

Skills required by Youths for Employment in Green Jobs in the Agricultural Sector (Grassland Management and Agritourism) in Anambra State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Youth unemployment in Anambra state has led to negative effects such as underdevelopment and increased crime rate. It became imperative to find solutions to the issue of youth unemployment in the state. Green jobs have helped in reducing youth unemployment in other locations although the skills need to be ascertained before it is adopted as a tool for employment in the state. Hence, the study sought to identify the skills required by youths for employment in green jobs in Anambra state. Two research questions were posed to guide the study while two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted survey research design. It was carried out in Anambra state. The population for the study was 121 made up of 77 lecturers and 44 extension agents. Due to the manageable size of the population, the entire 121 respondents were involved in the study. Structured questionnaire was employed as instrument for data collection. The instrument was face validated by five experts. Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.71 was obtained for the instrument. Data was collected by the researcher with the help of four research assistants. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for answering the research questions. Based on the data analyzed, the study identified skills required by youths in two green jobs. Ten skills were identified in grassland management and nine skills were identified in forestry management. The study recommended among others that; Tertiary institutions must ensure that they encourage members of the academic board to go into research in green jobs/skill requirement to further increase the opportunities of youths getting employed in green jobs

Keywords: Green jobs, Green skills, Agricultural sector, Grassland management, Agritourism

Introduction

Green jobs and associated skills have gained considerable attention through the Green jobs initiative, established in 2007 between United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization of Employers (IOE) and International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) (Raedmaekers, Svatikova & Yearwood, 2015). OECD and CEDEFOP (2014) defined green jobs as "work in agricultural, manufacturing, research and development, administrative and service activities that contributes substantially to preserving or restoring environmental quality". Also, ILO and CEDEFOP (2011) defined green jobs as "jobs that reduce the environmental impact of enterprises and economic sectors, ultimately to levels that are sustainable". Furthermore, ILO (2013) defined green jobs as "decent jobs that contribute to preserve or restore the environment, be they in traditional sectors such as manufacturing and construction or in new emerging green sectors such as renewable energy and

energy efficiency". The author further opined that green jobs exist in most sectors of the economy. However, due to the fact that the agricultural sector provides employment for a majority of Nigeria's citizens, green jobs in the agricultural sector is going to affect this sector the most (Fin Intel, 2016).

Agricultural sector is that sector of the economy that deals with crop production, animal production, agricultural marketing as well as agricultural extension service. Green jobs in the agricultural sector are occupations in plant and animal production that reduces the environmental impact of agricultural enterprises to levels that are sustainable (Projectives, Klapuch & Caudron, 2013). The authors further opined that green jobs in the agricultural sector are important for the following reasons; it helps to mitigate the environmentally damaging aspects of agricultural land use; it helps to reduce the energy used by farm holdings to run their operations, machines and installations; it helps to generate energy in rural areas from renewable raw materials or renewable energy sources and helps to enhance the health and safety of animals and people who are stakeholders in agriculture. For youths to get

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employed in green jobs, they require the requisite skills termed green skills.

In the opinion of OECD and CEDEFOP (2014), "green skills are competencies needed by the workforce, in all sectors and at all levels, in order to help the adaptation of products, services and processes to the changes due to climate change and to environmental requirements and regulations". Nwakile (2017) opined that green skills refer to the competencies needed to function in a job that aims at reducing pollution or providing coping strategies against the negative effects of climate change. The author further opined that this implies that any skill that takes into consideration changes due to climate and keeps environmental requirements and regulations in carrying out daily occupational activities are considered green skills. Green skills exist in many green jobs but due to availability of material resources, various authors have identified green skills needed by youths for employment in agritourism and grassland management.

Grassland management is a green job that entails managing grass for its continuous supply especially for grazing. "Grassland management refers to the manipulation of natural vegetation in order to achieve some predetermined goals. Grasslands are often managed to improve productivity and maximize benefits for human use" (Grassland Conservation Council of British Columbia, 2012). Grassland management keeps grass stands healthy so that they continue to provide long term conservation benefits (Minnesota Department of Agriculture, 2016). Grasslands are made up of various components within its ecosystem. Grasslands ecosystems have both biotic and abiotic components (Grassland Conservation Council of British Columbia, 2012).

Grassland Conservation Council of British Columbia explained that the biotic components of the grassland ecosystem are the living organisms that exist in the system and can be classified as producers (including grasses, shrubs and trees), consumers (including grazing ungulates, birds and insects) or decomposers (including fungi, insects and bacteria). Abiotic components of the ecosystems are the non-living components on which the living components depend, including climate, soil and topography (Grassland Conservation Council of British Columbia, 2012). Grassland provides a variety of importance to man.

Grassland provides feed for livestock especially ruminants, reduces the cost of feeding animals especially ruminants and increases infiltration and percolation of water, thereby reducing run off and soil erosion (Iwena, 2012). Iwena further noted that grassland also provides adequate nutrients to the soil through legumes which fix nitrogen in the soil as well as source of income to the person managing the grassland. Due to the importance of grassland, it is fast becoming a viable area for employment. Hence youths have to acquire the requisite skills before they can be successful in it.

The skills needed for grassland managers as identified by Grassland Conservation Council of British Columbia

(2012) include; skill in monitoring fire outbreak; skill in monitoring animal grazing/ choosing adequate grazing systems; skill in checking/ monitoring disease outbreak and skill in water management systems. Pye (2010) identified the skills needed by youths for employment in grassland management to include skills in organic manure application and skill in weed management. Also, O'riordan (2012) noted that the most important skills needed to properly function in grassland management include; Skill in estimating herbage mass in the grassland and skill in managing high grass quality. Finally, CEDEFOP (2010) identified the skills needed in grassland management to include skill in reseeding and skill in creating a grass seed mixture. Another green job that can increase youth employment is agritourism

Agritourism is a combination of agriculture and tourism. "Agritourism is any commercial enterprise that combines agriculture and tourism on a working farm, ranch, or other agribusiness operation" (UK Cooperative Extension Service & University of Kentucky, 2011). The Commonwealth of Kentucky defines agritourism as "The act of visiting a working farm or any agricultural, horticultural, or agribusiness operations for the purpose of enjoyment, education or active involvement in the activities of the farm or operation" (UK Cooperative Extension Service & University of Kentucky, 2011). Also, according to Blacka, et al. (2009), "agritourism is the practice of attracting travelers or visitors to an area or areas used primarily for agricultural purposes". Agritourism is also referred to as "entertainment farming" or "agritainment," and it is a means of diversifying the farm and adding value (i.e. the farm experience) to products already produced on the farm (UK Cooperative Extension Service & University of Kentucky, 2011). Agritourism provides a lot of opportunities for youths.

The opportunities in agritourism are vast. The opportunities in agritourism according to UK Cooperative Extension Service and University of Kentucky (2011) include; accommodations (bed and breakfast, farm vacations, retreat centers), educational/entertainment tours (agricultural tours, cook-offs/baking, concerts/musical events, cultural/heritage tours) and outdoor recreation (bird-watching, bonfires, camping). Despite the vast opportunities for employment of youths in agritourism, youths have to acquire the requisite skills needed.

UK Cooperative Extension Service and University of Kentucky (2011) noted that agritourism requires public relation skills, cooperation skills among members of the farm community, marketing skills and willingness to take risk. CEDEFOP, 2009 stated that apart from technical know-how, success in agritourism require skills such as entrepreneurial skills, management skills and core skills (ability to learn, to be innovative and leadership skills). Hans, Andre, Zhuohua and Binns (2011) identified the skills needed for employment in agritourism to include ability to be innovative, leadership skills and communicative skills. Blacka et al. (2009) noted that skills

involved in agritourism include ability to keep farm and visitors facilities always tidy, innate pleasure in meeting people as well as managing and organizing home and farm expenses. Also, Finora (2011) noted that individuals require people skills when practicing agritourism. According to McQuerrey (2016), people skills are assets in every line of work and they encompass skills in communication, empathy, conflict resolution, patience and tolerance. These green jobs will lead to a reduction in youth unemployment (ILO & CEDEFOP, 2011).

Unemployment is a problem in Nigeria especially for youths. A Youth is an individual who is in that phase or period of life in which one passes from childhood to maturity (Oduwole, 2015). In the Nigerian context, the National Youth Development Policy (2001) as cited by Oduwole (2015) defines a Nigerian youth as people aged between 18 and 35 who are citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Unemployment is a major problem among Nigerian youths. "Unemployment according to ILO definition is the population of persons aged 15-64 who, during the reference period were available for work, actively seeking for work, but were unable to find work" (Udo, 2016). Nigeria's population is said to have reached about 167 million people in 2012 (National Bureau of Statistics, 2012) and the NPC(2013) as cited by Tijani (2016) states that about half of the population is made of youths. The youths have a labour force of 38.2 million out of the total labour force of 78.4 million people of which 15.2 million youths were either unemployed or underemployed representing a youth unemployment rate of 42.24% (National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), 2016 report for the first quarter as cited by Tijani, 2016). This shows the state of youth unemployment in Nigeria. However, other countries have attempted to curb youth unemployment through green jobs (CEDEFOP, 2010).

In Kenya, provision of skills required for grassland management led to a generation of 1.1 million jobs in 2016 (ILO & International Institute for Labour Studies (IILS), 2012). In Indonesia, agritourism has led to a provision of 2 million jobs in 2015 alone (ILO, 2013). Despite the potential of green jobs to create employment, it has not been efficiently utilized as a means of creating employment in Anambra state despite the large number of unemployed youths.

In Anambra state, there are over 432,000 unemployed youths out of a youth population of 927, 500 (Ezie, 2016). The author further noted that due to the large number of unemployed youths, there has been an increase in crimes such as prostitution and arm robbery. This is sad because Anambra has the resources such as grasslands and human capital that are necessary to create employment opportunities in green jobs in the agricultural sectors. These available resources are not effectively utilized in green jobs creation as a means of reducing the high youth unemployment rate in the state. This is mainly due to unavailability of skill set required to get employed in green jobs in the agricultural sector in Anambra state. Hence, it became necessary to ascertain the skills

required by youths for employment in green jobs in the agricultural sector. After the skills have been ascertained, they will be imparted to youths through lecturers in the formal sector or through extension agents in the informal sector.

Therefore, the research is geared towards identifying skills required by youths for employment in green jobs in the agricultural sector in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study was to identify the skills required by youths for employment in green jobs in the agricultural sector in Anambra State. Specifically, the study sought to identify the:

1. Skills required by youths for employment in grassland management.
2. Skills required by youths for employment in agritourism

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study;

1. What are the skills required by youths for employment in grassland management?
2. What are the skills required by youths for employment in agritourism?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of lecturers and extension agents on skills required by youths for employment in grassland management.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the mean responses of lecturers and extension agents on skills required by youths for employment in agritourism.

Methodology

Two research questions were developed and answered by the study while two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Nworgu (2015) described a descriptive survey research as "those studies which aim at collecting data and describing in a systematic manner the characteristics, features or facts about a given population". The design was adopted because the study involves the use of structured questionnaires to elicit responses. It was conducted in Anambra State, Nigeria. Anambra state was chosen because the youths are known to be industrious and as such they would be a good test to identify the feasibility of green jobs workability in South East Nigeria. Furthermore, , Anambra state has a lot of natural

resources such as grasslands which are needed to partake in green jobs like grassland management and agritourism. The research was carried out in four tertiary institutions that offer agricultural related courses in Anambra State with the exception of private universities. The population for the study was 121 comprised of 44 Extension agents and 77 lecturers in Agricultural courses in tertiary institutions in the study area. These consisted of 18 lecturers in Federal College of Education (Technical), Umunze; 8 lecturers in Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe; 22 lecturers in the faculty of Agriculture, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus and 29 lecturers in the faculty of Agriculture, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The entire population was studied due to the fact the population was manageable. Hence there was no sample.

A questionnaire consisting of 19 items divided into three (3) sections which was developed from literature was used as the instrument for data collection. The scale for the questionnaire was: Highly required (HR)-4, moderately required (MR)-3, slightly required (SR)-2 and not required (NR)-1. The questionnaire was face validated by five experts of agriculture. Cronbach alpha was used to determine internal consistency of the questionnaire which yielded 0.71 coefficient. The questionnaire was administered on 121 respondents and there was 77% return rate which equates to 93 respondents. Mean statistics was used to answer the research questions while t-test statistics was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of probability. Real limit of numbers was

applied in decision making for the research questions thus; 1.00-1.49 –Not required, 1.50-2.49 –Slightly required, 2.50-3.49 –moderately required and 3.50-4.00-Highly required. The standard deviations (SD) of the items were also analyzed. Any item with SD value of 1.96 or below indicated that the respondents were near to the mean and to each other in their responses. On the other hand, any item with SD value above 1.96 indicated that the respondents were far from the mean and to each other in their responses. For the two null hypotheses, they were upheld if the calculated level of significance was greater than 0.05 or otherwise rejected.

Results

Research Question 1

What are the skills required by youths for employment in grassland management?

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of lecturers and extension agents on skills required by youths for employment in grassland management

Data for answering research question one and hypothesis one are presented in Table 1

Table 1: Mean ratings and t-test analysis of Lecturers and ExtensionAgents onSkills Required by Youths for Employment in Grassland Management. N= 93 (59 Lecturers & 34 Extension Agents)

S/n	Skills	G \bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	Sig	Dec
1	Monitor fire outbreak to prevent ecosystem disturbance. E.g. Use of fire extinguishers	3.42*	0.88	3.54	0.79	3.20	0.98	0.74	NS
2	Monitor animal grazing/ choice of grazing systems. E.g. Building paddocks to restrict grazing to certain areas.	3.48*	0.70	3.56	0.60	3.35	0.85	0.17	NS
3	Monitoring disease outbreak	3.64*	0.64	3.68	0.60	3.59	0.70	0.52	NS
4	Skill in water management recycling techniques	3.40*	0.71	3.42	0.72	3.35	0.69	0.65	NS
5	Ability to prepare and apply organic manure	3.57*	0.65	3.51	0.65	3.68	0.64	0.23	NS
6	Skill in weed control using biological methods e.g. lady bug	3.15*	0.83	3.19	0.71	3.09	1.02	0.59	NS
7	Estimate herbage mass in the grassland so as to monitor growth rate	3.00*	0.90	2.97	0.87	2.88	0.95	0.63	NS
8	Manage high grass quality .E.g. by using good seed stock.	3.33*	0.74	3.36	0.74	3.30	0.76	0.70	NS
9	Create a grass seed mixture for reseeding	3.03*	0.84	3.00	0.85	3.09	0.83	0.63	NS
10	Ability to carry out basic grassland management practices like land preparation and watering	3.38*	0.86	3.27	0.91	3.56	0.75	0.12	NS

Key: N= Population, G \bar{X} = Grand mean, \bar{X}_1 = mean of lecturers, \bar{X}_2 = Mean of extension agents, SD₁ = standard Deviation of lecturers, SD₂ = standard deviation of extension agents, S = Significant, NS= Not significant, *= Highly Required/Moderately Required

In Table 1, it is revealed that 2 out of the 10 items had mean values of 3.64 and 3.57. The values were within the real limit of 3.50-4.00 indicating that the 2 items were

highly required. The remaining 8 items had their mean values ranged from 3.00-3.48. Each of the values of the 8 items were within the real limit of 2.50-3.49; indicating

that the 8 items were moderately required. Generally, all the 10 items were required by youths for employment in grassland management. The standard deviation of all the 10 items ranged from 0.64-0.90. Each of the values was below 1.96 indicating that the respondents were near to the mean and to each other in their responses.

Furthermore, data presented in Table 1 showed that the calculated level of significance of the 10 items ranged from 0.16-0.99. Each of the significant level was greater than 0.05 indicating that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of lecturers and extension agents on the skills required by youths for employment in grassland management in Anambra state on the identified 10 items. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no

significance was upheld for the 10 items.

Research Question 2

What are the skills required by youths for employment in agritourism?

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference between the mean responses of lecturers and extension agents on skills required by youths for employment in agritourism.

The data for answering research question two and hypothesis two are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Mean ratings and t-test analysis of Lecturers and Extension Agents on Skills Required by Youths for Employment in Agritourism N= 93 (59 Lecturers & 34 Extension Agents)

S/n	Skills	G \bar{X}	SD	\bar{X}_1	SD ₁	\bar{X}_2	SD ₂	Sig	Dec
1	Public relation skills needed to address visitors to the farm. E.g. Public speaking	3.43*	0.77	3.58	0.65	3.18	0.90	0.01	S
2	Cooperation skills needed to work with co-employees in the farm	3.63*	0.57	3.56	0.62	3.76	0.43	0.93	NS
3	Marketing skills needed to sell organic farm produce	3.52*	0.69	3.57	0.59	3.41	0.82	0.27	NS
4	Entrepreneurial skills needed to organize other factors of production like labour and farm input.	3.51*	0.80	3.58	0.77	3.38	0.85	0.26	NS
5	Core skills such as ability to be innovative	3.54*	0.65	3.52	0.65	3.58	0.66	0.66	NS
6	Leadership skills	3.53*	0.67	3.59	0.62	3.44	0.75	0.29	NS
7	Ability to keep farm and visitors facilities always tidy	3.51*	0.69	3.60	0.65	3.38	0.74	0.15	NS
8	Managing and organizing farm facilities	3.43*	0.76	3.41	0.79	3.47	0.71	0.70	NS
9	Communication skills	3.51*	0.72	3.71	0.56	3.14	0.82	0.00	S

Key: N= Population, G \bar{X} = Grand mean, \bar{X}_1 = mean of lecturers, \bar{X}_2 = Mean of extension agents, SD₁ = standard Deviation of lecturers, SD₂ = standard deviation of extension agents, S = Significant, NS= Not significant, *= Highly Required/Moderately Required

Data in Table 2 revealed that 7 out of the 9 items had mean values ranged from 3.51- 3.63. The values were within the real limit of 3.50-4.00 indicating that the 7 items were highly required. The remaining 2 items had their mean values as 3.43. The values of the 2 items were within the real limit of 2.50-3.49; indicating that the 2 items were moderately required. Generally, all the 9 items were required by youths for employment in agritourism. The standard deviation of all the 9 items ranged from 0.57-0.77. Each of the values was below 1.96 indicating that the respondents were near to the mean and to each other in their responses.

Furthermore, data presented in Table 2 showed that the calculated level of significance of 7 out of the 9 items ranged from 0.15-0.93. Each of the significant level was greater than 0.05 indicating that there is no significant difference between the mean responses of lecturers and extension agents on the skills required by youths for employment in agritourism in Anambra state on the identified 7 items. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significance was upheld for the 7 items. However, the significant level of the 2 items (1 and 9) is 0.01 and 0.00 respectively which is less than 0.05. The values indicated that there was significant difference between the mean

responses of lecturers and extension agents on the skills required by youths for employment in agritourism in Anambra state on items 1 and 9. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant difference was not upheld for items 1 and 9.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study on skills required by youths for employment in grassland management in Anambra state showed that all the skills identified by the study were required by youths for employment in grassland management. These skills includes; monitoring fire outbreak to prevent ecosystem disturbance. E.g. Use of fire extinguishers, monitor animal grazing/ choice of grazing systems. E.g. Building paddocks to restrict grazing to certain areas, monitor disease outbreak, skill in water management recycling techniques, ability to prepare and apply organic manure, skill in weed control using biological methods e.g. lady bug, estimate herbage mass in the grassland so as to monitor growth rate, manage high grass quality .E.g. by using good seed stock, create a grass seed mixture for reseeding as well as ability to carry

out basic grassland management practices like land preparation and watering.

The findings are supported by studies carried out by Pye (2010) on green skills, green jobs: opportunities for the South West low carbon economy in which the identified skills needed by youths for employment in grassland management include skills in organic manure application and skill in weed management. The finding of the study is also in agreement with CEDEFOP (2010) on skills for green jobs: European synthesis report in which it was identified that the skills needed in grassland management are skill in reseeded and skill in creating a grass seed mixture. Therefore, it can be induced from the findings of the study that all the skills identified in the study are required by youths for employment in grassland management in Anambra state.

The findings of this study on skills required by youths for employment in agritourism in Anambra state showed that all the skills identified by the study were required by youths for them to get employed in agritourism. These skills are as follows; Public relation skills needed to address visitors to the farm. e.g. public speaking, cooperation skills needed to work with co-employees in the farm, marketing skills needed to sell organic farm produce, entrepreneurial skills needed to organize other factors of production like labour and farm input, core skills such as ability to be innovative, leadership skills, ability to keep farm and visitors facilities always tidy, managing and organizing farm facilities as well as communication skills.

The findings of the study on skills required by youths for employment in agritourism agreed with the result of CEDEFOP (2012) in a study on green skills and environmental awareness in vocational education and training. The author found out that the skills required for employment in agritourism include technical know-how, entrepreneurial skills, management skills, core skills such as ability to learn and to innovate and leadership skills. The findings are also in agreement with Hans, Andre, Zhuohua and Binns (2011) in a study on green jobs for a revitalized food and agriculture sector. The skills identified by the authors for employment in agritourism are ability to be innovative, leadership skills and communicative skills. The findings also with agreed with Finora (2011) in study on people skills required when practicing agritourism. The author found out that people skills such as communication and cooperation is very necessary for optimal performance in agritourism. Therefore, it can be induced from the findings of the study that all the skills identified in the study are required by youths for employment in agritourism in Anambra state.

The hypothesis tested on mean responses of lecturers and extension agents on skills required by youths for employment in grassland management showed that there were no significant differences between the mean responses of lecturers and extension agents on the skills

required by youths for employment in grassland management in Anambra state on the identified 10 items. The upheld null hypothesis for the 10 items can be attributed to lecturers in agricultural related courses and extension agents having relatively the same academic qualifications.

The hypothesis tested on mean responses of lecturers and extension agents on skills required by youths for employment in agritourism showed that there were no significant differences between the mean responses of lecturers and extension agents on the skills required by youths for employment in agritourism in Anambra state on 7 out of the identified 9 items whereas on the remaining 2 items (1 and 9), there was significant difference between the mean responses of lecturers and extension agents. The upheld null hypothesis of no significance on the 7 items can be attributed to lecturers in agricultural related courses and extension agents having relatively the same academic background. The null hypothesis was not upheld for items 1 and 9 which could be as a result of practical experience which extension agents usually have more than lecturers since extension agents spend more time on the field. This could have led to a difference in opinions on the two items.

Conclusion

The study was carried out to identify the skills required by youths for employment in green jobs in the agricultural sector in Anambra state. The skills required by youths for employment in two green jobs were identified. These green jobs are grassland management and agritourism. The required skills needed for youth employment in grassland management among others include; monitoring fire outbreak to prevent ecosystem disturbance e.g. use of fire extinguishers, monitor animal grazing/ choice of grazing systems e.g. building paddocks to restrict grazing to certain areas, monitor disease outbreak, skill in water management recycling techniques, ability to prepare and apply organic manure, skill in weed control using biological methods. The required skills needed by youths for employment in agritourism among others include; technical know-how, entrepreneurial skills, management skills, core skills such as ability to learn and to innovate and leadership skills. The ascertained skills needed for employment in green jobs will help reduce youth unemployment in Anambra state if properly inculcated. The duty of inculcating these skills to the youths will be carried out in two ways. The two ways are through lecturers in tertiary institutions in the formal system and through extension agents in the informal system.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that:

1. Tertiary institutions must ensure that they encourage members of the academic board to go into research in green jobs/skill requirement in areas like agritourism and grassland management to further increase the opportunities of youths getting employed in green jobs.
2. Policy makers have to enact policies/laws that would lead to the increase in the number of green jobs in the agricultural sector that youths can get employed in.

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