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Creation of Agricultural Smart Hub Value Chains to Improve Youth Unemployment in Zambia

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Abstract

Zambia is a country rich with vast natural resources together with the youthful population that is ready to contribute to national economic development. The country has enough resources to sufficiently produce enough food for national consumption but unfortunately 30 percent of this national output is lost to post harvest losses due to poor developed local value chains. Subsequently, the country spends significant part of the foreign reserves to import finished foods for local consumption at the expense of depreciating local currency.

This project idea will therefore aim at creating agricultural smart hub value chains to improve youth's unemployment in Zambia as shown on the poster. Agricultural smart hub project will create agribusiness hubs in all ten provinces which will be a coworking processing space utilising the locally available raw materials using the machinery in the hub to turn them into finishing products. The agribusiness hubs will utilise the comparative advantage of each of the ten provinces to determine the type of machinery to install in the hub and create a sustainable supply of required raw materials for the hub. For elaboration purposes the hub in Copperbelt province will have machineries for processing of Avocado oil/Paste, Fruit juices, Tomato paste and other products due to already locally available fruit trees and horticultural farmers in the province. The processing side of the hub will then process the raw materials into finished products at the same time coordinating with the in-house digitalized IT section to brand and market the finished products.

The Agricultural smart hub project will be a coworking Centre / hub that will setup a network of experts, customers, and agro suppliers to work together with a group of autonomous youth comprising of the graduates and rural youth to collaborate in three economic sectors namely agricultural production, agro processing & technology (ICT) to solve the food challenges. This will be done in order to co-create finished goods and services that will shift Zambia towards the culture of producing and processing its own food by making use of the available local agricultural raw materials and labour through shared value and collaboration.

Keywords: Agricultural Smart-Hub, Value Chains, Youth Employment, zambia