



A global movement by youth for youth

## What is YPARD?

An informal, multi-stakeholder network of young professionals across the agricultural development spectrum

- 14,000 registered members globally
- 45,000 facebook followers
- Over 60 national representatives

## Structure



## Mentoring

- Rural youth have less access to capacity development and mentoring
- 90 % of YPARD members expressed interest in mentoring
- So how can mentoring be a tool to bring about transformational change among young people; to develop successful young entrepreneurs, researchers and development practitioners that would become successful role models for young people around the world?

## YPARD Pilot Mentoring program

- Desk-review (late 2014) and piloting of different forms of mentoring (early 2015): trialed peer mentoring linked to seed funding, face to face, purely online, and conference mentoring.
- National spin offs, notably in Nepal and Croatia, with changes suited to local context;

### Esther and Nicholas (peer to peer in Kenya)

- After the training Esther convinced her family to give her some land for tomatoes and lettuce;
- She built a greenhouse and has four part-time employees;
- She is now mentoring others in the community
- Neighbours now replicating her methods.



Esther believes that Nicholas has been instrumental in helping her overcome challenges: *“Consistent communication with my mentor has played a very big role in success of my farming. This being my first greenhouse it had a lot of challenges which, if I had no advice from my mentor, I probably would have given up along the way.”*

Nicholas has seen a major cultural change in Esther’s community, observing that many neighbouring farmers had watched Esther’s success and were replicating her methods. *“I was able to help convince Esther’s parents to give her land in a highly male centric community. Explaining YPARD and its vision to the parents helped them to have a light bulb moment and they finally said they would support her all the way.”*



## Recommendations

- 1. Face to face meetings enhance mentoring relationships and require investment
- 2. Relationships must have an anchor/focus but this must be flexible (goals, map how to achieve goals, but too focused, maybe mentee has other needs)
- 3. Take steps to address time poverty
- 4. Help mentees ask for help (sometimes too shy to ask for help)
- 5. Set a nurturing, patient and supportive group culture in all projects, to avoid competitiveness
- 6. Training and checking in with pairs/groups is crucial
- 7. Mentees need access to funding and practical opportunities
- 8. Future program management and coordination is decentralised
- 9. Expand M&E design to capture longer term lessons and successes
- 10. Operate from a more comprehensive and realistic budget

## Insights on Mentoring (Plan International)

- The importance of transferable skills (or soft skills and life skills) is equally important to technical skills for their career path
- Integrated approach: Mentorship alone is not enough, need for setting up financing mechanisms to accompany young graduates/entrepreneurs as well as post-training support.
- Involvement of stakeholders from private sector as mentors, but do not underestimate investment in engaging with the private sector