to a market, means sleepless nights for one who has to repay a loan.

Another surprising finding was the participants' ranking of access to land. Although this was the second-most frequently listed top challenge (14 respondents), nearly as many respondents ranked it as a more intermediate challenge, and 23 respondents (39 per cent) selected it as the least challenging factor of the four choices (table 6). An analysis of the qualitative data clarified that many youth circumvent this challenge by renting or leasing a small portion of land, which works out well at least for the short-term. Hence the availability of rental land led participants to consider access to land a minor issue.

**Table 6: Ranking of access to land**

<b>Access to Land</b>	<b>Frequency (n)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
1-Biggest challenge	14	24
2-Second biggest challenge	12	20
3-Third biggest challenge	10	17
4-Fourth biggest challenge	23	39
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Author's Interview Data (2014)**

Based on these discoveries, instead of focusing strictly on 'access' to finance, land, a market, and agricultural education, I have given importance to some of the nuances that surround these barriers, and have presented the findings based on four themes which emerged from the qualitative analysis. These themes are the common phenomenon of renting/leasing land, the high cost of input supplies, low profit margins and unpredictable market prices, and insufficient vocational agricultural training.

#### Renting/Leasing Land

When asked what makes the local farmers successful in their business, many participants responded with comments about them having access to adequately large amounts of land. Presented below are extracts from three different interviews where participants expressed their desire for having more land so that they could be successful like other well established local farmers.

*[They are successful] because they have enough shamba [farm land]. Me I don't have a shamba here. Like this one is to rent. They have enough shamba to dig, they have water...so they succeed (Participant 9926).*

*Those who are successful...they have big lands and they are able to buy seeds and they have water. If only I have a land I think I can be successful (Participant 8042).*

*One, they have a big land. Let's say if you have 10 cows and you don't have a piece of land, then you are relying on buying the Napier [grass – an important fodder for cattle]. Let's say the expenses that you are using to buy Napier, you can invest in buying other more cows or purchasing other land (6636).*

Rarely does access to land escape the discussions surrounding the challenges of smallholder farming. Issues of land tenure and inadequate access to land plague smallholders in many African countries. Significantly, subdivision has led to small and uneconomic units of land resulting in low productivity and the degradation of a valuable natural resource. The present study establishes that land availability is a major concern for youth interested in farming, and the lack of it can play a big role in discouraging them from farming. Findings indicated that in Kiambu County access to land is usually restricted to family land or rental land. Although farming on small family land areas can prove to be a good start, one eventually needs more land to expand the business. Table 7 shows the land size of 32 participants who were presently farming. One participant in Kahuho who was rearing cows on a 1/4 acre of family land expressed her desire to move from family land to personal land. Without enough capital, it was difficult for her to imagine making this move any time soon.

*I would like to move out from here...have my place, a bigger place. Here it's mom's place, there's limit where you can reach. Even extending more cows you have to move to another place (Participant 1371).*

**Table 7: Land size of youth presently farming**

<b>Land Size (Acres)</b>	<b>Frequency (n)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
¼ Acre	11	34
½ Acre	8	25
1 Acre	11	34
2+ Acres	2	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Author's Interview Data (2014)**

It is difficult to have any hopes of inheriting productive large pieces of land, especially if one comes from a large family that relies on smallholder farming and where the land would be subdivided amongst the eligible sons. One participant in Kahuho who was grateful that he could buy land from his grandfather, explained that some youth, like himself, will probably never have any land to inherit.

*Agriculture needs land. Maybe your parents are like the parents of Chinua Achebe. This guy Chinua Achebe mentions in his book Things Fall Apart...Okonkwo had a father who was very lazy and had nothing to inherit to hand over to the children. That's why Okonkwo decided to be a gentleman and never to be like his father who was lazy and never had anything to hand over to the children. **So some of the youth they inherit nothing from their parents.** Like the way I started, I had to buy land first. Where I'm planting my trees...nobody can tell me...this is not yours. I bought it from my grandfather. So land is a problem (Participant 9080).*

A common phenomenon among the participants who were farming was the renting or leasing of a small portion of land.

*For you to be in farming you must have land, and that is not easily available. Those people who are interested in farming, they don't have the land, they rent (Participant 6636).*

During one of my visits to Red Hill, a participant walked me by a huge piece of land that was subdivided into several 1/4 acre portions and rented out. He pointed out the 1/4 acre that he was renting for 4,000 KSH/month. While he appreciated the fact that he could afford renting that piece of land, he wished he could have a bigger portion, or be able to rent another 1/4 acre to increase his profits. Unfortunately at the moment there was no other piece of land available in the same area to rent out.

One big issue with renting land was that it could be taken away from the participants at the owner's will. One of the participants I met in Kahuho showed me around the 1/4 acre that he was renting. He was growing the regular crops such as spinach and kales and was making a profit of 15,000KSH per month. However, not knowing whether he will be able to continue renting the same land next year scared him.

*The places [where] we do farming, land [price] is so high. Some people cannot rent [their land to] you. Here we [rent] by one year. If you rent one year, the second year the owner of the land [can] say I want you to leave my land (Participant 4095).*

Needless to say, rental land has its advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, it gives one the opportunity to start farming and earning small amounts of income. On the other hand, there is only so much one can do with a small piece of land. For example, the land may be big enough to only grow a single crop, such as spinach or cabbages. If the crop ends up being affected by diseases and is not treated, or if the weather decides not to cooperate, one is almost

guaranteed to suffer losses for the month. This is why a participant I met in Karura expressed his disinterest to work on small pieces of land.

*The first challenge is the piece of land where you farm. In our area in Kiambu most of us don't have big farms where you can farm. You find that the piece of land you are working on is very small compared to other areas where people farm in acres. So **the amount you will get from [your] plot cannot sustain you** (Participant 9669).*

While scarcity of land is an important issue, it was interesting to hear some participants talk about their friends who had a piece of land but decided to sell it. Presented below are extracts from three different interviews of participants who explained possible motives behind their friends' decision to sell their land.

***They don't want to farm because they think farming is a dirty job.** It's the passion, because some have maybe a small land at home but they don't make use [of] it. Things like carrots and dania's [coriander, a high value market crop] they don't take a big piece of land, so it's not the land, land is not the issue, maybe it's the passion (Participant 0524).*

*People have idle land everywhere, not necessarily theirs, maybe they were given down by their parents, grandparents, it's just there...they are doing something small scale, eventually they do away with it (Participant 9558).*

*Having this knowledge about farming it's a somehow grace from God, so maybe they had a big land but they saw like it's not fruitful, it's not profitable, so I better sell it and spend the money otherwise. But for me I wish I had that land because I would not sell it (Participant 9655).*

Lack of a passion for farming and believing the piece of land to be too small for any productivity are a couple of factors that may explain the trend of land selling among some youth. In other cases, youth who incline towards non-agricultural careers and are in need of capital may also consider the selling off of their land as a very tempting option. Another reason for discarding land can be explained by the fact that majority of the participants felt that they had insufficient capital to start and/or run a successful farming business. With high start-up and maintenance costs associated with farming, selling the piece of land at a fair price may seem to be a reasonable trade-off for these youth.

### High Cost of Input Supplies

High input costs also serve as a major deterrent to starting a farming business. Without having much capital to resort to, and farming on relatively small pieces of land, participants

engaged in crop farming found prices of seeds and fertilizers to be unreasonably high. The following sentiment was expressed by a young student working in the village of Kahuho. His views were shared by many other participants who explained lack of access to finance in relation to the expenses needed to run a successful farming (crop/livestock) business.

*[I agree] when somebody is telling you ‘You can’t do farming and get rich’...not unless you convince me you have enough capital. If it’s tomatoes you have capital for the seeds, the labor required, the inputs like fertilizers, but if starting from nothing you only have a jembe and a piece of land, you don’t even have the seeds to plant, you can’t convince me that that’s business, no that’s just passing time (Participant 6777).*

Participants engaged in a crop business specifically pointed out the high prices of seeds, which vary according to the brand. Quality seeds (and other inputs) are a key precondition to a successful yield. While certain seed companies offer better quality seeds, a small scale farmer is likely to only buy the brand which he/she can afford, which might mean lower yielding or less marketable crops, or even the possibility that the cheaper packets are counterfeit and do not contain the varieties that the labels claim. One participant from Karura explained that when you factor in other setbacks, such as bad weather, affording good quality seeds becomes even more difficult.

*Sometimes [there is] short rain and the seeds don’t germinate well. Sometimes the sun is so hot so some of them dry up and sometimes there are these small animals, after you sow, the animals come and remove the seed, so [we have] to go and sow again...the seeds are expensive, like buying a packet of maize, you see it’s like 400[KSH], maybe you have like 3 acres, you have to buy like 7 packets of maize. So after you sow and that animal come and removes you have to buy some other maize. Sometimes if you buy the seeds they [may] not [be] the right seeds, maybe they are forged and put in a packet, but they are not the right seeds (Participant 0524).*

I visited the home of a participant in Karura who had agreed to participate in the study. As I entered I could not help but notice a small healthy garden of vegetables. It was easy to tell the difference between her garden, and another one I had seen earlier in Kahuho which was suffering from diseases. As we started talking about the challenges of being a farmer, the very first thing she brought up was access to finance.

*There are many challenges. One, you need to spray, as in there as pests and parasites. So you need that money. And these agro chemicals...are very expensive, especially in areas where people are doing farming. **Without that money you find you have planted tomatoes but they are***

*not doing well because a certain disease is an outbreak and you don't have the money to buy the chemicals (Participant 9655).*

The issue of input supplies is even more pronounced when it comes to livestock farming. As I visited homes in the villages, I quickly realised that rearing cows was a common practice. However, it was surprising to hear that many families managed to get only a minimal amount of milk production from their animals. I asked one of my participants in Kahuhu why this was the case, and he replied by saying that many people in his area do not have the finance to buy a good breed of cow. A good cow breed can cost a minimum of as much as 100,000KSH. An owner of 3 cows and a calf, he further went on to explain how access to finance limits him from expanding his farming business.

*One of the resources that I don't have is...money. I would like to have cows that produce a lot of milk and they are costly. **If you get a cow that produces around 35-40 litres a day it is going to cost you about 180,000[KSH].** That kind of money I don't [have]. And if I decide to sell the ones I got, they [aren't] going to make that much (Participant 9929).*

Another participant in Kiamumbi, who was eager to venture into dairy farming, explained that he simply could not afford buying a cow breed that would bring him good returns.

*I have so many ideas that I want to implement but I don't have the finances to do that. **I want to add more cows...dairy cows...get more milk...but I have no finances to do that.** To buy one good cow will cost you like 120,000[KSH] (Participant 3288).*

It should also be acknowledged that the “improved” breeds of cows are usually much more prone to disease and need a more carefully managed diet. Hence, while they might yield more milk, they usually end up being much more costly to keep healthy and productive.

After hearing about the profit one can make from pig farming, one of my participants in Kahuhu decided to try it out. However, with the costs of animal feeds so high, he always ran the risk of going into losses. During the interview he explained his careful calculations while rearing his pigs to ensure there is profit at the end of the process.

*The feeds from the agrovet is expensive, like the starters mash. Like next month I'm expecting one pig to give birth. Before [the piglets] start eating...they breastfeed. After a short while you give them starters mash. That one is actually 1,600[KSH]. Once they grow a bit, we have growers mash. That is 2,100[KSH]. When they reach five months, that is time actually you need to give them a lot of food rich in proteins and carbohydrates. We give them a lot of proteins and*

*a lot of carbohydrates so that a lot of food is actually stored in the body so that it may fatten, because the more it fattens the more the kilogram goes up. And once you sell this to Farmer's Choice [ a meat company]...the average is between 10,000[KSH] and 15,000[KSH] for one [pig]. Your pig you should make sure that from the beginning to the end whatever you spend on it, it should never reach 10,000[KSH] so that you get profit. If you are not careful then you will not get any profit" (9080).*

As I interviewed more youth, I realised that the issue of access to finance, and more specifically the high cost of input supplies, needs to be understood in conjunction with the challenge of finding a consistent lucrative market. The increasing costs of input supplies has a direct effect on the quality and quantity of production, especially when there is a tight market. Presented below are extracts from two different interviews. The first is of a participant who was frustrated with receiving low profit margins, all the while having to pay a lot to ensure good maintenance of his livestock. The second is of a participant who applauded the government for giving out youth funds as loans, but considered it as an incomplete gesture towards encouraging the youth to engage in a farming business.

*At the moment, those who are in dairy farming, the feeds are very expensive, the veterinary medicine is also very expensive. At the end of the day when you take this milk to the cooperative societies...the returns are very minimal (Participant 8404).*

*The only encouragement they are giving is that they are giving youth funds as loans. But again when they get this money...there is the issue of market for their product. So they are encouraged by being given capital, but again they are discouraged by lack of market for their products (Participant 7926).*

#### Low Profit Margins and Unpredictable Market Prices

When asked to select access to a market from 1 to 4 in terms of the biggest challenge one has to overcome in farming, 24 per cent of the participants selected it as number 3, i.e. they ranked it the third biggest challenge compared to access to land, finance, and agricultural education (Table 8).

**Table 8: Ranking of access to market**

<b>Access to a Market</b>	<b>Frequency (n)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
1-Biggest challenge	5	8
2-Second biggest challenge	16	27
3-Third biggest challenge	24	41
4-Fourth biggest challenge	14	24
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Author's Interview Data (2014)**

In the structured questionnaire participants were asked to agree or disagree with the statement, “It is easy to find a market to sell my crops/milk/eggs after harvesting them.” Out of 59 participants, 59 per cent agreed with this statement, while 41 per cent disagreed. Out of the 33 participants who were presently engaged in commercial farming, 67 per cent agreed it was “easy to find a market”, while 33 per cent disagreed. An analysis of the qualitative data related to the challenges of the market reveals that simply finding a market in and of itself is not a major challenge; what deters many from farming is having to deal with inconsistencies in pricing, which results in low profit margins. Out of the 33 participants who were presently farming, 19 reported their monthly income (Table 9). The two participants who were earning 40,000 and 70,000 KSH/month were supplying to local restaurants. The rest of the participants depended on the traditional markets, which includes the “middlemen.”

**Table 9: Monthly income earnings from farming (KSH)**

<b>Farming Income/Month (KSH)</b>	<b>Highest Education Level Completed</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Type of Farming</b>
70,000	Tertiary	21-24	Mixed
40,000	Tertiary	21-24	Mixed
21,000	Tertiary	21-24	Livestock
20,000	Tertiary	21-24	Crop
20,000	Tertiary	31-35	Mixed
17,000	Primary	18-20	Crop
15,000	Primary	21-24	Crop
15,000	Secondary	25-30	Mixed
10,000	Secondary	31-35	Mixed
10,000	Tertiary	31-35	Crop
7,500	Secondary	31-35	Crop
6,000	Primary	31-35	Mixed
6,000	Secondary	25-30	Mixed
5,000	Secondary	25-30	Mixed
5,000	Primary	31-35	Mixed
4,000	Secondary	21-24	Mixed
3,000	Primary	31-35	Crop
3,000	Secondary	31-35	Mixed
2,000	Secondary	31-35	Mixed

**Source: Author’s Interview Data (2014)**

Smallholder farmers, who are often undercapitalized and often undereducated, struggle to meet the requirements of supermarket chains and thus are left to rely on traditional markets. A

study by Neven et al. (2009) on Kenyan supermarkets found that a threshold capital is needed to enter the horticulture supermarket chain, leaving small farms out. Most of the direct suppliers to the supermarket chains were medium-sized commercial farms, run by well-educated farmers. My several visits to the traditional markets left engrained within me a picture of unclean, crowded, and unorganized street vendors, majority of who sell the same produce. An abundance of excessive production and competition are likely to result in low profit margins and inconsistent market prices, leaving farming a very risky business. In fact, this was a further factor that discouraged people from taking a loan. One of my participants in Kahuho who was involved in crop farming on rented land wanted to venture into poultry farming. Knowing the inconsistencies of the market, he reasoned that repaying a loan might end up being difficult. Instead he preferred to save up from the income he was already earning.

*Sometimes there is no control in price. Today you can sell [for] 100[KSH] tomorrow no money. For poultry I better do agriculture myself [and] have my own money [rather] than getting a loan...those who do poultry take their eggs to Wangige [market]. You cannot say the price is fixed...today you can sell [for] 300[KSH] tomorrow you sell [for] 150[KSH]. I cannot do poultry by getting a loan (Participant 4095).*

A common source of market for many smallholders is the “middlemen.” The middlemen take away the stress of transporting goods and any costs related to it. However, selling to the middlemen often means low returns. A participant from Kahuho who works as an animal health assistant shared his views on why many youth in his area see farming as unproductive.

*I don't see a situation whereby someone can venture into farming and get to do well [compared to] some other fields, because the returns are very low. Again the market for these products, it's challenging because some of these raw products that the middle men buy from the farmer...they buy at a very low cost and...the final product goes...more than a 150% profit (Participant 7926).*

It is interesting to note market prices as a challenge given the rise in food prices over the past few years. It would be logical to assume that as food prices increase, so would the income of farmers, but this was far from being the case. One of my participants in Kiamumbi who supplies chicken to local restaurants explained that the struggles resulting from high input supplies are often further exacerbated with the low, stagnant profits at the market.

*The market is also a challenge because you find that the standards of living are high...so you find that the feeds are getting expensive, the price of buying one chick has also gone up, but then*

*despite all that the sale price for that particular chicken has not increased significantly to justify the increase in cost of feeds, cost of the whole process. So the profit margins remain small compared to what they should be because the hotels [local restaurants] are also selling the chickens at a more expensive price than they used to but they don't want to increase the price they are buying from you (Participant 9558.)*

During one of my visits to the Kahuho village, I asked a participant who owned 3 cows where he sells his milk. He ended up taking me to the local dairy cooperative, which was just a walking distance from his house. There I witnessed a lineup of people carrying silver cans which were ready to be handed over to the man who was measuring the quality and quantity of milk. During the interview, I mentioned to him that dairy farming must be a very attractive economic activity since cooperatives serve as an easy access market. He clarified for me that although the dairy cooperatives make life easier in terms of searching for a market, they offer very minimal returns when you take into consideration the expenses. The same sentiments were expressed by another participant in the same village who added that the returns are very minimal when you consider the profits to be made with just one litre of milk.

*Like one litre of milk they are buying for about 35-40 Shilling and after this milk is processed into something like yogurt, half a litre is going for more than double the cost it was bought from the farmer (Participant 7926).*

One of the factors that contributed to the market challenge is an abundant supply of traditional staple crops. Some of the most common produce I saw farmers growing included maize, beans, and spinach. In fact, a majority of the participants engaged in a crop farming business were likely to produce spinach and maize. Table 10 lists the ten most popular grown products of the participants who were engaged in a farming business.

**Table 10: Most popular crop/livestock products grown by the participants**

<b>Products</b>	<b>Frequency (n)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Cow dairy/beef	18	55
Maize	18	55
Spinach	18	55
Poultry	16	48
Beans	10	30
Potatoes	9	27
Tomatoes	6	18
Sukuma wiki (kales)	5	15
Goat dairy/meat	4	12
Cabbage	4	12

**Source: Author's Interview Data (2014)**

Several reasons can explain why cow dairy/beef, maize, and spinach were the top three favoured products. Firstly, these are the traditional staple products that one is more than likely to be exposed to while growing up. For instance, almost every home I visited in rural Kiambu had at least one cow that was producing milk for consumption and small income. Secondly, the seeds for maize and spinach, and the feeds for cows and chicken were almost readily available in most of the rural agricultural stores. Finally, accessing a market for these three products was relatively easy. For example, dairy cooperatives are widespread in rural Kiambu, and besides serving as an easy access market, they provide dairy farmers with both the information and the inputs related to livestock maintenance.

One participant who was frustrated with having to deal with the issue of finding a good market for these common crops decided to venture into fruit farming instead.

*Another challenge is that sometimes you produce and you find that it is the high season for everything, so you find that everybody has what you have produced, so prices has to go down. **That's why I'm even getting tired of maize, I'm getting tired of beans, I'm getting tired of some other things which the prices depend on the production.** So that's why now I'm joining the fruits. I will also depend on some other markets, I will not depend on local markets (Participant 9080).*

According to one participant I interviewed in Red Hill, dealing with the market challenge is part of what he calls the learning curve. He explained that in order to be a successful farmer one has to go through a learning curve.

*The challenges are the learning curve. There are some things you have to learn in order to be a bit more successful...In crops you have to learn the seasons, some seasons are rainy, some are dry, you have to learn when to plant your crop in order for it to be marketable (Participant 2208).*

Practical experience plays an important role in the learning curve. Equally important however is also access to agricultural education. Just like any other career, there are certain skills that farmers need in order to run a successful farming business. Some of these skills include the technical know-how of appropriate management of crops and livestock. Using the correct spacing for crops, applying the fertilizers correctly, and knowing the correct feeding methods are a few examples. Then there are also general business skills to manage farming as a business. An absence of this education can make farming a frustrating and unattractive low-income activity.

### Insufficient Vocational Training Programs

Challenges brought about by climate change have tested the will and strength of smallholder farmers like never before. Almost every organization that deals with farmer training initiatives in Africa recognizes these challenges, and as a response aims to educate smallholders using ‘climate-smart’ techniques, such as the usage of hybrid seeds that can survive increasing temperatures and tackle stubborn weeds. These organizations contend that many smallholders today continue to use poor farming methods which often result in low yields, and in the process, reinforce negative perceptions of farming among youth. Presented below are extracts from two interviews where participants related their parents’ struggles as farmers to poor knowledge of farming.

*When I grew up I found my mom was farming, but **due to lack of knowledge** she did not plant properly (Participant 4624).*

*The weather here is somehow unpredictable. So sometimes they [my parents] would plant and the seeds would not grow...maybe **they don’t have that background knowledge of agriculture**. The correct spacing...they don’t have that knowledge. The type of seeds, they don’t have the knowledge [of] what to choose...and what not to choose (Participant 4598).*

Farming First, a coalition of multi-stakeholder organisations, makes note of a study by Farm Africa which discovered that many students in Kenyan schools lacked access to training and education on farming, and therefore were not being encouraged to perceive agriculture as a future career. In light of their research, and other studies which have established similar findings, the present study sought to explore youth perceptions of access to agricultural education. When asked to select access to agricultural education from 1 to 4 in terms of the biggest challenge one has to overcome in farming, 23 per cent of the participants selected it as number three, i.e. the third biggest challenge in relation to access to land, finance, and a market (Table 11).

**Table 11: Ranking of access to agricultural education**

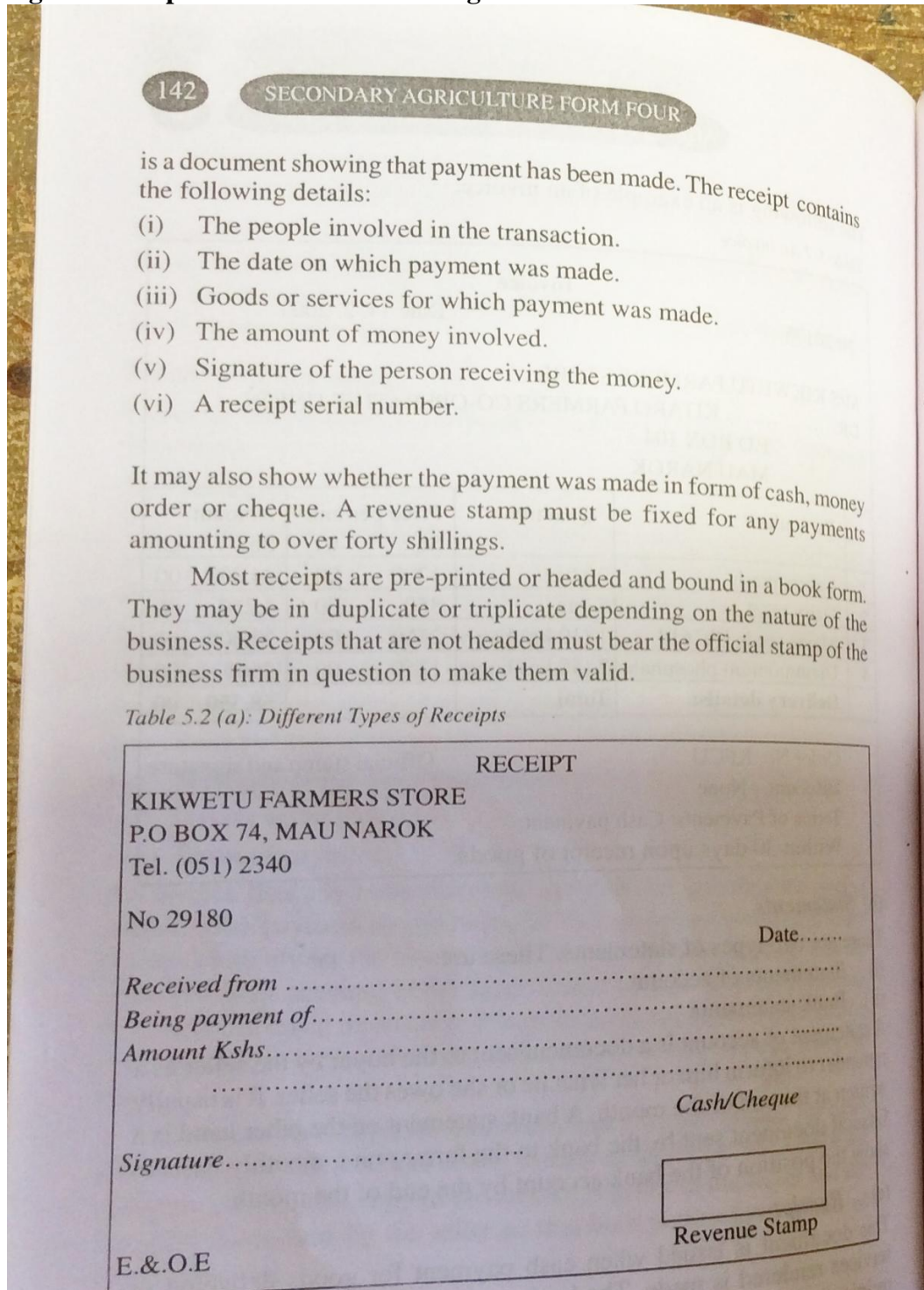
<b>Access to Ag. Education</b>	<b>Frequency (n)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
1-Biggest challenge	4	7
2-Second biggest challenge	17	29
3-Third biggest challenge	23	39
4-Fourth biggest challenge	15	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Author’s Interview Data (2014)**

The most convenient avenue for exposure to agricultural education was school. While analyzing the school system to determine the quality and effectiveness of agricultural education is a research subject in and of itself, secondary interviews conducted with two secondary school teachers in the villages of Kahuho and Gikambura provided important insights. The teachers explained that agriculture as a subject is mandatory in Form One and Form Two, and optional in Form Three and Form Four (equivalent of Grade 9-12). From the 55 participants who had completed secondary school, 55 per cent had taken agriculture as a subject of study throughout high school (Form One to Form Four). Figures 4, 5, and 6 display a snapshot of some pages from the Form Four agriculture textbook. These figures illustrate that by the time they graduate, students would have been exposed to different farming methods, farming tools and techniques, as well as a basic level of agribusiness management.

Other avenues of learning about farming skills mentioned by participants were TV programs and social media. An example of a TV program mentioned by the participants was the *Shamba Shape-Up* show (<http://www.shambashapeup.com/>). The TV show features a team of experts who visit a different farm each week in a different area of the country to tackle issues of crop and livestock management using sustainable methods. Easy access to mobile phones has also brought all kinds of information to the fingertips of the youth, especially through social media tools such as facebook. One facebook page titled *Mkulima Young* was particularly popular among the participants who were interested in farming. The page, specifically geared towards young farmers, allows anyone to join in discussions, share photos and farming tips and tricks (Figure 7). It also allows members to post items and produce for sell, additionally serving as a digital marketplace.

**Figure 4: Snapshot of the Form Four agriculture textbook**



**Source: Author's Interview Data (2014)**

**Figure 5: Snapshot of the Form Four agriculture textbook**

<b>Contents</b>		<i>Page</i>
<i>Prologue</i> .....		<i>v</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i> .....		<i>xi</i>
<b>Chapter One</b>		
<b>Livestock Production V (Poultry)</b> .....		<b>1</b>
Parts of an Egg .....		1
Selection of Eggs for Incubation .....		3
Brooding .....		9
Brooder and Brooder Management .....		10
Rearing Systems .....		15
Stress and vices in Chicks .....		22
Marketing of Poultry Products .....		24
<i>Revision Questions</i> .....		27
<b>Chapter Two</b>		
<b>Livestock Production VI (Cattle)</b> .....		<b>28</b>
Raising of the Young Stock .....		28
Methods of Calf Rearing .....		29
Routine Management Practices .....		34
Milk and Milking .....		36
Milk Secretion and Let-down .....		38
Essentials of Clean Milk Production .....		41
Dry Cow Therapy .....		46
Marketing of Milk .....		47
<i>Revision Questions</i> .....		48

**Source: Author's Interview Data (2014)**

**Figure 6: Snapshot of the Form Four agriculture textbook**

<b>Chapter Five</b>	
<b>Agricultural Economics IV (Farm Accounts) .....</b>	<b>139</b>
Financial Documents .....	140
Books of accounts .....	146
Ledger .....	146
Inventory .....	147
Cash-book .....	150
Journal .....	151
Subsidiary Books of the Journal .....	153
Financial Statements .....	153
<i>Revision Questions</i> .....	<i>162</i>
<b>Chapter Six</b>	
<b>Agricultural Marketing and Organisations .....</b>	<b>164</b>
Market and Marketing .....	164
Demand, Supply and Price Theory .....	166
Factors Influencing Demand for a Commodity .....	168
Elasticity of Demand .....	170
Supply .....	174
Elasticity of Supply .....	177
Determination of Market Prices .....	178
Marketing Functions .....	180
Marketing Organisations and Agencies .....	183
Problems in Marketing Agricultural Produce .....	186
Agricultural Organisations .....	189
Agricultural Statutory Boards .....	189
Types of Farmers Co-operative Societies .....	194
Associations and Unions .....	195
<i>Revision Questions</i> .....	<i>198</i>

**Source: Author's Interview Data (2014)**

**Figure 7: Snapshot of the Mkulima Young webpage**

The screenshot shows the Mkulima Young website interface. At the top is a navigation menu with five items: HOME, SOKO (sell your farm produce), QUESTIONS (ask and get answer), RESOURCE (blog & tips), and EVENTS (post events / training). Below the menu is a 'SELLING' section with three product listings:

- Kroilers Cocks:** Available 100 Pieces, PRICE KES 1500. Image shows several dark-colored chickens in a cage.
- KARI kienyeji chicks:** Available 50000 Pieces, PRICE KES 85. Image shows a large group of small, fluffy yellow chicks.
- New-48-eggs incubator-0707787884:** Available 195 Pieces, PRICE KES 20000. Image shows a yellow and white plastic incubator.

Below the listings is a section titled 'Young farmers helping young farmers' with the following text:

Mkulima Young is an initiative by ACLECOPS. It aims at encouraging youth to engage in agricultural issues. Young farmers are plagued with problems affecting their productivity and marketing where middlemen offer meager prices for their produce, delays with payments and expensive farm inputs. Mkulima Young is connecting young farmers and those aspiring them with each other in a virtual space

**Source: Mkulima Young (2013)**

The spread of technology along with the exposure to farming as a business in high school suggests that getting access to agricultural education is not necessarily a significant challenge. However, participants felt that more emphasis needs to be placed on giving the youth a good quality, hands-on farming experience. For example, one participant from Kahuho who had not taken agriculture as a subject in school explained that opening up a farming education centre would not only help many youth who are interested in farming, but would also create a positive vibe in the community.

*For the youth who are in these local places...if the government would set up education centers for them, maybe even if it's twice a week...go and learn about tomato farming...do it for maybe*

*2-3 weeks. The next week is another group learning about poultry farming. It would help (Participant 8688).*

Vocational farm training initiatives like these are particularly important for youth who missed out on learning about agriculture in secondary school, or youth who are not well connected with the online community. For example, a participant from Kahuho explained that poor knowledge of crop/livestock maintenance is something that holds back many youth from running a successful farming business, which reinforces negative perceptions of farming as a business.

*Most of the youths here around Kiambu don't have that much education about farming. Maybe they don't know which medicines to give to their crops if they get a certain disease. They [also] don't know at which age to give those medicines (Participant 1874).*

Running a farming business without a proper understanding of how to deal with crop/livestock diseases can result in major losses. Presented below are extracts from two different interviews. The first is of a participant in Kiamumbi who related the painful experience he had to go through because of not being well equipped with how to deal with a disease that had infected his birds. The second is of a participant in Karura who wished the government would establish programs whereby they would visit farmers to understand their challenges and connect them with modern techniques of farming.

*Concerning the chicken there is the outbreak of diseases. Sometimes you find these viral diseases when they attack maybe they attack your whole...lot of it. You find that an outbreak can wipe a good percentage of your chicken. It has happened quite a lot (Participant 9558).*

*They should be visiting people from homes to see what young people are doing and to know what they want and what they do not want...to know the challenges of farmers. They should get deep into the farmers and to know what's happened...are they implementing the new things or are they using their old ways of doing farming. The government should have a forum whereby they should be coming to homes, talking to people (Participant 3953).*

Vocational programs should not be limited to teaching the skills of crop/livestock maintenance; they need to serve an all-inclusive purpose that includes a cultivation of the instinctive and traditional connections to farming and its economic benefits. For example, one participant from Kahuho believed that before providing loans and other support mechanisms, youth first need to understand and accept the rewards a farming business can bring. Other

participants suggested that vocational programs should include showcasing ways that farming can be a profitable business, as this can aid in developing a passion for farming, something which many youth lack. Presented below are extracts from five different interviews of participants who held strong views about incorporating an all inclusive strategy in vocational programs.

*The only thing I would like to add on is that **to encourage youth in business require a lot of information. It's not just giving them money** like the government is doing. It's not just telling them farming is good. Personally it's because I've gone to a field that deals with animals, animal health and production. That's why I can see the good part of farming. But if I just relied on the kind of farming that I saw with my parents, it is totally discouraging. So they need to get exposed, they need to be taught, they need to be informed about farming, about the benefits (Participant 7926).*

*To motivate the youth **you must show them that farming is good** so that they can get into it. When you have passion for anything, you can source the capital from anywhere (3482).*

*Showing them that farming is also a job...it's profitable. If they see **someone to teach them and show them that farming can be of use, it can give you money**, whatever you need, because if you farm you can have everything others have (Participant 0524).*

*They may be discouraged by the things that are happening in our country. According to me the government is not interested about agriculture. Sometimes you find they are putting much effort on business. Sometimes youth they think that farming does not give you a big income. When they add value to farming, they **show people that farming has more and [that] farming can do great things to their life**...so they need to show good things about the farming (Participant 3953).*

*[The government] are not creating awareness among the youth on the importance of farming. I think youths only believe that I'm going to school and then get employed and from there I'll get my income and I'll know how to go about it. I think when the government takes care and thinks of creating awareness...holding seminars and educating on the importance of farming and how you can do it...how you'll overcome some challenges, I think the youths will be able to know (Participant 9655).*

## CHAPTER EIGHT – CONCLUSION

Consistent with many other papers, such as the ones produced at the 2012 “Young People, Farming, and Food” conference in Ghana, this study establishes that many youth hold negative perceptions of farming and show a disinterest in working as a farmer. These are not unreasonable attitudes, considering the challenges that smallholder farmers in Kenya face today. Equally important however, are the findings which reveal that it is not uncommon for youth to express interest in farming. The present study found that participants expressed different motivations for staying in agriculture. Some were genuinely interested in pursuing it as a career, while for others it was a method of earning quick cash so that they could invest in other businesses. A few older participants also expressed their desire to stay in farming because of being unable to find jobs in the city. These findings suggest that it is incorrect to paint a homogenous picture of rural youth as far as their attitude towards farming concerned.

The present study establishes that non-agricultural career aspirations, such as engineering and teaching, may create the desire to migrate to cities. However, this desire is likely to be influenced by the level and nature of the “push” and “pull” factors experienced through the complexities of social influences and structural constraints. Significantly, many of the youth developed positive or negative perceptions of farming from an early age based on how their parents lived as farmers. These perceptions were at times reinforced through peer influence. Furthermore, the challenges of access to land, high costs of input supplies, unstable market prices, and insufficient vocational agricultural education were found to limit the profit margins of some youth, while for others, the mere perceptions of their existence was enough to discourage them from farming. With the existence of these barriers, it becomes a rather daunting task to convince the youth that farming can be a profitable business. The perceived existence of these barriers and the difficulties in overcoming them led a participant in Kahuho to understand, and to some degree concur, with his peers negative perceptions of farming.

*They [my friends] just say it's for old people...because the returns are very low. And those old people are the ones who don't have many responsibilities, they've finished with most of their responsibilities and us as young people we have a lot that's ahead of us and so farming cannot help us achieve our goals and live a decent life. Some way I agree with them because...it is true. It is very hard to achieve the goals that you [want] in the future when you're just in farming, unless you have enough capital, which is a major challenge, technical know-how and some other*

*resources like land. Even myself I don't want to take it like a career. But I'm trying to take it as a stepping stone to enable me to venture into other businesses. If I venture into pig production I can be able to accumulate some capital to buy like a matatu [minibus] whereby the income will be constant. In farming there is this variation in prices. That high level of risking I don't like it (Participant 7926).*

The findings of this paper provide some important learning points that contribute to the understanding of the complexities of the process of deagrarianization. While there is no doubt that the non-agricultural rural economy is rapidly growing as more and more people opt out of farming, the present study establishes that there still exists a sub-set of youth who are not only passionate about farming, but who also consider farming an attractive career path. Interestingly enough, according to them, the idea that success can only be attained by working in a white-collar job is the 'traditional' mentality that exists within their parents' generation (see page 39). Whereas their parents view farming as primarily a traditional subsistence activity, many respondents consider it a business that is just as competitive and profitable as any other urban business. While they are willing to take upon farming as their primary income generating activity, they also acknowledge that they will need the required resources, the most important of which is land. As the data on role models revealed, farmers who were considered successful were those who owned large land and farmed using modern technology. The present study found that access to land is an issue for two groups of youth: those who are interested in farming but do not have the finances to rent, and those who have managed to secure rental/family land but the size of it is incredibly small and there is no security as the land can be taken away at the owner's will.

While much of the discourse surrounding youth in agriculture, and admittedly many of the papers cited in this study, hold farming (as practiced through modern techniques) as a potential solution to high youth unemployment, findings from the present study suggest that many youth may not have the resources needed to succeed in, or even enter into, commercial farming. Hence, as the new language of farming (farming-as-business) reaches the ears of the youth, it is crucial to point out that certain structural constraints continue to serve as a major hindrance to smallholder productivity. This fact perhaps explains the significant variations in income earnings among young farmers in table 7. A quick glance at the table reveals that the top five income earners had completed tertiary education. However, the present study did not have sufficient data to carry out a comparison between high income earners and low income earners. Besides high

education levels, it is possible that combinations of access to large family land, the ability to source capital from outside sources, access to higher value markets, and other factors may have dictated their ability to secure higher profit margins. In addition, the present study found cases of rural youth who had completed high school but did not have the resources to proceed with further education. At the same time, they also lacked the key assets needed to succeed as a farmer. As a result, they were left with the choice to either migrate or resort to a combination of informal non-agricultural low-wage activities and subsistence farming. The uncertainties of the city life, and the dreadful images of living in slums would have more than likely resulted in them accepting, although unwillingly, the latter choice.

Lastly, the role of gender in young people's decision to become farmers is a key area of consideration. For example, as far as perceptions of farming and the decision to work as a farmer are concerned, exclusion from land inheritance may serve as an additional factor of discouragement and influence some young women to stay away from farming. Nevertheless, the present study found a few cases of young women managing their own farming business on rented land. However, there was insufficient data to compare how their struggles of working as farmers differed from the struggles of young men. Research in this area becomes even more important when early-age marriages are the norm. For instance, young married women who find themselves working on (their in-laws) family land may have to deal with different social influences (and pressures) which will inevitably affect their perceptions of farming and decision to work as a farmer.

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