Agribusiness Opportunities, Constraints and Challenges Facing the Youth in Swaziland

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Abstract: Swaziland, like most Southern African countries, is faced with a high level of youth unemployment. Swaziland labor markets have insufficient jobs to absorb young job seekers. The purpose of the study was to identify opportunities and constraints that are faced by the Swazi youth who are engaged in agribusiness. The study also sought to identify the markets of the agribusiness products and the support institutions that assist the youth to engage in agribusinesses. A sample of 40 youth involved in agribusinesses in the country was given questionnaires. A total of 10 institutions that helped the youth doing agribusinesses were interviewed using an interview guide. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data for this study to obtain frequencies and percentages. Quantitative data was extracted from the findings and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 to obtain frequencies and percentages. The findings of the study indicated that most Swazi youth were engaged in fieldcrop and vegetablecrop production. However, the youth faced many challenges while conducting their agribusinesses such as limited access to land and funds from support institutions. Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that there are many agribusinesses that the Swazi youth are engaged in. It is recommended that government make access to land and finance for agribusinesses relatively easy. Training about agribusiness should be conducted by the financial institutions before providing funds to ensure the proper usage of funds by the youth who own agribusinesses.

Key words: Agribusiness • Eswatini youths • Financing • Challenges and Opportunities • Food security • Sustainable Economic Growth and Development

INTRODUCTION

Africa has an exceptional population profile: 200 million people living in Africa are between the ages 15 to 24, constituting over 20% of the African population; 70% of African youth resides in rural areas and account for 65% of labor in agriculture. Young people make up 36% of the working population and account for 60% of the total unemployed [1]. The large youth population in Africa should be seen as an asset for the continent’s development if appropriate human capital investment measures are taken.

Rural youth face many hurdles in trying to earn a livelihood. Pressure on arable land is high in many parts of the world, making it difficult to start a farm. Youth often also lack access to credit and many other productive resources necessary for agribusiness investment. Generally, studies on Africa’s agriculture do reveal that the sector is left to the less educated; and that farmers have low access to technologies, credit and extension services [2].

Creation of non-agricultural jobs may not happen in the short run; as such agriculture and agribusiness is likely to continue being a source of employment and livelihood in the medium to long term especially for countries that heavily depend on agriculture[3, 4]. The 2008 World Bank “Agriculture for development report” further pointed out the enormous potential of agriculture and agribusiness in offering employment [5].

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Youth inclusivity in agriculture and agribusinesses is thus an imperative with its many direct and indirect benefits. It will provide under- and un-employed young people with employment and income, this in turn will provide the food they need via increased production and ensures farming is passed from one generation to the next. Indirectly, it will drastically reduce the criminal and illegal activities youths may indulge in due to lack of gainful employment. Youth may form cooperatives. Co-operative membership has a positive and statistically significant impact on price, gross income, farm profits and return on investment [6]. Commitment was found to be more important in agricultural co-operatives in Sweden [7]. Youth are not largely involved in agricultural activities due to the fact that agriculture as a career of choice is burdened with misperceptions and a lack of information and awareness. This is mostly due to uncompetitive wages, the physical aspects associated with work in the sector and the lack of awareness of what careers in the agricultural sector have to offer [8].

Africa’s young people are the continent’s biggest asset and in case of Swaziland they are the future of the Swazi nation. The starting point for elimination of poverty and the transformation of African economies is the provision of high quality education to youth of Africa; with an emphasis on what is arguably Africa’s most important business - that of agriculture. Agribusiness will play a central role in sustainable development and wealth creation for most countries in Africa.

African agribusinesses are beset by a host of challenges. Studies identify lack of market access, low productivity on-adoptions of modern farming systems, climate change, low fertilizer usage, inadequate storage and processing facilities as being the most crucial.

Youth by their very education, talent, innovation, energy, openness to new agricultural techniques and technologies are better poised to be more effective and efficient agricultural producers. Youth unemployment in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is higher than adult unemployment and in fact youth in SSA are twice as likely to be unemployed than are adults. In 2012, the youth unemployment rate in SSA was 11.8% and it will remain close to 11.7% in the coming years [9].

Youth employment in Africa is a problem and it may appear to be more of a problem because the focus is on wage jobs. Instead, the focus should be on tapping the dynamism and resourcefulness of youth to establish productive ventures, especially in agribusinesses and helping them to create jobs for themselves and others within the agriculture value chain. Only by doing this will the potential of a brighter future for Africa be realized. Youth form a major catalyst for change and a backbone of a nation and can be mobilized for national development through participation in agribusiness [10, 11]. However, youth face particular constraints in gaining access to land, credit, training and new technologies. They also face limited access across the entire agricultural value chain ranging from research, innovations, product development and market participation. For Swazis living in rural areas, agriculture remains the single largest source of employment and income. In low income countries, job creation is the key to shared prosperity and reduction of poverty [3]. There are major challenges and constraints when it comes to agribusinesses and youth in SSA. Secure land tenure is not assured in many SSA countries; increasing and sustaining the productivity and production of smallholder family farms to a commercial level is difficult; access to affordable credit and working capital hampers agribusiness investments.

Limited availability and access to appropriate productivity-boosting technology and equipment is a common challenge in many SSA countries; access to international and regional markets is difficult. Knowledge can lead to more skills for the youth as a preparation to establish their own business [11].

To make a livelihood from agriculture one needs to acquire or rent land. However with ill-defined land tenure policies in many African countries, land markets lack the structure they need for individuals to buy or rent land with confidence [11]. Valerie [10] argued that young farmers were needed to replace ageing farmers. Opportunities exist for harnessing the energy, vitality and innovation of the youth in the agribusiness sector.

Swaziland faces a major youth employment challenge, as evidenced by one of the highest youth unemployment percentages in Africa and widespread youth idleness. Young people are the continent’s biggest asset and they are the future of the Swazi nation yet they face many hurdles and constraints when it comes to agribusiness investment. Evidence from the 2017 census indicates that young people are more than half of the population of Swaziland [12] yet the overall unemployment rate amongst the Swazi youth is 74.4% for rural youth and 25.6% for the youth living in urban areas [13]. This indicates that unemployment in Swaziland is especially widespread among the youth. Agriculture in the country is mostly done by the elderly since most Swazi youths are moving from rural to urban areas in large numbers in search for office work. However, the urban areas are not able to
generate jobs as fast as the growth in the population [4]. This factor has led to high levels of youth unemployment. The lack of evidence has impeded designing policies addressing the youth employment challenge. Agribusiness has been identified as a gateway for youth employment opportunities if it can be practiced properly.

Therefore, this study aimed to identify and describe the agribusiness opportunities and constraints that affect the youth involvement in agribusinesses to reduce unemployment amongst the youth of Swaziland.

The Purpose and Objectives of the Study: The purpose of the study was to identify agribusiness opportunities available to the youth and the constraints that are faced by the Swazi youth who are involved in agribusinesses.

The specific objectives of the study were:
- To identify agribusiness opportunities that the Swazi youth are engaged in.
- To describe the equipment and inputs that the youth need to run their agribusinesses.
- To determine the markets that the youth sell their agribusiness products to.
- To identify the constraints faced by the Swazi youth who have agribusinesses.
- To identify the institutions available for assisting youth investing in agribusinesses.

Justification of the Study: The study will be a building block for government strategies, policies, institutions and programs for sustainable livelihoods of Swazi youth, in particular job creation and entrepreneurship. The youth will be given enough platform in the agricultural industry especially land provision and finances. By so doing the findings are expected to increase the employment level among Swazi youth.

Research Questions: The study pursued the following research questions:
- What are the agribusiness opportunities that the youth of Swaziland are involved in?
- What inputs and equipment do the youth need to run their agribusinesses?
- What constraints are faced by the Swazi youth in agribusiness involvement?
- Which institutions are available for assisting youth to invest in agribusinesses?
- Which markets do the youth sell their agribusiness products to?

Methodology

Research Design: Research design as defined by [14] is a step that the researcher takes while undertaking research process from the initial stage of research to the end. It is a process that enables the researcher to understand the important part of the research and steps to take in the whole process [15].

The descriptive research design was used to conduct the study. This type of research design is a non-experimental quantitative research design. The data was collected to describe the agribusiness opportunities and constraints amongst the Swazi youth to address and reduce the unemployment level in Swazi youth, as well as to identify the financial institutions that are available for the youth to access credit facilities in order to invest in agribusinesses.

Sample Selection: The target population of the study were the youth of Swaziland, a country located in Southern Africa. This country was chosen for the study because it is a nation in which many agricultural activities are done and its economy is dependent on agriculture. The convenience sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 40 youth doing agribusinesses in Swaziland, selecting ten youth respondents in each of the four regions of Swaziland. The sample size for the study was determined using [16] a table which gave the researcher a sample size of 40 youth from a total population of 45 youth in the country that have agribusinesses. The youth were identified through the help of Swaziland National Agriculture Union in Manzini as they had their records.

The convenience sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 40 youth doing agribusinesses and ten institutions that assisted the youth to start agribusinesses which were: Swazi Bank, Luhlelo, Lolunotsisa Temabizinisi (LULOTE), Swaziland National Agricultural Union (SNAU), National Maize Cooperation (NMC), National Marketing Board (NAMBOARD), Small Enterprise Development Company (SEDCO), KickStart Swaziland, Swaziland Farmers Cooperatives Union (SWAFCU), Micro Finance Unit (MFU), and the Youth Enterprise Fund (YEF).

Instrumentation: In the study a questionnaire and an interview guide was used to collect data. The interview guide was used to collect data from the ten institutions which assisted the youth that engaged in agribusiness. Personal interviews with the managers of the
institutions in order to identify their roles towards agribusiness opportunities and constraints faced by the youth were conducted.

The questionnaire was used for collecting data from the 40 youth respondents. The 40 youth engaged in agribusinesses were identified with the help of SNAU who had their contact details. The researchers collected data after the respondents’ regional meetings. The respondents were required to fill in the information and the researchers collected the questionnaire upon completion. The questionnaire and the interview guide were developed from the objectives of the study.

The questions were both open ended and closed ended and the respondents were able to express their views freely when filling the questionnaire. Both of the instruments being the interview guide and the questionnaire were translated into siSwati (local language) during the data collection process for clarification.

Validity: In this study, both data collecting instruments, being the interview guide and questionnaire were validated using content validity to check the authenticity of the structure of the instrument to be used.

To demonstrate this form of validity the instrument showed that it fairly covered the domain or items that it purports to cover. The instruments were validated by experts at the University of Swaziland Faculty of Consumer Sciences and the Department of Agribusiness Economics and Management (AEM), Faculty of Agriculture, Luyengo Campus to check if the instrument really assessed the content that was being examined.

Reliability: Reliability is the consistency of measurement over time, whether it provides the same results on repeated trials. It is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results after repeated trials [14]. An instrument is reliable if it can measure a variable accurately and consistently and obtain the same results under the same condition over time.

The reliability of the questionnaire was tested by piloting it on 4 youth. According to [17], the pilot study sample should be 10% of the total population projected for the study. The 4 youth is the number derived from 10% of the 45 youth which was the population of the Swazi youth that had agribusinesses. Piloting the instrument was done to ensure that it was relatively easy to use and that it was appropriate for obtaining the information which was required by the study.

A correlation coefficient of 0.82 was obtained using Cronbach’s Alpha. This correlation coefficient showed that the instrument was reliable. For the instrument to be considered reliable the correlation coefficient should be positive and also the correlation coefficient should be in the Cronbach alpha 0.65-1, less than 0.5 is unacceptable [18].

Ethical Considerations: The respondents’ were informed that their names would be kept confidential and numbers would be used to code them in order to protect their dignity and welfare.

Data Collection: Personal interviews with managers of ten institutions which assisted the youth that engaged in agribusiness were conducted. The researchers conducted interviews with the managers of these support institutions in order to identify and describe the agribusiness opportunities that were at the youth’s disposal. The managers of the ten institutions were requested to answer all the open-ended questions that were asked by the researchers and also expressed their own views on their roles towards agribusiness opportunities and constraints facing the youth.

The Questionnaire was used to collect data from the 40 youth that had agribusinesses. The respondents were assisted to fill in the questionnaire and the interviews were conducted in siSwati. The questions were asked as they were written so that all respondents were asked the same questions to obtain unbiased results. The questionnaire was collected upon completion on the same day of the interview.

The interviewer-administered questionnaires approach was adopted to alleviate the problem of misinterpretations or misunderstandings of some words or questions. This strategy also ensured that all questions were considered without the respondents omitting “inconvenient” ones.

Data Analysis: Quantitative data was extracted from the findings and analyzed quantitatively using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 [22] a computer program to obtain descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data for this study to obtain frequencies and percentages.

RESULTS

Characteristics of Respondents: The study targeted the youth of Swaziland who were involved in agribusinesses.
Table 1: Distribution of the respondents by age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-35</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by highest level of education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary level</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertiary</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Type of Agribusinesses Opportunities that the Youth are Engaged in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agribusiness type</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crops</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous chickens</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broilers</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Layers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piggery</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bee keeping</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rabbit</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papaya</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents were the youth between the ages of 18 and 35 years who owned different agribusinesses in the country.

Demographics Characteristics: This is demographic characteristics of respondents by gender, marital status, age and level of education.

Distribution of the Respondents by Gender: There were more male youth respondents as they were represented by a frequency of 28 (70%) than females which were represented by a frequency of 12 (30%).

Distribution of the Respondents by Marital Status: The majority of the youth from the forty agribusiness owners were single and were represented by a frequency of 26 (64%), followed by those married by a frequency of 14 (36%). This indicated that more single Swazi youth are engaged in agribusinesses than those already married.

Distribution of the Respondents by age: Table 1 shows the age of the respondents as they were grouped into three groups. Age group between 30 - 35 years and age group between 25 - 29 years were the highest respondents with each of both age groups having a frequency of 14 (35%) and were followed by the age group between 18 – 24 years with a frequency of 12 (30%).

Distribution of Respondents by Educational Level: Table 2 shows the distribution of the respondents by the highest educational level attained. The respondents were asked to state their highest educational level attained. High school was the highest level of education attained by most respondents with a frequency of 17 (43%), followed closely by tertiary education with a frequency of 16 (40%). Secondary school education and primary school education level were the least represented with only 4 (10%) and 3 (7%) respondents respectively.

Type of Agribusinesses that the Swazi Youth were Engaged in: Table 3 shows that there were more youth that were engaged in field crop production as indicated by the highest frequency of nine and they were followed closely with those who are involved in vegetable crop production with a frequency of eight. Those who raised indigenous chickens and broilers each had a frequency of six. However, there were only four youths that were keeping chicken layers and only three agribusiness owners were in piggery production. There was only one agribusiness owner of papaya production and one owner kept rabbits.

Equipment and Inputs Needed to Conduct Agribusinesses: Land, water pipes, fence, trowel and hoes were the most needed equipment and tools. This was indicated by the highest frequency of 22 (55%) of the 40 youth and was followed by wheelbarrow, water tank and infrared heater with a frequency of 7 (17.5%) of the youth who needed those equipment (Table 4). There was only 1 (2.5%) respondent who needed beehives, protective clothing and industrial machine for beekeeping.

Table 4: Agribusiness equipment needed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Equipment</th>
<th>Frequency (N=40)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chicken house, feeders, waterers and vaccines</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egg crates, poultry house, electricity</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beehives, protective clothing and industrial machine</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land, water pipes, fence, trowel and hoes</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>55.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheelbarrow, water tank and infrared heat</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Agribusiness Inputs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inputs</th>
<th>Frequency (N=40)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Broiler chicks, broiler mash, water and cleaning detergents</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Layer chicks, layer mash, vaccines and water</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Feed, water, chicks and disinfectant</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. Bees, nectar and water</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Seedlings, seeds, water, fertilizers and sweet potato vines</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f. Doe, buck, feed pellets and water</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g. Piglets, boar, sow, vaccines and water tank</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source of Agribusiness Equipment and Inputs:

Table 6 shows that most youths bought their inputs at Vickery in Malkerns as many of them need seedlings to grow in their gardens and they are represented by a frequency of 11 (27.5%). They were followed by those who bought their agribusiness equipment and inputs at Buy Cash Hardware and Feed master with each recording a frequency of 8 (20%). However, few agribusiness owners bought their equipment and inputs from Save Mor and Taiwan Mission as indicated by only 2 (5%) each.

Improvements Made in the Agribusiness:

Table 7 shows that most respondents had made improvements of fencing their area where they conducted their agribusinesses in order to minimize the invasion by animals as this was indicated by a frequency of 13 (32.5%) respondents. Fencing improvements was followed closely by irrigation improvements with a frequency of 10 (25%) respondents. However, only a few respondents recorded improvements on land and labour payments as each of them recorded a frequency of 2 (5%) each.

Agribusiness Training Attended by Agribusiness Owners:

Table 8 shows that most youth were trained by Swaziland National Agriculture Union (SNAU), a farmers cooperative union in Manzini as a frequency of 8 (20%) of the respondents stated that SNAU trained them. A frequency of 6 (15%) respondents indicated to have received training from Khuba traders in Manzini. They were followed closely by the respondents who received training from SWADE with a frequency of 5 (12.5%). Moreover, there was a frequency of 4 (10%) respondents who received training from NAMBOARD, World Vision, FAO and Eswatini Kitchen each. Only a frequency of 3 (7.5%) and 2 (5%) of respondents were trained by SEDCO and KickStart respectively.

Market of Agribusiness Products:

Table 9 indicates the highest frequency of 14 (35%) youth respondents who sold their agribusiness products to community members as they produced at small scale. A frequency of...
Table 9: Markets of agribusiness products.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Markets</th>
<th>Frequency (N=40)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spar</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Members</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurants</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAMBOARD</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NMC</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pick’n Pay</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Area of Operating, Ownership, Period of Operating and Transport Used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Operational Variables</th>
<th>Frequency (N=40)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area of Operation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNL</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TDL</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alone</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starting Year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004-2010</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2016</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport Used</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use Own</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use Public</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11: Agribusiness constraints faced by Swazi youth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agribusiness Constraints</th>
<th>Frequency (N=40)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expensive inputs and shortage of equipment</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low product price and theft of the product</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insufficient land and difficult credit access</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water scarcity, pests and diseases attack product</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport, small market and high competition</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9 (22.5%) respondents sold their agribusiness products to Spar Supermarket. Only 3 (7%) of the respondents sold their agribusiness products to NMC and Pick’n Pay Supermarket each.

Constraints Faced by the Youth when operating their Agribusinesses: There were many constraints faced by Swazi youth when conducting their agribusinesses. The respondents were asked to list the constraints that they face while conducting their agribusinesses. These constraints were then grouped according to the responses of the respondents (Table 11). Insufficient land and difficult credit access were the greatest constraints faced by the respondents with a frequency of 12 (30%), followed closely by low product price and theft of product with a frequency of 9 (22.5%). Expensive inputs and shortage of equipment were also other constraints with a frequency of 8 (20%) of the youth faced by these constraints. Water scarcity, pests and diseases as well as transport, limited markets and high competition were the least constraints with frequencies of 6 (15%) and 5 (12.5%) respectively.

Institutions that Assists Youth to Start Agribusinesses: There were ten institutions which assisted the youth to start agribusinesses that were interviewed: Swazi Bank Mbabane branch, Lulelo Lolunotsisa Temabizinisi (LULOTE), Swaziland National Agricultural Union (SNAU), National Maize Cooperation (NMC), National Marketing Board (NAMBOARD), Small Enterprise Development Company (SEDCO), KickStart Swaziland, Swaziland Farmers Cooperatives Union (SWAFCU), Micro Finance Unit (MFU) and the Youth Enterprise Fund (YEF).

These ten institutions were asked to state their role in assisting the youth agribusiness entrepreneurs in the country.

The institutions assisted the Swazi youth in six major roles which are funding, training, buying, promoting and service delivery. However, the institutions expected the youth to provide the necessary requirements before they gave them assistance. All the ten institutions were interviewed where the managers and assistant managers provided the researchers with the necessary information.

Funding Institutions: Swazi Bank and the Youth Enterprise Fund: Swazi Bank fully supported commercial agriculture. The bank has unmatched expertise and experience in the field. The agribusiness finance offered by Swazi Bank had the following agricultural products: farm purchase, sugarcane farming, field crops and vegetable crop production, dairy farming, poultry production, piggery production, feedlot farming and agro-processing.

Applicants must be Swazi citizens and at least 18 years old and companies or cooperatives must be legally registered in Swaziland. Applicants must conduct banking
with Swazi Bank and must submit technically and commercially viable agribusiness proposal. Companies or Co-operatives should possess acceptable collateral and legal rights to use land and water where applicable. Lastly they should provide letters of confirmation of markets and sources of supply.

The Y E F is a business support mechanism established for youth between the ages of 18 – 35 years aimed at contributing to the reduction of youth unemployment through the provision of business capital for qualifying individuals, associations and companies. The loan applications were assessed by an intermediary institution upon receiving the forms from the secretariat and presented to the Board of Directors for approval. The Y E F aims to curb Youth unemployment through achieving the following objectives:

- Empowering the youth to engage in economic and commercial enterprise through the initiation and ownership of small and large businesses in different spheres.
- Empowering the youth to be self-employed and to create wealth through employment of others.
- Facilitating the provision of skills development for loan recipients and youth at Tinkhundla centers.
- Exposing the youth to business environments through internship opportunities.
- Providing mentorship to youth owned enterprise.
- Providing seed capital without the need for collateral to youth enterprises.
- Financing the growth of existing youth enterprises.
- Facilitating the establishment of national youth entrepreneurship award schemes.

Training Institutions: SEDCO and SWAFCU: Training Institutions offered the following services: Company registration, business plan compilation, business training, business counselling and advisory, office space/workshop provision and marketing.

SEDCO provided training on vegetable production, beekeeping and fruit tree production. In fact they offered a one day training on the growing of fruit trees where they trained selected resource poor families in the countries’ communities.

After the training, they provided free 100 fruit trees for each family where the family was expected to care for them and subsequently sustain a living. SEDCO also provided business plan training for aspiring agribusiness owners. However, they preferred training a group of people to minimize costs of training each and every individual on a particular business idea.

Swaziland Farmers Cooperative’s Union (SWAFCU) has been training farmers for the past two years on agribusiness opportunities such as field crop production, vegetable crop production and fruit production. These trainings usually last for a period of one week to four months. There were no fees charged for these trainings and they also helped to provide business plans for the farmers. The organization does not keep records of the trained youth as many trainees disappear once they were trained due to lack of startup finance to begin their agribusinesses. The organization faces a major challenge of youth inconsistent participation and attendance to their trainings.

Promotional Institution: SNAU: Swaziland National Agriculture Union (SNAU)’s key role is to promote agribusinesses that are done in the country especially piggery, maize and bean crop production. They assisted the youth in the upsaling of production, processing as well as marketing of agribusiness products. They had a marketing officer who assisted with marketing strategies and skills to willing agribusiness owners.

SNAU is calling upon Swazi farmers to join the organization and be a full member in order to access some opportunities and benefits offered by the organization. The membership requirement is a fee of about US$10.00 which includes registration and a membership card. However it is recommended that community members form a group so that the delivery of inputs and equipment by SNAU becomes relatively easy and cost effective.

Farmers register in their respective regions of the country. SNAU has formed partnership with Swazi Bank where they assists farmers financially especially with inputs and SNAU helps to pay 7% of the 15% interest that the youth farmer is expected to repay to Swazi Bank.

SNAU provide economic services such as bulk purchasing of farming inputs. This is beneficial to members because of shared costs of transportation. They can also offer transportation but this depends on the quantity that the member has purchased. Through this initiative SNAU is able to negotiate for discounted prices with input suppliers so that the participating farmers can enjoy relatively lower prices. Another economic service is the Maize Block Project which is implemented by SNAU and it seeks to improve maize productivity for many smallholder farmers in high maize producing areas of the country.

Buyer of Agribusiness Products: NAMBOARD: The National Marketing Board (NAMBOARD) had the following core activities:
To regulate imports and exports of scheduled agricultural products and goods in transit.

To facilitate in such a manner as the board may consider appropriate, the production, processing, storage, transportation and sale of agricultural products.

To advise government in all matters related to the availability and demand for scheduled products.

To facilitate in the establishment of markets and marketing of locally produced products in the domestic (national) and international markets.

The NAMB promotes the youth agribusinesses especially baby vegetables and cabbages. They assists the youth agribusinesses at all stages from production to selling of their products. They also have contracts with the farmers and assist by providing the youth with farming inputs such as seeds, fertilizers and agro-chemicals to treat their produce so as to prevent pest and diseases attack. NAMBOARD also assists with funding in a form of inputs which will be repayable and they also help the youth with markets and supervision of their agribusinesses. The agribusiness farmers are able to make enough profits but it depends on how well and dedicated they are to their performance in order to deliver the best results. NAMBOARD works with other institutions such as NMC and SWADE to assist farmers around the nation to produce high quality products. They face constraints while working with agribusiness owners such as not following instructions well and some farmers do not reach the quality standard due to improper following of the instructions on how to treat or grow and care for produce like the baby vegetables.

Requirements Needed by Institutions: Table 12 shows that most of the institutions required collateral from the youth as indicated by 45% (18) of the respondents. In addition, there were 30% (12) of the respondents who were required to provide a business plan. There were less youth respondents where a bank account was needed as there were only 10% (4) of the respondents.

Assistance Provided by Support Institutions: The respondents were asked to indicate the assistance that they received from the support institutions. More youth received inputs from support institutions as indicated by 30%. However only 18% of the youth received capital to start their agribusinesses.

Table 12: Requirements needed by institutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Frequency (N=40)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bank account</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business plan</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credit history</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collateral</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 13: Assistance provided by support institutions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of assistance</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capital</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inputs</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

DISCUSSION

Agribusiness Opportunities that Swazi Youth are Engaged in: The study identified nine agribusiness that the Swazi youth were engaged in which were: chicken broiler production, chicken layer production, indigenous chickens, beeking to produce honey, vegetable crop production, field crop production, pawpaw production, piggery production and rabbit production.

There were more youth that were engaged in field crop production. This may be because many youth had been growing crops and vegetables since their childhood life and this made it easy to engage in such agribusiness and sell the product on the local market as well as to feed themselves with the surplus. However, agriculture has moved from being rain fed to irrigated agriculture on the SNL because of drought and climatic change. The youth needed to consider how to find and utilize a source of water for their crops and vegetables to grow well until they are ready for harvesting.

The Swazi youth rearing indigenous chickens and broilers had a frequency of 6 each. Indigenous chicken farming is described as backyard poultry rearing, rural poultry production or keeping scavenging chicken. In Swaziland, indigenous chickens are kept through subsistence farming practices by almost all the households, with a minimum of at least five birds per family [20].

Indigenous chicken lay between 8 and 15 eggs per clutch depending on availability of feed. They are broody and hatch about 80% of the eggs they sit on. The [21] reported that indigenous poultry production is a fast growing industry in the country. A frequency of 6 (15%) of the respondents sold their agribusiness products at restaurants and they included indigenous chicken farmers as there was a high demand of indigenous chickens in Swaziland. Many restaurants and food outlets now serve indigenous chicken meat though only in limited amounts [21].
However, there were only 4 youth that kept layers and only 3 agribusiness owners were in piggery production. There was only 1 agribusiness owner of pawpaw production and 1 owner who kept rabbits.

The Swazi youth have many opportunities when it comes to agribusinesses and financial institutions and relevant stakeholders are there to assist them. Collateral is not required for borrowing from the YEF and the interest rates are set below the commercial rates, but the amounts of individual loans are usually small as compared to groups or companies. After receiving the loan, entrepreneurs have up to 3 months to start their business and 2 years for repayment. Other government employment initiatives included the Rural Youth Programme under the Ministry of Agriculture and the Youth and Tourism Programme under the Swaziland Tourism Authority.

**Equipment and Inputs that the Youth Need to Operate Agribusinesses:** The findings showed that land, water pipes, fence, trowel and hoes were the most needed equipment and tools by most agribusiness owners. This was indicated by the highest percentage of 55% respondents. The findings agree with those of [22] who reported that it is a universal belief that certain basic infrastructural facilities helped the development of the mind and body and assisted productivity in any environment.

These facilities included good water supply, inputs, access to information and communication technology and other tools of the trade. Agriculture in Swaziland is dualistic divided into commercial estates on TDL and subsistence farms on SNL.

The commercial sector which occupies about 40% of the cultivated land produces mostly export crops such as irrigated sugarcane, citrus and pine apples. This sector takes about 60% of the arable land. Agricultural activities on SNL are predominantly characterized by low-input practices that are largely dependent on natural rainfall and local resources.

The smallholder farming sector predominantly produces food crops such as maize (staple cereal), sorghum, grain legume crops and vegetables and raise livestock mostly cattle, goats and chickens. However, land productivity on SNL is continuously threatened by a myriad challenges emanating from climate change [23, 24].

The country faces and is likely to continue experiencing agricultural production obstacles because of the high reliance on natural rainfall [25]. Wheelbarrow, water tank and infrared heaters has a percentage of 17.5% of the youth who needs these equipment. There were only 2.5% of the respondents who needed beehives, protective clothing and industrial machines for beekeeping. The main inputs required in bee keeping are bees, bee forage, bee hives, equipment and water. Honey bees depend on a number of plants for nectar and pollen. They make honey from nectar while pollen is fed to brood as a source of protein. A bee hive is also important when keeping bees. A hive is a box or some other container where bees live.

Bee equipment include protective clothing which is a set of clothing that is used to protect the beekeeper while inspecting the hive or harvesting honey. It is composed of the veil (headgear), coverall, gloves (protect the hands) and gumboots (protect the feet). Smoker is equipment used to emit smoke when opening a hive to inspect or harvest honey.

Indigenous chickens’ meat and eggs are tastier and preferred by most consumers to those obtained from commercial breeds. Initial investment is less than that needed to keep commercial breeds. More tolerant of harsh conditions, including diseases, than commercial breeds. The chickens can be fed on cheap, locally available feeds.

**Markets of Agribusiness Products:** The findings of the study showed that agribusiness owners have markets where they sell their agribusiness products. The highest frequency of 14 (35%) youth respondents sold their products to community members where they were able to make more profit by selling to individuals other than conventional markets like NAMBOARD. Chase [26] noted that producers often try to maximize their income by selling produce directly to consumers through various marketing outlets where the highest price of the product can be received. According to [26] products are generally priced based on customers demand competition and costs. Most farmers use the cost based strategy, which determines profit based on cost.

**Constraints or Challenges Faced by Agribusiness Owners:** Young Swazis were drawn to entrepreneurship out of both necessities in order to escape unemployment and build livelihoods. A mix of constraints impeded youth entrepreneurship in Swaziland. While well recognized constraints in the business environment such as access to credit and land as well as limited markets undoubtedly play an important role among challenges facing youth entrepreneurship.

There were many constraints that were faced by the Swazi youth when conducting their agribusinesses. Insufficient land and difficult credit access were the greatest constraints. Although access to land is
fundamental to starting a farm, it can often be difficult for young people to attain. Inheritance laws and customs in developing countries too often make the transfer of land to young women and the youth very difficult. Gender issues have to be taken into account. For example it was reported that in Larissa Prefecture, Greece, that women’s work was very important for the survival and development of the agricultural farm [27].

Most financial service providers were reluctant to provide their services like credit, to the Swazi youth due to their lack of collateral and financial literacy, among other reasons. Promoting financial products catered to youth, mentoring programmes and start-up funding opportunities can all help remedy this issue. This finding tends to conform with that of [28] who reported that commercial banks in Sub-Saharan Africa lend less than 10 percent of their total credit to the agricultural sector.

The majority of agribusiness owners reported that theft of their commodities as another cause of loss as they lacked fencing for their land or area where they conducted their agribusinesses. Expensive inputs and shortage of equipment were also other challenges with 20% of the youth affected. Water scarcity, pests and diseases as well as transport scarcity, limited markets and high competition were other constraints. Irrigation allowed producers to take full advantage of productive inputs and opportunities for high-value agriculture [25]. There is a need to include activities and policies that expand the size of the pie and to do research on productivity enhancing technologies which improves both the farmer and consumer well-being and lessens impacts on the environment [29, 30].

Access to markets by youth is becoming even more difficult due to the growing international influence of supermarkets and the rigorous standards of their supply chains. Agriculture remains hard work and risky and the allure of middle class lives in urban areas remains strong. Education increases more than just skills or immediate employability, it changes who people are and what they expect from life and for agribusiness to meet their aspirations it must be viewed as a viable livelihood option [31]. Extension services should be readily available because extension enhances local social capital [32].

In rural areas the turn toward entrepreneurship has been combined with renewed interest in the agricultural sector and agricultural value chains as sources of jobs for young people. Brooks et al. [3] reported that African agriculture can absorb large numbers of new job seekers and offer meaningful work with public and private benefits. However in order to fulfill its potential as the employment solution for young people in Africa, the agricultural sector must first become more profitable, competitive and dynamic in order to achieve the sustainable development goal of decent work.

It must also generate decent jobs for its workforce, thereby extending positive impacts to local communities. This observation reinforces the rationale for sponsoring youth-led agribusiness incubation. Youth seeking rural opportunities face several barriers. This relates to educated youth themselves, whose expanded horizons find imagined futures in farming difficult [33].

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary: The study was based on agribusiness opportunities and constraints amongst the Swazi youth. The study sought to identify the agribusiness opportunities that the youth were engaged in and the constraints they faced as they conducted their agribusinesses. The study also aimed at identifying the equipment and inputs that they need to run the different agribusinesses they are engaged in. Moreover the study sought to identify institutions available that assists the youth to engage in agribusinesses as well as the role of this institution towards youth who want to engage in agribusiness.

There are many agribusiness opportunities that the Swazi youth utilize and create their own employment. The most agribusinesses practiced by Swazi youth are crop and vegetable production as there were more youth engaged in these agribusinesses. Moreover the youth are also engage in keeping broilers and layers as well as indigenous chickens. The study also indicated that there are also opportunities in beekeeping and rabbit keeping to sustain a living.

There is a market for all the agribusinesses that the youth are involved in with the local community members being the main buyer. The agribusiness products market also include NAMBORD who is the buyer of vegetable products that the youth produce as well as N.M.C. who is the buyer of crops especially maize and beans produced by the agribusiness owners.

More youth also sell their chickens and rabbits to local restaurants. The youth purchase the equipment to run their agribusinesses especially the vegetables and crops from Buy Cash Hardware and the animal feed is mostly bought at Feed master in Matsapha. Inputs such as seedlings are purchased at Vickery in Malkerns.

The Swazi youth are faced with many constraints with limited access to land and difficult access to credit as
30% indicated in the study, this reflects the findings of Justine et al. (2011) that youth access to most crucial asset of agricultural production is limited as the parents holds the ownership of land.

More youth also mentioned that the product price is low and the product is usually stolen by some community members which reduce their profits after selling. The youth have other constraints of expensive inputs and shortage of equipment as indicated by 20% of the respondents. Transport costs, limited markets and high competition of the products is also a challenge to the youth as 12.5% of the agribusiness owners indicated these challenges. Water scarcity, pests and diseases attack to the agribusiness product are other constraints as 15% of the agribusiness owners indicated to be affected by these constraints.

There were ten institutions which assisted the youth to start agribusinesses that were interviewed: Swazi Bank, LULOTE, SNAU, NMC, NAMBOARD, SEDCO, Kick Start Swaziland, SWAFCU, MFU and the YEF.

The institutions assisted the Swazi youth in six major ways which were funding, training, buying, promoting and service delivery. However, these institutions expect the youth to provide the necessary requirements before they give them the assistance they need. A business plan is the most needed requirement from the youth as well as collateral in financial institutions such as Swazi Bank. The youth enterprise fund does not require any collateral but they do require a business plan and a proof of market of the business proposed.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that there are many agribusinesses that the Swazi youth were engaged in to mitigate the relatively high youth unemployment level that the country is facing. The Swazi youth are also faced with major constraints towards agribusiness investment which include limited access to land, limited access to credit facilities as well as expensive equipment and inputs needed to operate their agribusinesses. The youth lacked awareness on the available support institutions as the majority of them used their own savings or relatives money to start agribusinesses.

**Recommendations:** There is a need to facilitate land owner among the young people in order to attract them into farming, this will help them be able to own and manage on their own this most crucial asset of agricultural production. Furthermore there is a need to make access to credit especially for agribusinesses of the youth farmers easy, affordable and less tedious; this will encourage the youth who want to be involved in agribusinesses to access credit for business start-up as well as working capital. There is also a need to ensure coordinated and well-focused training for agribusiness owners and the government should identify and strengthen the key institutions that can provide the requisite training for farmers and agribusinesses.

There is a need to provide agribusiness equipment and inputs for the youth engaged in agribusinesses as it will boost and encourage them to work well. The youth must also be helped with marketing skills so as to expand the limited market they have for their agribusiness products. A thorough market research should be carried out to ensure that there is adequate demand for the products or services being offered by emerging agribusinesses.

**Recommendations for Policy:** The government of Swaziland should ensure that land ownership policy is implemented so that the youth can be able to own their own piece of land which they can use as collateral when they need financial assistance from banks. There is a need by the government to review the Youth Enterprise Fund policy and the loan process to ensure that the youth are able to access enough credit on time.

**Recommendations for Further Research:**
- The study identified the agribusiness opportunities, challenges and constraints, there is however a need to investigate the success and failure of youth run agribusinesses.
- There is a need to investigate the attitudes of the Swazi youth towards agribusiness.

**REFERENCES**

