

AGRIPRENEURSHIP ECOSYSTEM IN SOUTH SUDAN

A network analysis of institutions supporting agripreneurship



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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	3
INTRODUCTION	7
1. ECOSYSTEM MAPPING	12
2. NETWORK ANALYSIS.....	8
3. USER EXPERIENCE ANALYSIS.....	18
4. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	21
REFERENCES	30
ANNEX I: INSTITUTIONS INTERVIEWED.....	32
ANNEX II: ADDITIONAL NETWORK DATA	36
ANNEX III: TECHNICAL ANNEX.....	37

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

South Sudan is one of the world's youngest countries. It gained independence from Sudan in 2011 after decades of civil war and remained in conflict until a peace agreement was finally reached in 2018. This was further delayed, only taking effect in 2020, when a power-sharing arrangement was finally confirmed.

Due to the long history of conflict and instability, and the relative infancy of stable peace in the country, the economic development of South Sudan, particularly with regard to entrepreneurial activities, is nascent. The yearlong conflicts have resulted in an overwhelmingly young population who is with little education and employment opportunities. Specifically, around 80% of the South Sudanese population is under the age of 35, meeting ITC's definition of youth, and 94% of those youth enter the labour market with less than a primary education, meaning that about one third of South Sudan's adult population (all persons over the age of 15) is literate.

Despite these challenges, South Sudan can realise significant economic and social gains by fully exploiting the opportunities lying in its agricultural sector by fostering effective support structures. The agricultural sector of the country shows great promise and potential for future economic growth. South Sudan has excellent productive potential with rich, fertile, arable land. However, due to decades of conflict, this resource is deeply under-utilized with only around 5% of arable land being cultivated. South Sudan remains a net-importer of agricultural products. Entrepreneurs active in the agricultural value chain have the potential to tap into this significant resource, creating employment opportunities, particularly by improving value addition of agronomic products, and helping to reduce South Sudan's reliance of foreign aid and food imports.

Current institutional ecosystem

The current institutional entrepreneurship support ecosystem in South Sudan is considered nascent, and as such unable to fully meet the needs of young entrepreneurs. Many of these challenges can be traced back to the ecosystem's comparative youth: Most of the institutions have only existed for a few years and there is significant turn-over as institutions are facing unstable funding. While this could be seen as a consequence of unrest and civil war, and a necessary part of the state-building process, the result is an ecosystem that cannot adequately serve the needs of young entrepreneurs by providing its supports services in a sustainable and easily accessible manner.

One reason being that, institutions active in the ecosystem are majorly funded by international donors and development cooperation. While this allows those institutions to provide services free-of-charge, it leads to many challenges in building a cohesive, cooperative and alone-standing ecosystem. One of the biggest challenges this creates is a lack of sustainability for institutions as it impacts institutions' ability to generate their own funds. When a development project ends, or

donor dollars dry up, institutions are left without cash-flow and are usually unable to continue providing services and/ or following up with their clients. Moreover, this prevents meaningful knowledge retention and obstructs improvement overtime, as institutions are constantly having to pause and re-start operations in flux with donor funding. At the same time the ecosystem is used to offering services free-of-charge, those institutions that introduce revenue-generating models are often left without clients.

Furthermore, the over-reliance on donor funding makes institutions accountable only to those donors. Their primary objectives are delivering toward donor goals and not necessarily fully addressing the needs of the communities they are intended to serve. This becomes more worrying when most international interventions are not catered towards supporting entrepreneurs or boosting the private sector. Given the humanitarian conditions in South Sudan, most international donors are concerned with boosting basic livelihoods, rather than on developing thriving for-profit enterprises. This leads to an abundance of services addressing similar issues, and a dearth of services specifically for entrepreneurs. For example, there is a critical lack of training on the tax system and business development. Such a training is essential for entrepreneurs, but less important for basic livelihood promotion.

Those services that do exist for entrepreneurs in the ecosystem are overwhelmingly targeted at early/ ideation stage enterprises. Such services cover the basics of business operation such as business plans and record-keeping. Entrepreneurs that do make it past this initial stage are often left without significant support. More mature companies are usually left to fend for themselves, having to learn through costly trial-and-error with few offerings to help guide their decision-making.

One of the most acute challenges identified in the ecosystem was access to finance. While financial institutions do exist to provide financing, the vast majority of entrepreneurs are unable to meet their requirements for their products. Most entrepreneurs lack the requisite collaterals to take out traditional loans, or the history of diligent repayment that might otherwise certify their credit-worthiness. Some mitigating arrangements have emerged including Village Savings and Loans Associations, but more innovative access to finance needs to be done.

Despite these challenges, some promise can be seen for the ecosystem. One of the most notable features of the ecosystem was the high degree of connectivity between institutions. While the presence of these connections is significant, it is important to note that almost all of these connections were on the level of information-sharing, with few focused on service delivery. Cooperation on funding was almost non-existent, as institutions are forced to compete between each other in the pursuit of donor support. This shows that there is a willingness to cooperate, but more work needs to be done to integrate the ecosystem.

Next steps for the ecosystem

Alignment of policy: Current policy does not specifically address entrepreneurship, and this is a serious hurdle to the development of the ecosystem. Aligning policy and introducing a specific agenda for entrepreneurship will help provide guidance to the support ecosystem and provide a path forward for all actors

Providing access to finance: Access to finance is a recognized issue, and for instance the government is planning to address this through the formation of a Youth Enterprise Development Fund.¹ The management of this fund must be proactive to address the actual needs of young entrepreneurs. Conditions for loans need to be clear and attainable, and the fund should be promoted widely to galvanize youth and drive excitement for entrepreneurship.

Better, deeper connections between institutions: There is a clear need for better coordination between institutions. Many overlaps exist in the ecosystem, and many more gaps in services. Institutionalizing the regular alignment and knowledge-sharing meetings between institutions could be an important first-step in addressing this concern to help coordinate planning between institutions and act as a nexus for service delivery.

Make agripreneurship attractive to youth: Currently there is a lack of interest in agripreneurship, agricultural entrepreneurship, amongst youth, with most young South Sudanese seeing agriculture as only a subsistence activity, not an avenue to prosperity. An awareness campaign should be introduced to promote and highlight the profit-earning potentials of agribusiness. Moreover, a youth platform to foster exchanges and peer-to-peer learning could be introduced to develop an enabling environment.

Better training, coaching and mentorship: Current trainings focus on theoretical, basic knowledge such as marketing and customer relations. There needs to be more advanced skills training in business management and operations.

Limitations of the analysis

The analysis provided in this report reflects the findings of desk research and interviews. Some institutions, currently present in the ecosystem might not be represented in this analysis given the characteristics of their mandate (e.g. not including agripreneurship support), the sporadic

¹ The drafting of the bill has been supported by UNFPA. Currently, the draft bill has remained at the desk of the Minister of Youth, who is supposed to forward it to the Ministry of Justice. This fund is one of the provisions in the 2018 peace (including Women Enterprise Fund, which is still at idea stage). In principle, the bill is supposed to provide the legal freedom for management as well as budgetary allocation of the funds, where youth can access, as interest-free loans. Then donors will also provide additional resources.

character of their interactions in the network or challenges in outreach. In addition, this report has a focus on local support institutions active in Central and Western Equatoria. Therefore, support initiatives from international development agencies have not entirely been captured. The interview questions were based on ITC's Network Analysis methodology designed specifically to understand the interactions of support institutions and services provided to agripreneurs. The information gathered on the entrepreneur's perspective represents, via a focus group approach, a small subset of the ecosystem's entrepreneurs and therefore further analysis might be needed to provide a statistically significant assessment of the entrepreneur's journey. This report is a snapshot of the situation in 2021 and therefore might not be representative of past or future interactions.

INTRODUCTION

Context

South Sudan is one of the world's youngest countries in terms of its formation and has a population of 11.4 million as of 2020². The country gained independence from Sudan in 2011, six years after a bitter history of civil wars that lasted for 22 years (1983-2005). Overall, it is estimated that over two million South Sudanese died in the fighting and resultant famines, with millions displaced from their homes. In accordance with the humanitarian needs in South Sudan and cumulative effects of years of prolonged conflict, chronic vulnerabilities and weak essential services have left 8.3 million people, including 4.5 million children, in need of humanitarian assistance³. Years of conflict, lost livelihoods, destroyed crops, sexual violence, displacement, lack of education and loss of basic services have created a protracted humanitarian crisis with high inter-sectoral needs. As a consequence, South Sudan remains caught in a web of fragility, economic stagnation, and instability a decade after independence. Poverty is ubiquitous as well as an absence of meaningful development in (socio-economic) infrastructure which has been reinforced by a history of conflict, displacement, and shocks.

The economy of South Sudan is characterised by public sector domination of production, leaving limited room for the private sector to expand. Data from the African Development Bank reveals that the macroeconomy of South Sudan was hit hard in 2020 due to several factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, locust invasions and floods. The real GDP gains achieved in 2019 derailed from 7.4% to a negative 3.6% in 2020. Economic activity was disrupted by measures to contain the spread of COVID-19—social distancing, and restrictions on movement and business operating hours. The service sector, which accounts for 6.1% of GDP, was particularly hard hit. Floods and locusts hammered the agriculture sector, which accounts for 15% of GDP and employs 80% of the population. The oil sector, which accounts for 70% of GDP and more than 90% of public revenues, has continued to be the primary driver of growth, with estimated oil production of 62.1 million barrels in FY2019/20.⁴ Macroeconomic forecasts throw positive but very slow recovery at 0.1% in 2021 and 2.5% in 2022.

The relevance of entrepreneurship and small business

For fragile settings such as South Sudan, entrepreneurship holds a lot of promise for the country as an important channel to create (self) employment. However, for entrepreneurship to thrive, the

² <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/south-sudan-population>

³ South Sudan Humanitarian Snapshot 2021: <https://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/humanitarian-action-children-2021-south-sudan-2021-revision-1-june-2021>

⁴ World Bank South Sudan <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/southsudan/overview>

supporting environment (i.e. the entrepreneurial ecosystem), as well as general economic conditions, should be conducive for businesses to operate in order to maximize their capabilities.

South Sudan is endowed with resources that can be properly harnessed with young people at the centre to promote economic growth and development. The country has rich, fertile and arable land which is a good basis for the country to exploit its comparative advantage and indicate that there is great potential and opportunities that would increase the employment and income levels. Only ca. 4% of its arable land is under cultivation and the country continues to be a net food importer, particularly from Uganda.⁵ Apart from fertile land for agriculture, South Sudan is rich in oil, natural gas, hydropower, gold, copper, zinc, lead, manganese, iron, silver, tin, marble, limestone, dolomite, kaolin and clay.⁶ Unfortunately, conflicts, violence and instability have left the South Sudanese youth in a vulnerable state.

In a fragile context such as South Sudan, entrepreneurship has the ability to improve standards of living and create opportunities for young people to participate in economic activities, rather than in violence and conflict. Given this, entrepreneurship and small business must become an essential component of growing the South Sudanese economy.

Indeed, young people and women often regard entrepreneurship and small business as a driver of economic growth, wealth creation and employment in both rural and urban areas and also as a safety nets and social protection mechanism as it provides women with a level of power.

It needs to be mentioned that in most of South Sudan, the markets are not fully developed and functional. This is mainly because most of the country is in the grip of a protracted humanitarian crisis fuelled by years of chronic underdevelopment, conflict and natural disasters. Conflict increases insecurity and restricts movement between markets. These factors have contributed to a strong foreign aid/financial support dependency, particularly with regard to basic products such as nutrition. This dependency further distorts the development of a free market with price fluctuations (e.g. through the free provision of agricultural inputs or unconditional grants) and infrastructure implications. Reduced connectivity between markets adversely affects the ability of traders in the agricultural value chain to trade. They find it very difficult to remain operational, make profits or maintain adequate stocks in their shops. During conflict, traders are often targeted and looted and therefore move away or cease to trade, and the village market ceases to provide adequate essential food supplies.

Factors influencing women and youth entrepreneurship

In South Sudan, youth and women are in the majority and can make a positive impact on the economic dynamics and development. South Sudan has a very young population with 55.5% aged

⁵ Land cover Atlas of the Republic of South Sudan (FAO, 2011)

⁶ <https://iclg.com/jurisdictions/south-sudan/human-and-natural-resources>

between 15 to 64 years.⁷ It is estimated that 51% of South Sudanese are under the age of 18 years and 72% are less than 30 years. Youth between the ages of 20 to 29 years account for 34.24% of the population.⁸ According to South Sudan Housing and Population Census, those aged between 18 and 35 consists of 70% of the population.⁹ When using ITC's definition of youth being aged less than 35 years, it would then include 80% of the population. This would translate to about 8.5-10.0 million young individuals.

However, unemployment remains unacceptably high in South Sudan, and literacy levels remain low: As of 2018, the literacy rate, among those aged 15 years or older was 34.5%.¹⁰ Over 90% of youth, including women, are without formal employment¹¹. Presupposed, informal employment is the main source of income. Over 30% (32% male and 27% female) of youth are unable to find work. Those looking for work account for 19% (20% male and 18% female) while 11% are considered discouraged or underemployed workers. There is some variation by residence, sex and age range. In the agricultural sector 58% of employed youth are in non-wage work. Only 9% are salaried employees. The composition of youth employment varies somewhat across states, but the agriculture and livestock sectors are predominant.¹²

In the South Sudan context there are several factors which influence the development of women and youth entrepreneurship.

Low education levels: As pointed out above, literacy rates remain low and about 94% of youth enter the labour market with less than a primary education, underscoring the urgent need for second-chance learning opportunities to enable them to acquire job-relevant skills.¹³ A low level of technical and numerical skills affect the self-employment opportunities of youth and their future job prospects. Moreover, English, even though the official language of South Sudan, is often a language-barrier to engaging in entrepreneurship. This is particularly the case for those youth and women returning from Sudan where Arabic is spoken. Further, most of the rural youth and women predominantly speak one of 64 local languages. In general, the low level of education paired with relevant and marketable skills leads to a lack of opportunities and severely constrains income security for youth. Vocational training programs can support micro-entrepreneurs to gain education to foster knowledge and skills for productive employment.

⁷ <https://www.unfpa.org/data/world-population/SS>

⁸ South Sudan National Youth Policy 2019

⁹ <https://www.youthpolicy.org/factsheets/country/south-sudan/>

¹⁰ All Information on the literacy rate is taken from <http://uis.unesco.org/en/country/ss>

¹¹ UNDP. Promoting Entrepreneurship, Small Businesses and Self-Employment in South Sudan https://www.ss.undp.org/content/south_sudan/en/home/presscenter/articles/2017/01/12/promoting-entrepreneurship-small-businesses-and-self-employment-in-south-sudan.html

¹² South Sudan National Youth Policy, 2019

¹³ African Development Bank: https://www.afdb.org/sites/default/files/documents/projects-and-operations/south_sudan_-_skills_for_youth_employability_and_social_inclusion.pdf

Limited economic diversification: Oil revenues constitute more than 98% of the government of South Sudan's budget.¹⁴ This has resulted in little diversification of the economy and scarce decent work opportunities. The oil sector generates most of the country's national income but employs relatively few people, with relatively limited education. Only 26% of the national workforce employed in the oil and gas sector are engineers, geologists, and scientists.¹⁵ The strong GDP dependency on the oil sector influences entrepreneurial aspirations and business creation in other economic sectors. Other reasons for little diversification opportunities are rooted in job-related cultural values - working in hotels and restaurants invites scornful and humiliating criticism from peers, relatives and elders. Culturally, if a girl works in a restaurant, she is considered spoiled.¹⁶ Moreover, the service sector is mostly concentrated in Juba.

Receiving start-up capital: The lack of access to capital, be it for small start-up amount or larger investment opportunities, further aggravates entrepreneurial opportunities. Even if youth and women were to get access to start-up capital, it could be the case that they are not successful in managing the business because there is a shortage of business advisory services in South Sudan, particularly in rural areas outside the capital.

South Sudan is heavily dependent on imports: Particularly in the agricultural value chain, there is limited market potential due to cheaper inputs from neighbouring countries. In particular, Ugandan exporters have taken advantage of their relatively low cost of production to supply agriculture produce to most of the South Sudanese markets, including Juba. This puts pressure on local farmers to sell their produce at low prices, leading to reduced income levels for these young farmers, wholesale dealers and retailers.

Lastly, the socio-political environment plays an important role in encouraging or discouraging entrepreneurial processes. It determines the set of rules and policies that govern entrepreneurial activities, and the overall atmosphere in which firms can operate. Dependency attitudes created during the war persist as well as high levels of poverty and income inequality. Young people expected a peace dividend but this did not materialise on the hand due to poor governance and slow implementation of the Revitalised Peace Agreement. On the other hand, there is still an ongoing conflict in some parts of the country. There is thus a contrast in expectation and the reality on the ground. Further shocks have come from disasters including locust invasions, floods and the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the country is heavily dependent on humanitarian support which disincentivises activities focussed on profit-making.

¹⁴ South Sudan misused oil revenues: Government official <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/south-sudan-misused-oil-revenues-government-official/2287403>

¹⁵ South Sudan's Oil Industry Remains Dependent on Foreign Help: <https://www.voanews.com/africa/south-sudan-focus/south-sudans-oil-industry-remains-dependent-foreign-help>

¹⁶ Extract from the South Sudan National Youth Policy, 2019

Therefore, to support South Sudan's efforts in improving entrepreneurship and creating an environment in which start-ups and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) can thrive, this report provides an analysis of the South Sudan's agripreneurship ecosystem with a specific focus on the interactions between ecosystem actors, and the gaps in services supporting entrepreneurs.

With the present report, ITC aims to contribute to the development of ecosystem-enabling activities to facilitate matchmaking, new opportunities, and partnerships between various stakeholders of the agricultural value chain. The mapping analysis contributes to the objectives of the overall development plans of the entrepreneurship sector by highlighting existing gaps and overlaps in support services and providing an analysis of the network connections currently present in the ecosystem of agribusiness support organizations.

This analysis is presented in three perspectives:

Perspective 1: Service mapping and gap analysis. Findings identify the target beneficiaries and the services offered in the ecosystem. Information is based on interviews conducted with relevant local institutions.

Perspective 2: Network analysis. Assessment of how institutions in the ecosystem in create linkages. The analysis highlights the interactions between institutional actors.

Perspective 3: User experience analysis. Insights from agripreneurs in terms of navigating the entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Finally, the report provides key recommendations for the improvement of the ecosystem.

1. ECOSYSTEM MAPPING

In the context of this report, the ecosystem is defined as a mix of institutional arrangements and resource endowments leading to productive entrepreneurship. A typical ecosystem combines institutional arrangements and endowed resources to influence productive agripreneurship.¹⁷ Institutions must work with the available physical infrastructure, demand for goods and services, intermediaries, talent, knowledge, leadership and a dose of finance to bring out productive businesses. These elements should offer both monetary and non-monetary opportunities to women and youth. A functioning ecosystem is one that allows networks of cooperating institutions to create value that no single one could have created alone.

In this section the structural characteristics of the institutions interviewed will be described as well as their target beneficiaries and support provided. It will also shed light on the linkages forged by the entrepreneurship support institutions. The ecosystem in South Sudan can be said to feature a variety of national and international institutions offering (some) services related to entrepreneurship. In the context of this mapping, 25 support institutions were interviewed, and their resources and capabilities to offer coherent, entrepreneur-oriented solutions were analysed.

Characteristics of supported entrepreneurs

The interviews revealed that the agripreneurs in South Sudan are spread between different age brackets. Their businesses are of small size, they are often self-employed and with little other employment opportunities. The two primary age brackets consist of youth between the ages of 15 and 35, and those above this age group. This older bracket is made up of predominantly widows and senior women. Such individuals (e.g. young divorcees or widows engaging in informal trade) are often supported by South Sudanese institutions. The reason for this is that most support initiatives focus on a livelihoods and resilience approach. This leads to a focus on vulnerable households, or addressing malnourished, internally displaced persons and disaster affected households. Entrepreneurs supported by existing programmes are women's groups engaging in subsistence agriculture in rural areas, and a host of businesses operating in urban, informal employment structures. In contrast, active youth, even if in informal employment structures, might be excluded as they fall under the category of being engaged in income generating activities.

Characteristics of entrepreneurship support and institutions

At the time of this report, the entrepreneurship ecosystem in South Sudan consists primarily of international and humanitarian organizations, local NGOs, a few (youth-owned) companies and business associations. While there are some organisations which work in consortia, large-scale

¹⁷ <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/s11187-019-00270-6.pdf>

collaboration and coordination between institutions for the promotion of entrepreneurship is sporadic. Business development and technical support services have mainly been provided by development projects such as the South Sudan Agribusiness Development Programme I and II, which provide business and technical training to several thousand entrepreneurs and support to more over 1,000 MSMEs. Similar projects include the EU-funded projects in Bahr-El-Ghazal and the JICA project in Central Equatoria, Dutch-funded water projects in Lakes and Eastern Equatoria with agricultural development components or Spark youth entrepreneurship development projects. However, the long-term impact of all of these projects has been negatively affected by recurring violence, which led to an exodus of successful entrepreneurs and external funding dependency. This particularly impacts the sustainability of the business models of local support institution as their services are paid for by international development partners and thus provided free of charge for beneficiaries. Consequently, there is no commercial market for business advisory and support programmes, and services are often designed by external parties. Apart from the recurrent violence that hinders the sustainability of support programmes, entrepreneurship support does not focus on life after the project. Sustainable activities are not integrated into time-bound support programmes. Once the support programme ends, ensuing activities also end due to no clear path forward. Given these conditions, the entrepreneurship ecosystem can be classified as nascent.

Support services provided

Majority of the entrepreneurship activities and business-related trainings which are being conducted in South Sudan are small and the absence of jobs and lack of financial capital for the youth is tied to the broader ecosystem challenges. Most trainings in this area have only been implemented in the past few years and have only seen significant growth outside the capital since the latest peace agreement. It is observable that the number of institutions, often linked to or funded by international organisations, is steadily growing – mostly concentrated in urban areas of South Sudan. As prevailing agricultural practices are often poor and require a greater priority than farm administrative weaknesses, general business advisory services are often combined with technical support, agronomic training around production and processing and coaching. Some institutions also focus on building skills for capacities further up the value chain such as restaurant management, food processing and soft skills.

However, there is little support on either market and business-to-business linkages, which translates into the organisation of major business events or larger trade fairs to connect businesses to market partners and customers. Where these linkage services exist, they focus mostly on the immediate context, for instance, through the establishment of roadside stalls or linkages with local hotels. Similarly, there is less focus on more advanced business services as long-term investor linkages or legal aspects with regard to tax services or company registration. Overall, the ecosystem is lacking a strong institutional presence, and inputs of the private sector.

Consequently, many of the entrepreneurship components are included in livelihood programming focus such as forming or further developing Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs). VSLAs are member-based, self-managed and little-to-no-interest saving groups. On the average, 10-25 members use each other's savings to lend to each other – repayment loans is very common due to the closely knit community structure. There is usually at least one or two persons who are (financial) literate in these groups. Often, technical, business or soft skill trainings are established around these VSLAs such as tailoring, farming methods, record keeping or other practices that increase youth development to become innovative and resilient. The focus on creating and growing these groups is also because there are a few microfinance institutions providing small, short-term loans, and limited availability of collaterals.

These challenges, combined with the general insecurity and instability of the country's situation, affects private sector investment behaviour and risk appetite. The insecurity often prevents agripreneurs from acquiring large-scale (processing) equipment or making larger investments. Consequently, there are only a few micro-finance institutions providing loans to agribusinesses.

Linkages forged in the entrepreneurial ecosystem

The interviews revealed the presence of several types of linkages forged by the entrepreneurship support institutions in South Sudan.

Market linkages emphasize connections between entrepreneurs and their end-customers. Typical examples include connecting growers of agricultural produce to hotels or restaurants, or of vegetable producers to agro-processing companies. Others also connect to companies in the transportation sector to act as intermediaries to convey the produce of entrepreneurs to the market. Per interviews conducted and due to the import dependency described before, it was found that the geographical scope of the market linkages are mainly within the border areas and centred around the capital. There were no visible market linkages related to exports.

Financial linkages looked at the relationship entrepreneurship support institutions have with financial institutions to support entrepreneurs. It was found that some entrepreneurship support institutions liaised with local finance institutions to provide financial services to entrepreneurs. Sometimes, these extend beyond financial linkages to include trainings on financial management for entrepreneurs. By extension, some support institutions also work with microfinance institutions to provide soft loans, pairing small credit amount with lower than market interest rates, for entrepreneurs.

Institutional linkages outline the relationships between the various institutions, manifested in partnerships or collaborations. For academic linkages, support institutions tend to adopt existing training curricula. Sometimes, specialists from universities and TVET centres are contracted to provide trainings for entrepreneurs. Some institutions mentioned linkages with universities,

particularly with the University of Juba, where they receive thematic input on agricultural and other technical topics, conduct surveys or offer internships. Overall, it was observed that there seems to be a lack of institutionalised (public) TVET training programmes providing necessary technical skills and basic business training courses for youth to increase their job prospects. Employers usually have to re-invest additional resource for re-training and on-the-job mentoring of new staff.

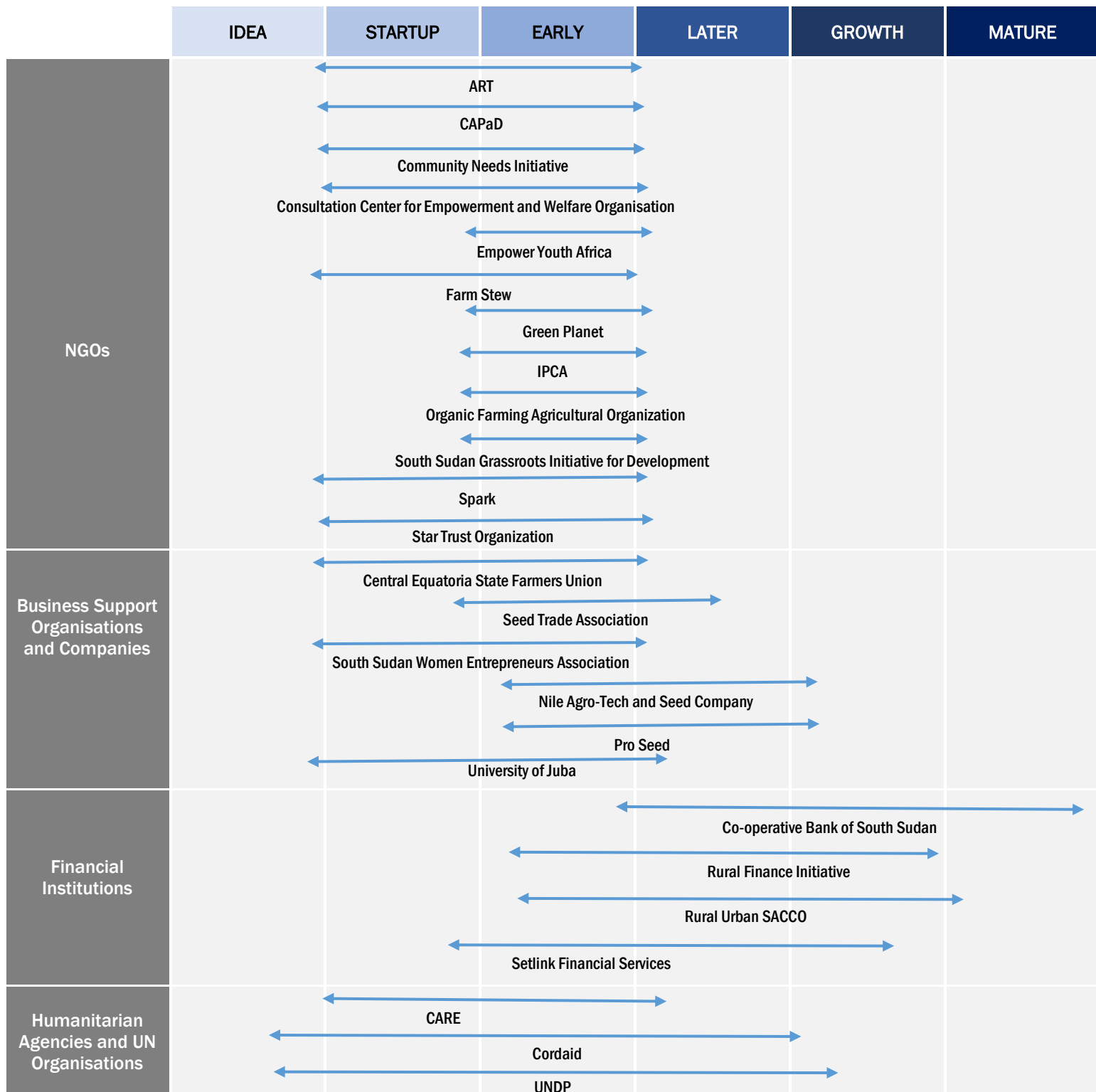


Figure 1: Agribusiness ecosystem actors by category and business stage, Source: Interviews with Institutions

IDENTIFIED GAPS

Inadequate and untailed business training

As described above, most institutions interviewed provide integrated business skills training for small businesses, women and youth in their support programmes. These trainings typically cover topics ranging from business development, production and storage to marketing and sales, financial services, and policy advocacy.

Many of the institutions target the same client segments, duplicating existing activities and oversaturating the market. Further, these business skills services are not necessarily tailored to foster agripreneurship and not differentiated enough to support entrepreneurs with the appropriate skills for their contexts and their level of literacy. Hence, trainings are sometimes disjointed and miss the purpose they intend to serve.

It was also found that trainings tend to focus on start-ups at the ideation and business-modelling stages of development, with a distinct lack of services for more mature start-ups and small businesses entering growth stages. Some institutions offer basic business development trainings which are either individually developed or follow standardized training programmes such as Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB) or EMPRETEC, providing business development trainings with the focus of building the entrepreneurial competences of business owners.

While such an effort is laudable, more is needed to shape the success rate of start-ups, particularly among women and youth-led enterprises. Most trainings do not focus on businesses at the growth or maturity stages. This is probably because there are few mature businesses in South Sudan - or this might be one of the reasons why there are only a limited number. Those that do exist are left to learn only by experience, which can be time-consuming and costly as issues are resolved without guidance, often by trial and error. Additionally, there are limited comprehensive follow-up structures to evaluate the efficacy of trainings, or the extent to which they affect business. This is also due to limited funding availability or short project duration, which makes continuous support or improvement of services challenging.

As previously described, most institutions concentrate their activities on agricultural or other sector skills training and have business skills as an “add-on”. For instance, CORAID, SPARK and FARM STEW are providing initial incubation and acceleration services, but comprehensive programmes are largely missing. In particular, seed funding and investor linkages are weak.

Business mentorship and entrepreneurship support networks are also limited in their scope and availability, and access to information to encourage entrepreneurship is also limited. To this point, there was no identified entrepreneurship network available in South Sudan, nor were there many functioning sectoral support associations present in the country. Sectoral associations, such as

the Farmer Seeds Association, do exist but should encourage business owners to share ideas amongst their peers. In such fora, entrepreneurs should be encouraged to exchange best practices, share knowledge and funding ideas, as well as access role models or potential mentors. Such mentorship and access to relevant networks are indeed key for entrepreneurs to stay aware of market trends and identify potential business deals.

These gaps in the entrepreneurial support are particularly evident in a post-conflict environment. Individuals and communities that have faced displacement and human tragedy often do not possess basic education and (financial) literacy skills, English language skills, nor a foundational knowledge in business development and entrepreneurship.

Limited availability of financial instruments in a fragile context

As touched upon previously, in the entrepreneurial ecosystem in South Sudan, access to finance and advanced credit instruments is very limited. This stems in part from underperforming loans due to internal conflict and fiscal and monetary mismanagement as well as the information asymmetry between investors and entrepreneurs.¹⁸ In most cases, entrepreneurs are unable to meet the demands of financial institutions. Such demands include collaterals which entrepreneurs are unable to provide, particularly women who often do not typically inherit land rights or other heirlooms even though the Land Act 2009 does not prohibit them from taking land ownership. Compounding this issue, without access to loans, entrepreneurs are unable to build up a history of diligent repayment that might otherwise demonstrate their credit worthiness. This spiral has been pervasive, making it difficult for entrepreneurs to access funds for start-ups and expansion.

Nevertheless, some institutions have their own financing mechanisms that support their members. Such financing mechanisms allow application for commercial loans and specific loans focused on agriculture, business start-ups and expansion. While these loans have been very supportive for some entrepreneurs, access is not widespread and limited only to registered members.

However, the sustainability of financing is also a pervasive challenge. Most financing comes in the form of cash grants or unconditional cash transfers which are linked to donor deadlines and conditions. These do not specifically target youth or entrepreneurs but rather usually focus on vulnerable individuals or households. Funds are intended to promote resilient livelihoods, rather than provide market-based solutions such as the provision of agricultural inputs like seeds or tools informed by market demand. Consequently, the provided solutions are not market-oriented and have limited engagement with financial institutions. In cases when donor support for a project ends, it becomes difficult for entrepreneurs to access finance. Thus, sustainability in terms of finance is a big challenge, even where emerging businesses have access to it. Inability to access

¹⁸ Source: 2018 African Economic Outlook

sustainable finance has the potential to kill creativity and reduce the number of businesses that could reduce unemployment.

Lack of tax education

It was found that small businesses in South Sudan face a huge and pervasive challenge with tax payments due to little tax education and awareness. In most cases, small businesses do not have adequate knowledge of the brackets in which they are supposed to pay income tax. This is because they operate mostly as informal entrepreneurs, coupled with a less transparent tax revenue collection approach by government officials. Though tax on profit for small businesses is pegged at 10%, our interviews revealed that small business owners are often taxed arbitrarily, without recourse to any standard. This has dire consequences on small businesses and has forced many to operate as informal enterprises.

Infrastructure deficit

There is a huge challenge regarding infrastructure in South Sudan, which strongly impacts its entrepreneurial ecosystem. Road infrastructure is poor and, in some places, transportation is only viable by foot. This is due to absence all-weather roads which adds to the cost of doing business, particularly during rainy season. At the same time, road security is a challenge due to the prevalence of banditry or armed attacks.

As such, for many agricultural entrepreneurs dotted across the country, getting produce to market on time is an immense challenge. To keep their produce from rotting, many farmers sell off their stock at very low prices, sometimes not even breaking even. The interviews revealed that the only means of transportation between certain places in South Sudan is by air. Entrepreneurial businesses in South Sudan are modest, however, with minimal start-up capital. For these entrepreneurs, conveying their wares by air is prohibitively expensive.

Storage facilities are also limited. In places where there are larger storage facilities or even refrigerators available, they are mostly not enough to serve the agricultural production of most entrepreneurs. Transport vehicles with refrigeration systems to deliver produce directly to the market are also not available, let alone the necessary road infrastructure to facilitate such travel. Interviews revealed that there is little support in the face of insecurity. Entrepreneurs located long distances from marketplaces sometimes avoid accessing such markets for the fear of being attacked in transit. Profit margins of entrepreneurs are reduced when they are unable to sell their goods in markets with competitive prices.

Internet and electricity are also costly and not stable in urban areas and basically non-existent in rural areas throughout South Sudan. This is the real-life challenge entrepreneurs face in South

Sudan paired with the limited availability of electricity in most of the areas where the agribusiness is taking place. This also impacts the ability to store perishable goods.

Little coordination among ecosystem players

It was found that there was little coordination between the different organisations promoting or supporting entrepreneurship activities. Organisations identified within the ecosystem are funded by different, usually international sources, and feel obliged to report only to their donors. This leaves little room for coordination among organisations in the ecosystem. The insular approach to entrepreneurship promotion leads to duplication of services intended for the same entrepreneurs. This disjointed model of operating implies the presence of support for entrepreneurship, but the reality presents a redundant offering of services that fails to address business needs. The relevant South Sudanese government institutions (e.g. department units at the administrative level) often have limited capacities and experience to provide policy guidance or strong technical, locally informed expertise. The Youth Consultative Forum where the Ministry of Youth & Sports is regularly meeting with the youth focused organisations and youth-led organisations and the NGO Forum provide a basis for coordination which could be extended though – potentially also through the establishment of one common comprehensive coordination forum.

Absence of clear policy guidance for entrepreneurship

In all the interviews conducted, it was evident that there is no clear entrepreneurship or MSME policy to guide the growth of entrepreneurship in South Sudan. An active policy in this regard would identify challenges entrepreneurs face in the country and provide directions as to how the challenges could be mitigated. The absence of an entrepreneurship or MSME policy thus allows different actors to operate in their own capacity without recourse to national objectives. The outcome is significant overlaps in some support services, and/or neglect in others.

IDENTIFIED OVERLAPS

Presence of several capacity development providers at the early business stage

As pointed out above, there are strong overlaps between services to improve livelihoods, boost technical and vocational skills, which are often mixed together with entrepreneurship programming, e.g. through the provision of financial support, agricultural inputs such as seeds and basic business trainings (see mapping in Figure 2.). Entrepreneurship has not been defined or envisaged as separate objective, leading to a lack of adequate services specifically tailored for that purpose.

The local ecosystem is rich in the number of national and international organisations supporting entrepreneurship to different extents as pointed out above. Despite this, the focus on capacity

development is tied to the ideation and modelling stages of the business cycle. This is an understandable attempt to reduce unemployment through start-ups. The focus on ideation and business modelling, however, starves the market of any support for businesses that are growth-oriented and leaves such businesses to self-explore the dynamics of the market. Diversifying the offering and spreading beyond support for the earliest stages of the business cycle would provide entrepreneurs with more comprehensive and sustainable support.

Source of funding

Institutions are dependent on external funding as their source of financing, primarily relying on donor funding to maintain their operations. Most training or entrepreneurship programmes are free of charge to clients, and therefore do not provide sustainable revenue for the institution. To this point, many programmes adhere to donor priorities and needs rather than the actual needs of the market. This contributes to the limited differentiation between services. Establishing small fees for (successful) clients could allow to exit this dependency.

Institutions	Traditional income generating activities	Technical Agri-Skills Training	Traditional Self-Help Group Formation & Development	Business Training	Mentoring and Coaching	Soft Skills	Funding	Entrepreneurship Event/Talks	Market Information	Business Support	Linkages to Investors	Trade Fairs/ B2B
Action for Recovery and Transformation (ART)	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓
CAPaD	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓					
CARE	✓	✓	✓	✓								
Central Equatoria State Farmers Union	✓	✓			✓		✓					
Community Needs Initiative	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓			
Cordaid	✓	✓		✓								
Co-operative Bank of South Sudan			✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		
Consultation Center for Empowerment and Welfare Organization	✓			✓					✓			
Empower Youth Africa		✓	✓		✓			✓	✓			
Farm Stew	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	
Green Planet	✓		✓	✓								
IPCA		✓	✓	✓			✓					
Nile Agro-Tech & Seed		✓										

Institutions	Traditional income generating activities	Technical Agri-Skills Training	Traditional Self-Help Group Formation & Development	Business Training	Mentoring and Coaching	Soft Skills	Funding	Entrepreneurship Event/Talks	Market Information	Business Support	Linkages to Investors	Trade Fairs/ B2B
Organic Farming Agricultural Organization		✓		✓	✓				✓			
Pro Seed		✓		✓								
Rural Financial Initiative		✓		✓								
Rural Urban SACCO	✓						✓					
Seed Trade Association of South Sudan												
Setlink Finance Services							✓					
South Sudan Grassroots Initiative for Development	✓	✓					✓					
South Sudan Women Entrepreneurs Association	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Spark				✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	
Star Trust Organization				✓					✓			
UNDP	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓		
University of Juba	✓		✓	✓								

Figure 2: List of services by institutions in the entrepreneurial ecosystem in South Sudan, Source: Interviews with Institutions

2. NETWORK ANALYSIS

The following section summarizes the findings of the network analysis as well as the conclusions drawn about the community within the South Sudan agripreneurial ecosystem. The analysis provides insights on density, betweenness centrality and three types of network connections: information sharing, funding as well as service provision and collaboration.

As mentioned in the previous section, South Sudan does not yet have a fully developed entrepreneurship support ecosystem. Most programmes provided by (local) institutions are considering entrepreneurship from a livelihoods and income-generating perspective paired with technical skills training and business development support. Therefore, mostly micro and small businesses in their early (start-up) stages are in the focus. This implies that the network analysis presented in this section reflects the nascent ecosystem currently focused on these service offerings but with the potential to increasingly consider entrepreneurship support.

With regard to the selected actors in the ecosystem, the analysis attempted to show the wider scope of locally, regionally, nationally and internationally active institutions in Central and Western Equatoria.

ITC's Network Analysis methodology

ITC's Network Analysis methodology aims to capture interactions, trends and patterns in collaborations among institutions. The results presented in this section are based on three pillars of analysis:



Desk research

Preliminary research to understand the landscape of institutions in the country and their offerings. Research on specific studies and reports in the field of agripreneurship support in the country. Research to validate findings.



Agripreneurship support institutions

Personal interviews to understand the role of the institution in the ecosystem, its contributions, perspectives and specific collaborations within the network.



Entrepreneurs

Personal interviews to validate the institution's offering and to understand the entrepreneur's journey in the ecosystem.

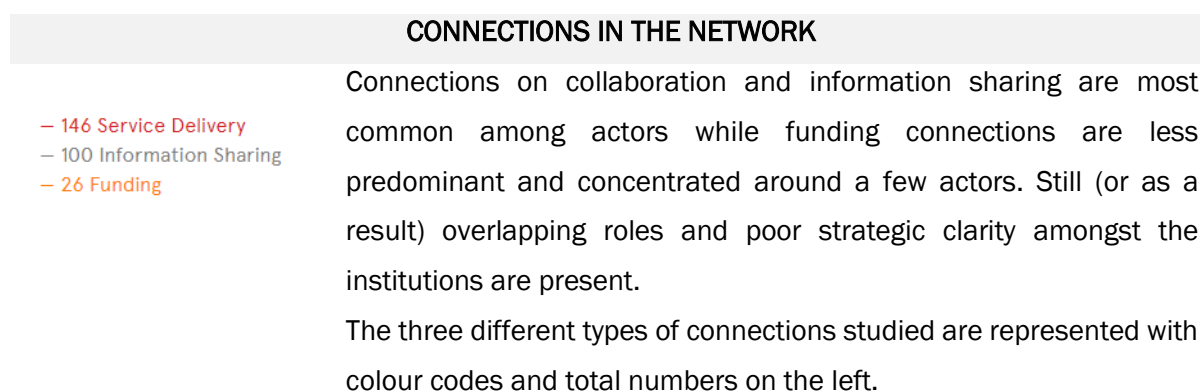
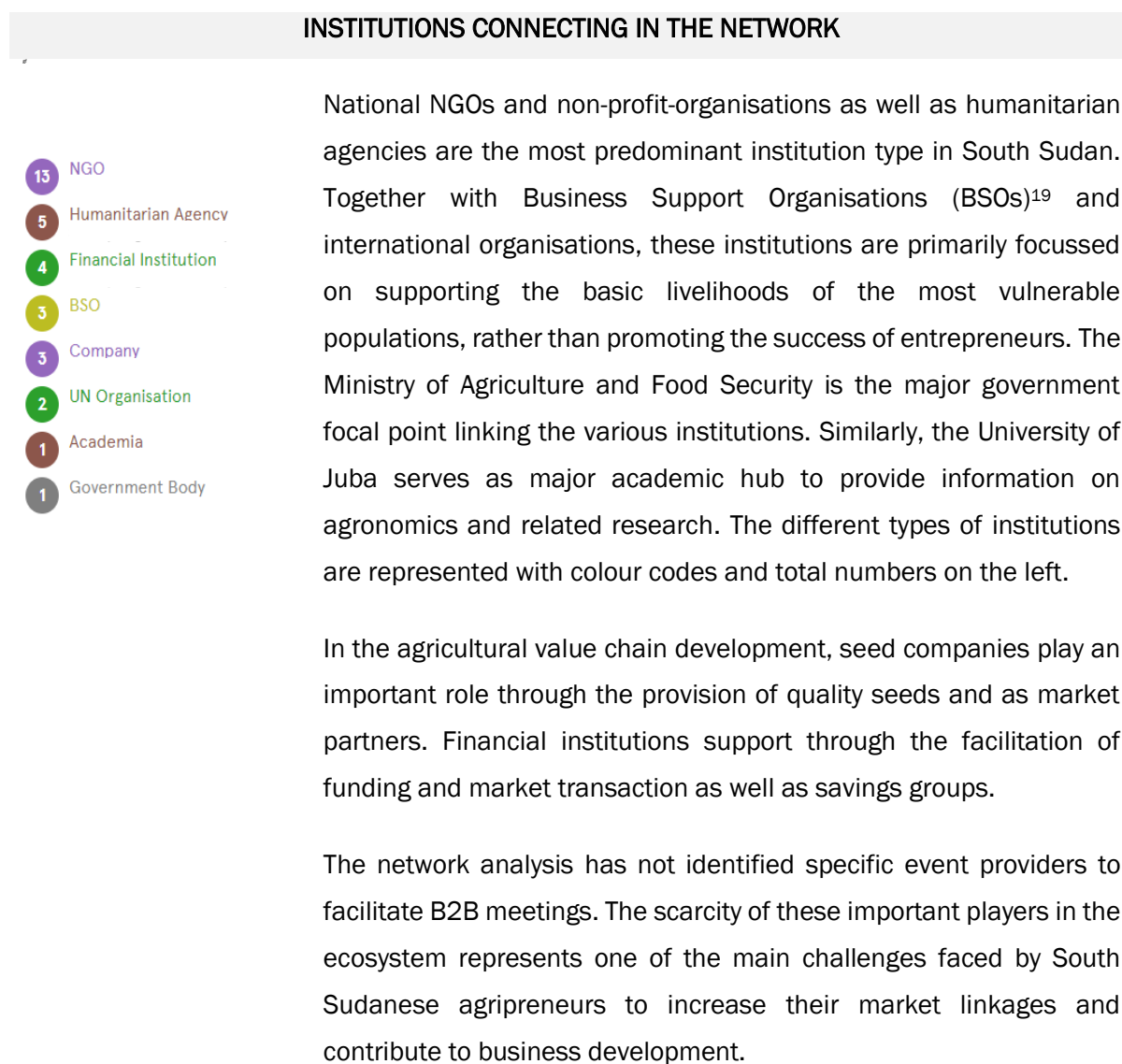
In order to represent and visually capture the interactions and linkages among the interviewed institutions, this section of the report provides qualitative and quantitative insights supported by a network analysis software.

The following section provides answers to two key questions:

1. ***What are the main connections in the network?*** The analysis explores how the landscape of institutions interact with each other, which are the most connected institutions, with who are they connecting and why are they connecting. The aim of this analysis is to understand what stimulates collaboration or what might be preventing it and therefore, what can be done to strengthen the ecosystem.
2. ***What are the different types of connections?*** ITC's network analysis focuses on three key factors of collaboration: information sharing, pursuit/provision of funding as well as service delivery and technical cooperation. In the case of information exchanges, the analysis considers aspects such as information sharing on activities, beneficiary needs, partners or other information through regular (cluster) meetings or similar events. Regarding financial provision, the analysis focuses financial service provision to beneficiaries or the exchanges of funds between institutions. This would be the case of institutions providing financial support for training activities, inputs or institutional support to other institutions. Finally, service delivery involves the provision of tools, advisory services, extension services or capacity building among others and thereby implies collaboration for joint activities such as research, trainings or joint programming.

ECOSYSTEM NETWORK ANALYSIS

The information below summarizes key features of the network:



¹⁹ South Sudan Chamber of Commerce, Seed Trade Association, South Sudan Agricultural Producers Union, South Sudan Women Entrepreneurs Association, Central Equatoria State Farmers Union

NETWORK DENSITY

The network density is measured using the ties between actors, which represent interactions within the ecosystem. The study establishes that connections within the ecosystem are well pronounced. Indeed, the density of the South Sudan network is relatively high. Network density describes the portion of *potential* connections in the network that are actually realized. Comparing the number of actual connections to the number of potential connections, South Sudan is in the middle of global averages, scoring 0.55 (1 being the highest possible density number, and 0 the lowest). Many institutions have more than five connections and are therefore classified as “well connected” actors, mostly with (other) NGOs. Still, there are some challenges:

1. **Early stage focus:** For entrepreneurs to thrive and to develop their business, it is necessary to provide a stimulating environment by ensuring access to support services throughout all the stages of growth and development. As pointed out previously, most institutional players focus mainly on traditional skills and income generating trainings and to a certain extent on coaching and mentoring of programme participants. There is little support to further scale up small businesses.
2. **Limited specialization and overlapping focus:** Most actors in the ecosystem started their support to entrepreneurs in recent years based on project funding and they are therefore testing their approaches and initiatives. The project funding is earmarked to certain activities and for a specified duration. Based on this, training programmes are not implemented in a sustainable manner and the continuous support for entrepreneurs to further develop their businesses is limited. Often, interventions are not sustainable in the long-term as they are donor depended. This also implies that there is little institutional memory or analysis of lessons learned and feedback loops for improvement. Moreover, there is often an overlap with regard to focus on the same subset of sectors, providing training on the same topics, and supporting entrepreneurs at the same stage of development. There are few organizations offering unique expertise so entrepreneurs can differentiate between institutions offering unique value.
3. **Lack of growth pipeline:** A result of the lack of specialization and focus on early-stage support, entrepreneurs lack guidance to take their start-ups to the next level. Services such as support to leverage technology to scale up, access to markets and certifications on international standards are currently rare. According to the interviews conducted, there are some attempts to provide market information but more advanced business support is lacking, particularly with regard to legal and tax issues or trade fairs and B2B activities.

INSTITUTION CENTRALITY

Institution nodes are ranked according to betweenness centrality. This type of centrality measures how many times a node (institution) acts as a gateway in the network. The higher the betweenness centrality of an institution, the more paths run through that entity to connect two other actors. When an institution has a high betweenness centrality, and therefore a bigger node size in the map, it means that a node is a key bridge or facilitator between different actors.

Overall, it measures how often an institution appears on the shortest paths between nodes in the network. Institutions with high betweenness may have considerable influence within the network by virtue of their control over information flows between others. They are also the ones whose removal from the network would most disrupt communications between other institutions. This report has also evaluated degree centrality, defined as the number of links on a node (i.e., the number of ties that a node has). This indicates which institutions have built a bigger network for themselves but does not provide insights on their work as ecosystem builders.

Figure 3 shows the overall network of institutions supporting entrepreneurs in South Sudan. The size of the nodes (institutions) correspond to their betweenness centrality score (the larger the node, the higher the betweenness centrality).

Overall Network

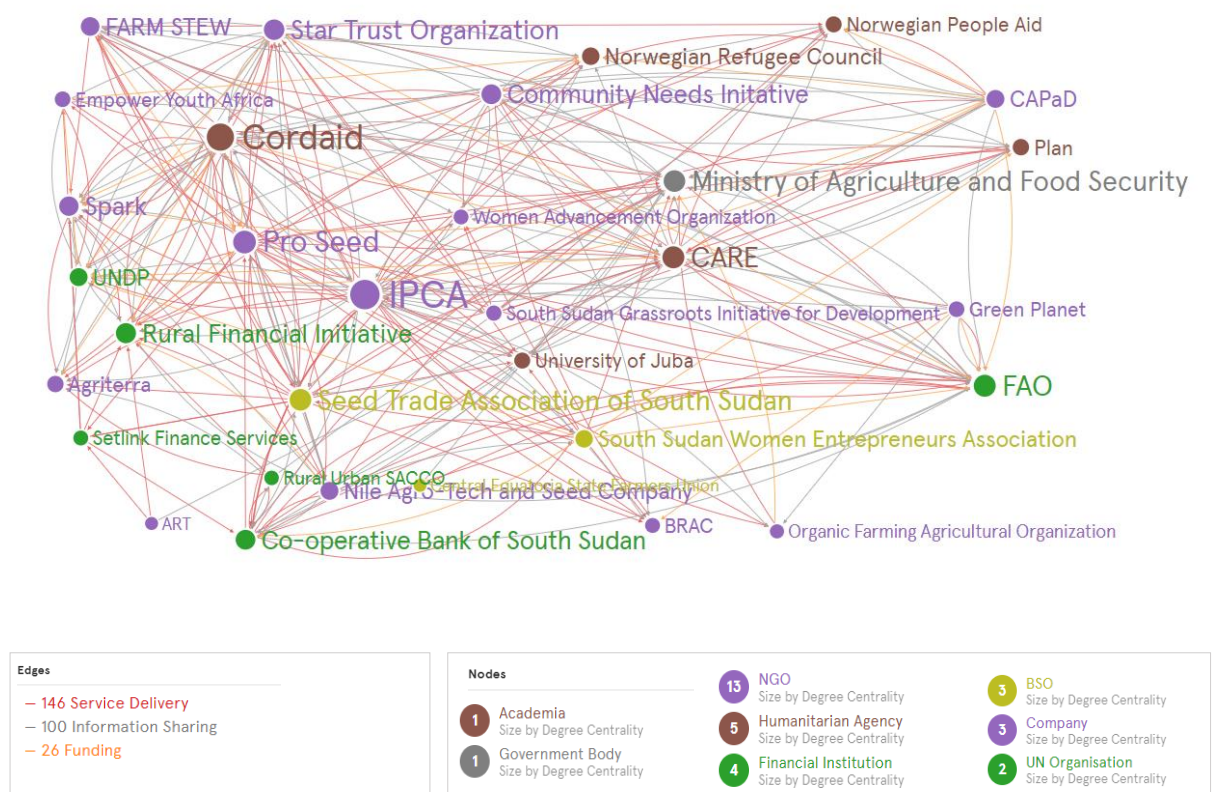


Figure 3: South Sudan's Agri-Ecosystem Network

The analysis of Figure 3 indicates that creating additional connections could significantly increase the overall density and centrality scores. Possibilities for growth in the network can be as follows:

Potential connections

Table 1 provides an overview of institutions acting as bridges to expand and strengthen the ecosystem network (ranked by betweenness centrality). This indicates that when connecting to these institutions, actors will potentially improve their reach to less connected actors in the ecosystem. If a new or existing actor connects and collaborates with an international humanitarian agency as well as to the Ministry, connections to other small scale or recent actors in the ecosystem have the potential to improve. Interestingly, a lot of actors are connected to national NGOs and Pro Seed which is collaborating with farmers, companies and national and international NGOs.

Table 2 provides a ranked list of institutions with a strong individual network (degree centrality). These institutions have a large network as a result of a successful positioning. When connecting with them, actors might be able to increase visibility and access new opportunities. However, when compared to Table 1 they might not necessarily provide support to reach new or emerging actors (less connected) in the ecosystem.

Overview of Actors by Betweenness Centrality	<i>(High bridging capabilities)</i>
IPCA	79.84
FAO	37.27
Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security	36.67
Pro Seed	30.67
CARE	30.10

Table 1: Ranking by betweenness centrality

Overview of Actors by Degree Centrality	<i>(Strong individual network)</i>
IPCA	47
Cordaid	41
Pro Seed	29
FAO	27
CARE	27

Table 2: Ranking by degree centrality

In addition, when looking at the distribution of the results (see Annex II) only a few institutions are ecosystem connectors (high betweenness centrality). Then there is a small subset of different leading support institutions such as government and UN agencies, international humanitarian agencies, financial institutions and a few local NGOs which are also well connected. This indicates

that a small set of institutions lead the support and connectivity of the agripreneurs through the ecosystem. This can be explained by those organizations' ability to connect new institutions to the existing network, often due to the fact that these institutions work in consortia, offer complementary services such as business training and financial support or serve as major donors or coordinators of a project. Institutions who are not part of this small set have the potential to increase their presence in the ecosystem by increasing the overall number of connections by sharing information with other actors, proposing collaborations to deliver joint services and supporting other institutions for instance financial institutions to deliver on their mandate.

Limited regional outreach

The majority of institutions supporting agripreneurs in South Sudan are located in the capital Juba. Often, organisations can be found in close proximity to each other which facilitates collaboration.

While international and financial organisations as well as the government might also have regional offices or local representatives outside the capital, NGOs due to their limited size and available funding are often focused on a single location. This implies that there is a limited potential to reach agripreneurs in other regions of the country. Outreach activities are exacerbated as physical and online infrastructure is limited. This, paired with low literacy rates, challenges the implementation of e-learning content or other online solutions to bridge this geographical barrier. Local institutions offering similar services could partner and thereby reach economies of scale.

Network focusing on Humanitarian Agencies and NGOs

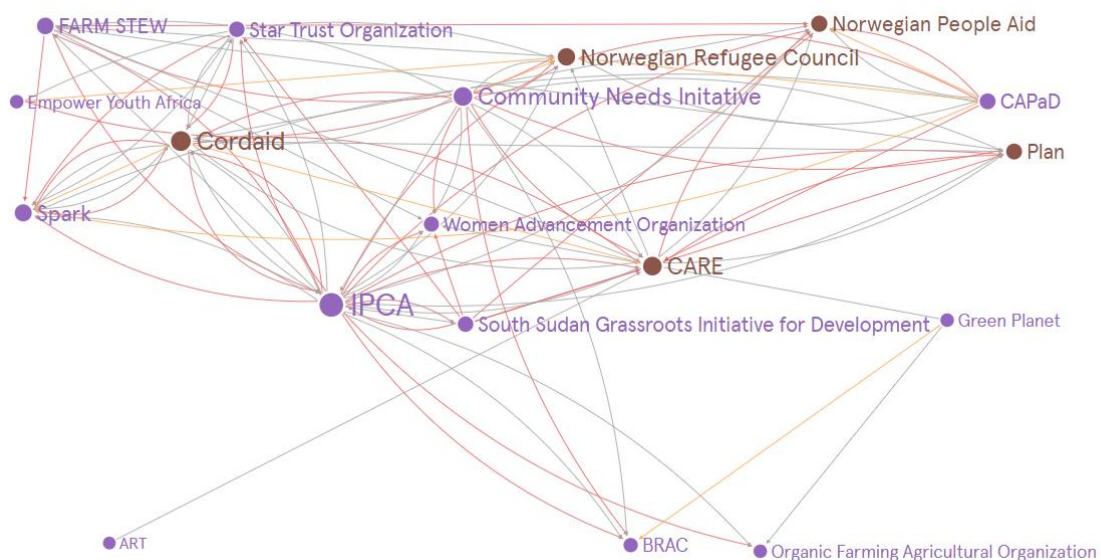


Figure 4: South Sudan's Agri-Ecosystem Network – focusing on Humanitarian Agencies and NGOs

Limited financial support for agripreneurs

To adequately support entrepreneurs in expanding and scaling their business idea, technical and soft skill training should be mixed with financial support schemes. While there are some organisations which give out (in-kind) grants or start-up kits, existing financial service providers are only connected to a small set of NGOs. Apart from cash transfers, loans are mostly only provided to advanced businesses and formal enterprises who can meet lending requirements (such as collaterals, or a history of diligent repayment). To bridge this gap as pointed out above, the formation of local Village Savings and Loan Associations are often part of NGOs service offerings, or attached to their trainings. To strengthen the country's banking system, collaboration and linkages could be increased through joint programming and the setup of dedicated support system and specific service offering. Such a cooperation would also overcome the "trust" gap entrepreneurs are often facing when trying to access loans. A joint database of "approved" businesses (developed with the cooperation of both NGOs and financial institutions) which have undergone business training activities could access loans more easily.

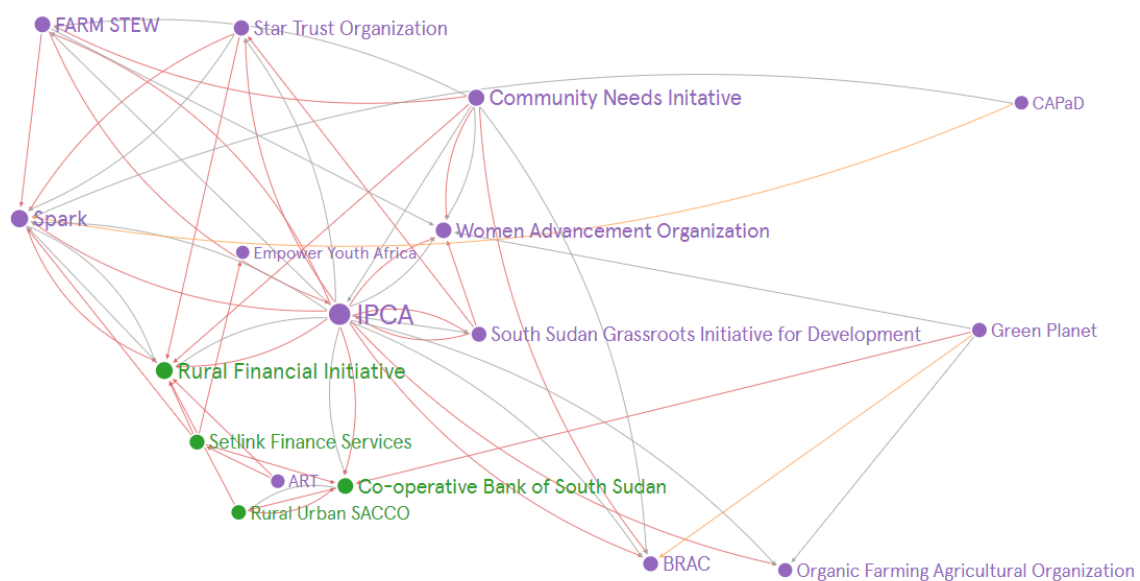


Figure 5: South Sudan's Agri-Ecosystem Network- subset of NGOs and local financial service providers

2. What are the different types of connections?

The following analysis looks at the characteristics of the linkages (edges) connecting each institution (node). This report has looked at three key interactions between institutions:

1. **Information exchanges:** information sharing on activities, beneficiary needs, partners or other information through regular meetings or similar events.

2. **Service delivery:** joint activities for research, trainings, joint programming or provision of tools, advisory services, extension services or capacity building among others.
3. **Financial collaboration:** the exchanges of funds between institutions or financial service provision.

Nurturing information exchanges

The network analysis revealed that there is already a good level of information exchanges between the different network partners. This is mostly due to the fact that many of the selected institutions participate in the NGO Forum or regular cluster meetings set-up by lead agencies and are coordinating for programme implementation with a subset of institutions. Through these larger exchange meetings, less-well connected institutions have the chance to engage with lead partners. Hence, information sharing represents the main linkage between actors.

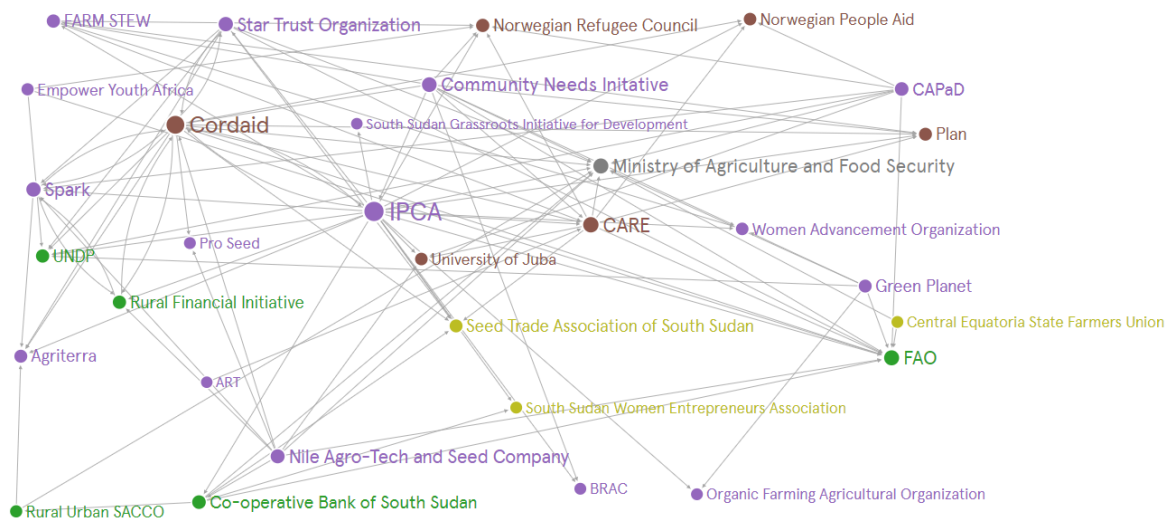


Figure 6: Network by information exchanges

Service delivery

When compared to the number of connections on service delivery, it is evident that not all information connections directly translate into effective partnerships. An option to increase collaboration and foster engagement with wider network linkages could be an amplified joint organisation and provision of services.

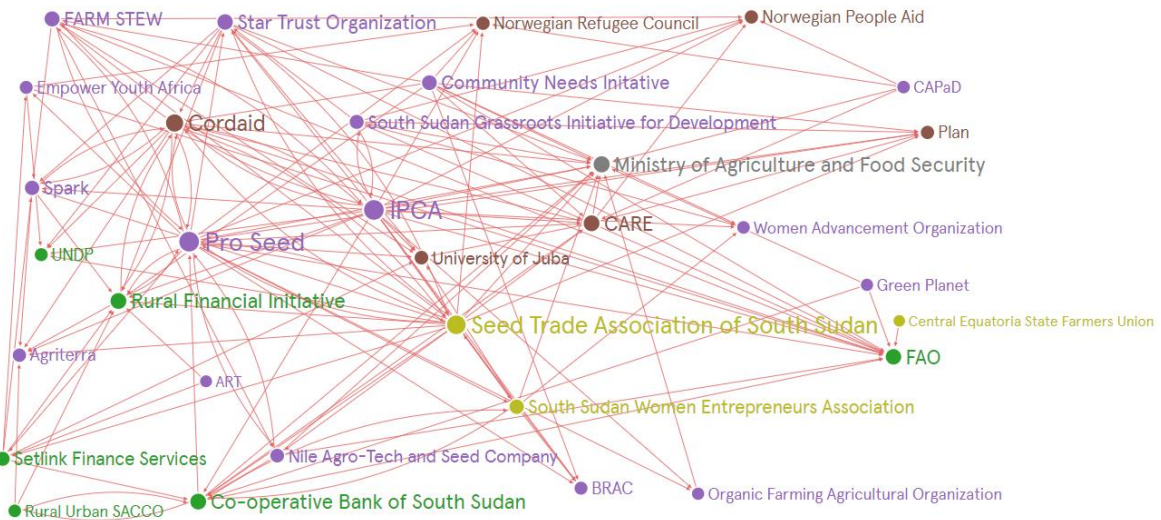


Figure 7: Network by service delivery

Funding connections

The accumulation of overlapping programming is visible in the network when analyzing how financial institutions, NGOs, humanitarian and international agencies pursue and access funding. Institutions which have shown as central in the overall network analysis are likely to receive funds from multiple sources. This implies that institutions which are further outside the network have less opportunities to sustain their program activities.

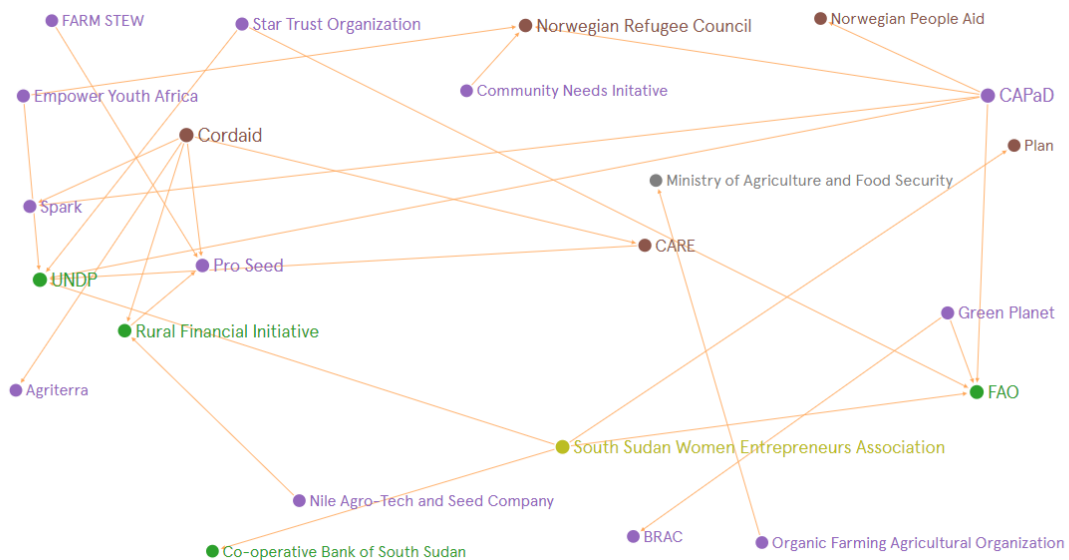


Figure 8: Network by financial collaboration

3. USER EXPERIENCE ANALYSIS

Analysing the entrepreneurship ecosystem of a country requires not only the insights of its institutional actors but also those of the entrepreneurs or “users” of the network. Interviews were conducted with a selected group of young entrepreneurs in the agribusiness sector to complement the above network analysis. This section provides an overview of their experiences in navigating the network and accessing the services they require.

The following box presents the profile of the 26 young entrepreneurs who participated in the focus group discussion on October 2nd 2021. All of them have a business located along the agricultural value chain, working in vegetable and fruit sub-sectors, which included producers, wholesalers, retailers and small-scale processors.

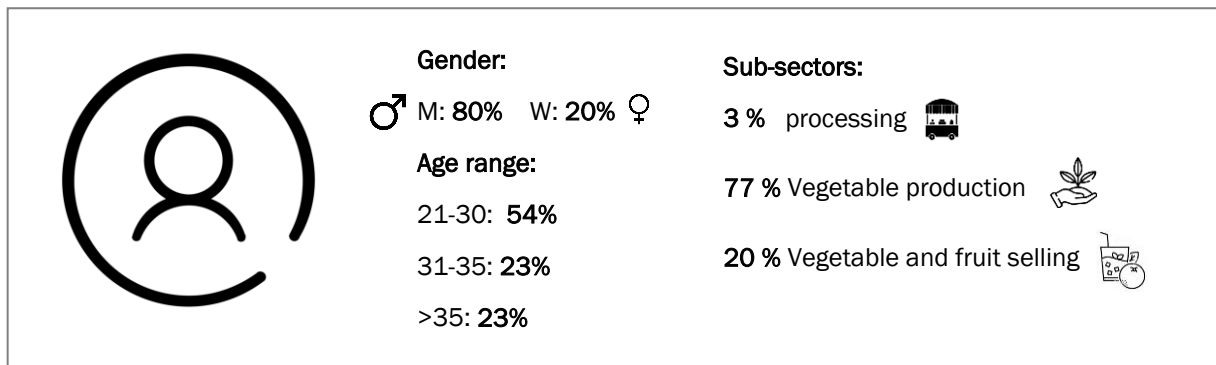


Figure 9: Overview of Focus Group Discussion participants

Based on the insights gathered from entrepreneur interviews, the following key trends can be outlined regarding the user experience in the South Sudan entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Limited skills for agripreneurship: Participants expressed their skills-deficiencies as big constraints to engage in business activities along the value chain. Participants raised concerns that they find themselves in comparative disadvantage to youth from neighbouring regions due to unfinished basic education (majority being primary or secondary school dropout), poor language competences (English, Arabic and/or local languages) which also makes communications amongst themselves difficult, lack of relevant work experience, and sometimes poor work ethics. Some also mentioned though that the opportunities to receive free trainings and star-tup capital or in-kind support is attracting them to advance in the sector.

Focus on seeking support from leading institutions: Most participants were unaware of local business development services. Reasons mentioned were that international organisations are actively promoting their (free) training support and provision of seedling and other agricultural inputs and

tools throughout the country and have good marketing materials available and therefore are much more known than local institutions which were mentioned as assisting in the transportation of young vegetable dealers' products to market in Juba. Some participants also said that they have not heard of or been looking for support at all. From the ones who did, they mentioned that the support received was inconsistent, spontaneous in nature and remained superficial in terms of content and quality.

Localisation of support schemes: The participants of the discussion showed a preference for local and national support over international one to provide continuous and sustainable services. The required support includes improved technical and business training, access to improved agro-technologies and know-how, setting up of market-information system, packaging and process of produce to achieve a longer shelf-life.

Large revenue opportunities along agricultural value chains which are rarely exploited: Indeed, the youth see too many barriers to accessing those potential profits. They are aware of the needs for expensive equipment, management skills, and other hurdles, but are not aware that services exist to help them overcome these challenges. For those with such an awareness, they lack the skills to plan, invest and manage commercial levels. The limited access to finance also limits access to modern, efficient farming equipment. It is pertinent to raise financial resource allocation to input support programs for youthful farmers and invest heavily in mechanisation. Moreover, there is a lack of adequate records keeping to enable analysis of whether they are making a profit or working at a loss. Further, most farmers lack the requisite agronomic skills to make a critical analysis of the choice of vegetable varieties that would be most profitable and technically feasible to produce. They expressed their lack of skills and vegetable nurseries management and the need for further support.

At the same time, entrepreneurs also reported that farming techniques are labour intensive and very few young people get attracted into the industry. The hesitance of young people to farming due to its labour intensiveness and high labour cost, makes farming a very expensive venture. The ability to make rational business choices is also lacking, and needs to be developed so that youth would know which crops are the most profitable and which production or irrigation techniques would be most economical. Farmers need to be able to determine their operational costs and their returns to justify such decisions, like hiring of full-time or part-time labour, investing in new technologies, expanding farmland, managing cropping cycles for consistent supply, or applying for loans. The entrepreneurs would like to understand principles of accessing funds, whether through own savings or shareholders, mobilisation from friends and family. In addition, they would like to understand the technical procedures around formal financing – loan conditions, interest rates, repayment period.

Need for capacity development through trainings, coaching and mentorship: Young entrepreneurs at the production level reported that they lack access to and knowledge of appropriate technologies such as modern farming methods like setting up and raising of good vegetable nurseries, application of agro-chemicals and fertilisers and/or usage of improved irrigation technologies. They also reported a huge deficit in business management skills and functional financial literacy that hinder them from business capital mobilisation. In addition, they reported the need for support in products marketing and business linkages to high-end markets. Young entrepreneurs at the next level of the value chain (including transporters, retailers, wholesalers and processors) reported that they need improved skills in post-harvest management, such as good hygiene and sanitation standards, to ensure products' quality. They equally need training and capacity in processing and preservation technologies.

Opportunities and challenges in accessing finance: Young entrepreneurs have very little engagement with financial institutions. A number of them were concerned about the difficulties of accessing funds through value chain enablers like BSOs, NGOs, financial institutions, and the government. While the few cases of in-kind support, grants and access to loans have been reported, the levels and frequency are so small that they are negligible to have impact on the growth of the agribusiness sector. Some entrepreneurs have already received support through business-plan competition events – often, these are one-off events and winners are few – leaving the rest of the ecosystem without financial support.

Need for networking: The participants unanimously agreed that the lack of a common platform for local agripreneurs to discuss, network and advocate on issues of vegetable and fruit value chains by key actors is add to the challenges of to the growth and development. They recommended setting up of a meaningful network that adds value to them, and the participants should add value to it. The proposed options include monthly peer-to-peer physical interactions. Such a platform could be a source of market information and market linkages for their various products, fund raising and resource mobilization as they would showcase their products and services, exchanging business ideas and management skill as well as a source of support to other businesses in case of failure of suppliers or customers. The key obstacles that make such a forum absent is the lack of committed lead-persons to spearhead such initiatives. Besides, for the physical forum, there is a lack of suitable and convenient space to bring the youth together as that would involve some costs; transport challenges for accessing such a place. For the online forum, key constraints include the limited access to gadgets like smartphones, poor access to internet including high cost of connectivity, and limited ICT skills among the young agripreneurs.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the service mapping, identified gaps and overlaps, network analysis and user experience analysis and a general discussion during the ecosystem mapping validation workshop, this section summarizes the recommendations to support the growth and success of the South Sudan entrepreneurship ecosystem. These recommendations are intended as guidance to local ecosystem actors.

Bridging the disconnect between entrepreneurship support

It was found that the support provided by institutions, and the expectation of entrepreneurs, do not necessarily align. On the one hand, this is partly due to the lack of a clear national policy guide as outlined further below on entrepreneurship support. On the other hand, some institutions that are donor-funded are focused on processes that satisfy donor conditions, rather than deliverables that would benefit entrepreneurs. We recommend that institutions design clear entrepreneurship-related deliverables in order to extend the relevant support to entrepreneurs. It is also important that these services will be communicated and promoted.

Though institutions will not be able meet all of the expectations of entrepreneurs, a re-oriented focus on entrepreneurship-related deliverables could establish a strong connection between institutions and entrepreneurs. This would be further enhanced when entrepreneurs are invited through fora, workshops or symposia to contribute to creating support schemes. In this vein, entrepreneurship support institutions would be empowered to create entrepreneurship-driven programmes that ultimately have the potential to reduce unemployment.

Overall, a classification guide or framework could be established which depicts the specific training and service support offer of the different institution to guide entrepreneurs and is linked to the entrepreneurial growth journey.

A case in point is the operational model of the International Fertilizer Development Center (IFDC) in Ghana. IFDC is an independent non-profit organization with focus on developing market systems and building strategic partnership with medium to large enterprises to positively influence sustainable agricultural solutions that reflect in soil health, food security, and livelihoods around the world. Particularly on market systems and strategic partnership, IFDC has linked up with a fruit export processing company to provide training to smallholder pineapple farmers on market linkages. For efficiency, smallholder farmers are put into clusters to enable the export processing company deliver staggered trainings in a manner customized to the needs of each cluster. In addition, smallholder pineapple farmers also provide knowledge to the model farm being cultivated by the export processing company. Ultimately, the arrangement initiated by IFDC provide market linkages between the smallholder farmers and the export processing company. Such partnerships,

when set in the South Sudanese context, have the potential to re-define the service, support and training programmes that institutions directly and indirectly support.

Establishing a robust institutional network

Although some institutions indicated their linkages with national, regional and international institutions, these are not widespread but limited to only a few. In the light of this, there must be need to establish networks between institutions as it is necessary to align, harmonise, share and exchange knowledge. Institutional level networks could be initiated by creating joint- programmes for entrepreneurs with institutions focusing on their most competitive offering. The possibility of putting heads together to co-create projects and design programmes is also highly recommended. This could be organised by regularly exchanging resource persons between institutions to deepen trust among actors in the ecosystem. This will deepen knowledge transfer and sharing, a shared responsibility, and where necessary, combine mutual resources to complete a joint task. This has a strong potential to avoid the duplication of efforts. Ultimately, this should further strengthen the capacity of youth entrepreneurs to compete in local and regional markets. In establishing a robust institutional network, we strongly suggest that respect and tolerance for the other institution be enshrined in everyday discussion. Respect for opinion on an entrepreneurial competence, as opposed to personal has the strong tendency to bring in new ideas that may be problem-solving.

To facilitate the establishment of a strong institutional network, the existent NGO Forum could be extended to a database to register active institutions, past and future project endeavours, service and training offering and the respective target groups. The Forum could be used as an information-sharing platform that identifies and provides a deeper understanding of the current status quo of entrepreneurial support trainings - replications, overlaps and gaps. The ecosystem actors should appoint a network actor to play a leading role to foster engagement, regular alignment meetings between institutions, frequent cooperation and the pooling of resources. Thus, institutions are encouraged to join this Forum to gain first-hand information on different institutions and their mission, training possibilities and courses.

For institutions to become familiarized with entrepreneurship and build their expertise in the subject, ecosystem actors could benefit from institutional strengthening to review their current service portfolio and training content. Having a clear positioning in the network, communicating it, and using their position to identify synergies could significantly increase the connections between actors. A stronger and structured ecosystem could also attract new private sector actors interested in collaborating in the region.

Creating an enabling policy environment

In order to fully coordinate initiatives supporting entrepreneurship, there needs to be a clear national entrepreneurship policy guide for the entrepreneurial ecosystem in South Sudan. A

national entrepreneurship policy guide should be the point of departure when charting the role of entrepreneurship. It may set the rules and encourage specialisation among entrepreneurship support institutions. Defining goals, objectives and targets is critical to designing a roadmap towards building and supporting entrepreneurs. Since policy takes quite some time to be passed by Parliament, provisional guides on entrepreneurship can be prepared and released by the Ministries in order to boost the entrepreneurship drive and encourage self-employment.

It is important that during the design and co-development of the entrepreneurship policy guide, there is differentiation between efforts to support livelihoods, and those promoting entrepreneurship. Agencies and institutions should be specific on their entrepreneurship initiatives and on what they want to achieve and should respond to: 1. What is the ecosystem's vision for entrepreneurship? 2. What are the strategic objectives to support entrepreneurs? 3. What are the key measures that will indicate success for the ecosystem? 4. How will the ecosystem implement actions to achieve the strategy? These have the tendency to shape the services provided for.

The foundations exist for such a policy guide. Different policy documents reference the topic of entrepreneurship to differing degrees, such as (2018) National Development Strategy. Consolidate Peace and Stabilize the Economy, South Sudan Vision 2040: Towards Freedom, Equality, Justice, Peace And Prosperity For All, Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) 2018, The Comprehensive Agriculture Master Plan and the National Youth Development Policy. These policy documents should be reviewed and aligned to establish common grounds from which an entrepreneurship enabling environment may emerge as called for in the reforms needed under the Revitalised Agreement for the Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS).

One promising development in this realm is the recent passage of the Youth Enterprise Development Fund Bill. The purpose of the Bill is to provide for the promotion, establishment and governance of enterprise development among youth and for investing in and facilitating the growth of micro and small enterprises. It is recommended that funds which are foreseen to be disbursed under this scheme are structured in a manner that incentivizes repayment to ensure diligent use.

Making entrepreneurship appealing to youth and establishing a robust entrepreneurial network

A recurring challenge to fostering entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector is its lack of appeal for youth. Farming is mostly regarded as a subsistence activity, and not an avenue towards business success. To change this general perception, we recommend a wide-spread communication and visibility campaign showcasing successful entrepreneurs and the advantages of profit-oriented agricultural production. The concept of agribusiness and agripreneurship should be explained and marketed to encourage and motivate youth to take this path.

In The Gambia, entrepreneurship advocates have taken it upon themselves to conduct massive awareness campaigns for the youth to engage in entrepreneurship. The so-called Tekki Fii – meaning “Make it here” – goes around the country trumpeting the benefits of entrepreneurship. To bolster the seriousness and credibility of this initiative, the President of The Gambia gave a keynote address to launch Tekki Fii. Agripreneurship in South Sudan could be made more appealing by enlisting high profile persons to speak on and elaborate its benefits by drawing experiences from home and abroad.

Increasing the awareness of business opportunities in the agricultural sector could be done through entrepreneurship events and fairs to increase exposure. This could be in form of pitching competitions and networking (particularly with financial service providers, funders or investors), knowledge exchanges between institutions and their participants in the field, business plan showcasing, etc. Furthermore, instituting youth dialogue with successful entrepreneurs has the potential to stimulate interest in entrepreneurship, especially when such entrepreneurs are from local communities where the youth reside or identify with.

At the enterprise level, entrepreneurs are also recommended to establish their own network. Unlike the NGO forum, there is currently no organized system or structure that brings private sector actors together (whether for networking, experience sharing, showcasing products & services, marketing investment opportunities etc). The previously existing Entrepreneurship Business Forum (EBF) ceased to exist in 2018 due to the lack of funding. It provided a unique local platform for bringing entrepreneurs (both growth-oriented and start-up business) for knowledge sharing and transfer together as well as linking them with buyers to increase market linkages. For the EBF to be revived, business associations should be willing to prepare an appealing plan that can garner support from the donor community.

For any future entrepreneurship network to function and deliver on its potential, it should have the capability to facilitate peer-peer interactions (both face to face and virtual platforms). The entrepreneurs’ network should become a nexus of communication, market information and market linkages for entrepreneurs. The network should be able to become a fund raising and resource mobilization platform where entrepreneurs could showcase their products and services, exchange business ideas and management skills, and become a source of support to others. Thereby, it could also become a basis for agritech start-ups to enable the online purchase of agricultural products and to facilitate communication between buyers and sellers.

When setting up such a network, it should be kept in mind that it needs to be well-organized, with a strong lead figure who will actively drive the network e.g. through regular once- a-month peer-to-peer interactions. The entrepreneurship network may work to enhance peer-to-peer learning, prepare joint proposals to access finance, support fund raising, share market information and

opportunities for market linkages, mobilize resources, share logistics where possible and much more. Successful business owners in the network, in addition to promoting their particular trades or sectors, could act as mentors for start-ups and young entrepreneurs.

To jump-start such a network, entrepreneurs could come together to form a local Ye! Chapter, which works for and with youth entrepreneurs to enhance access to networks, mentors, and digital skills. The Ye! Chapter can be established by identifying a local youth leader, the Ye! Advisor and the Ye! Anchor (a local Business Support Organisation), to roll out events and activities which build the digital skills and networks of youth entrepreneurs. This would include the establishment of youth groups/self-support groups, which could involve successful businesspeople as role models and mentors to share their experiences as well as provide a common platform for discussion.

Further, there was a noted gap in mentorship or advisory services. Experienced entrepreneurs and mentors can help educate and guide first-time business owners before they make financial decisions or meet with investors. Having a network of support and mentorship can empower entrepreneurs through pivotal moments and processes. Mentoring programmes can offer guidance to entrepreneurs to make the smartest possible decisions and provide them with hope and encouragement. It is clear that entrepreneurs have their unique experiences of success and challenges. Specifically, successful entrepreneurs may share their entrepreneurial life experience as a form of guidance for start-ups and may choose to 'adopt' an entrepreneur for direct mentorship. Mentors can also be important connectors, linking entrepreneurs to forums and associations and many other local or regional forums, as well as creating market linkages based on their network

Private sector empowerment must be the overarching goal. Thus, learning from neighbouring countries presents South Sudan the opportunity to reassess its competitiveness in order to position itself in regional and continental markets. Interviews revealed that (female) entrepreneurs from South Sudan attended trade fairs and business-to-business meetings in neighbouring countries. While these events present the entrepreneurs the opportunity to showcase their products, they also learn about new ways of negotiations with buyers, new market opportunities and new business approaches in their sector. Based on these, we highly recommend that business associations motivate and support their members to take active and regular part in attending business to business meetings in neighbouring countries for new ideas and new market opportunities. Likewise, business associations may also organise such trade fairs, match making, business to business meetings in South Sudan for the same purpose of grasping new market opportunities at home.

Facilitating access to finance and exploring linkages for business incubation

The main providers of financial services in South Sudan consist of commercial banks and microfinance agencies. Despite the existence of these financial institutions, most entrepreneurs cannot access the resources they need to boost their farming, processing, and selling activities. Access to loans is equally needed by entrepreneurs to procure inputs and farm equipment (such solar pumps to reduce water consumption and over-dependence on fuel, which has fluctuating prices and frequent scarcities as well as modern mechanical farming equipment). This should be combined with business management skills, including financial management, risk management, functional record keeping, to ensure that those entrepreneurs that do access financing can make best, responsible use of it. Moreover, a joint database of “approved” businesses (developed with the cooperation of both NGOs and financial institutions) which have undergone business training activities could facilitate access to loans.

Another way to boost access to finance could be through group lending arrangements where the group acts as a collateral for loans taken by members in a group. Especially for women, this has the tendency to ward off the obstacles associated with accessing finance through collaterals tied to their male partners. Group lending also impose a sense of responsibility on each member to diligently use loans acquired. The risk of the group losing everything they possess naturally ‘forces’ members to use loans wisely and effectively. Additionally South Sudan could look to learning from best practices in neighbouring countries such as Kenya and Uganda where entrepreneurship support has gained roots.

For instance, in Kenya mobile money has granted many women and youth the opportunity to open mobile accounts through which monies are transacted. The transactions in these accounts demonstrate the cashflow of these women and youth-led enterprises, serving as basis for soft loans in micro finance schemes. These practices could be introduced to women and youth-led enterprises in South Sudan, and applied where they fit best and connectivity infrastructure is sufficiently robust. Practices from other countries offer good examples for South Sudan in terms of innovative access to finance.

For instance, in the 2Scale²⁰ project in Benin, a fruit company, agricultural inputs dealers and a financial institution were connected to support nine pineapple farmer cooperatives, by offering subsidized loans with 15% interest (instead of 24%) to purchase agricultural inputs. Loans were not directly offered the farmer cooperatives. Rather, after business plans prepared by the farmer cooperatives have been approved by the financial institution, it paid the input dealers and tied the loan to the farmers’ supply to be delivered to the fruit company. The loan was to be serviced within 24 months, but a moratorium of 18 months (cycle of pineapple production) was triggered to allow

²⁰ See the example of 2Scale here at https://www.2scale.org/upload/650938_2SCALE_paper11.pdf

farmers harvest their pineapples first. When farmers finally supplied produce to the fruit company, it (fruit company) paid directly into the bank accounts of the cooperatives in the financial institution in question. Subsequently, the loan was deducted with the agreed interest and the remainder transferred to the accounts of the farmers.

Relating this to the case of South Sudan, various agricultural value chain actors could be brought together to provide funding for entrepreneurs. While the best practice from Benin could be useful to South Sudan, it must also be placed in the context of the current ecosystem and make a best fit out of it. For instance, agro-processing companies, just as in Benin, could create entrepreneurship financial cluster support by paying for agricultural inputs for entrepreneurs. When the produce of entrepreneurs is due, the agro-processing companies may buy and deduct their support and release the remaining to the entrepreneurs. It may involve financial companies, input dealers and other relevant actors into this scheme as demonstrated in the case of Benin. In any model employed, the best practice adopted should be the best fit for South Sudan.

Another mechanism that has emerged to try and fill this gap are Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) and Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations (SACCOs). These could be “upgraded” to provide in-depth financial literacy trainings to members. Moreover, VSLAs and/ or SACCOs could be linked up to share and exchange best-practices or to reach out to (micro) finance institutions to increase their offer to members.

As often there are technical, business or soft skill trainings established around these VSLAs, these institutions could be strengthened to eventually become future incubators or accelerators or they could be linked with existing incubation facilities to provide the relevant mix of technical and financial support needed to support aspiring entrepreneurs. Similarly, seed companies could extend their existing support service portfolio to integrate more entrepreneurship and business training offerings into their programme, particularly with regard to their suppliers.

Encouraging crop diversity for sustainable income

It is often instinctive to invest in only the most profitable crops. When starting an agribusiness with the intent of generating revenue, it seems obvious to focus only on the crop(s) that generate the greatest profits. This tunnel-vision can, however, be damaging to the long-term financial health of the business. Monoculture farming means that harvest (and therefore revenue-generation) is seasonally dependent. In other words, high volumes of sales can be experienced in certain seasons (e.g. during dry seasons, during seasons with special events), and almost no sales in off-seasons. This does not promote regular income.

A case in point is ITC's Sankofa project in Ghana where cocoa farmers are encouraged to cultivate other crops to generate income until the cocoa has matured for harvesting. Farmers in the project

cultivate other crops with harvesting cycles. In effect they have been able to diversify their income to support livelihood and entrepreneurial ventures. As an added advantage, this quest for alternative income has brought life to the natural environment through biodiversity. Women and youth-led enterprises are recommended to adopt such an approach to income diversification based on mixed cropping.

Focussing on specific training

Young entrepreneurs need support on many of the practical realities of agribusiness. Current trainings focus on theoretical knowledge such as customer marketing and increasing commercial traction, creating market linkages, customer care, management reporting and planning and budgeting financial resources. There is a need for both more technical training offers (tax requirements, procurement, farming techniques, packaging, etc.) as well as more soft skills training programmes (negotiation power, goal setting, team motivation, etc.). For aspiring entrepreneurs with less developed literacy skills, financial trainings could be standardised to include visual aids or even be provided in form of a comic or similarly visual media. Key would be to establish a framework to distinguish between different groups of entrepreneurs to inform the delivery of specific capacity building and training as previously described. Linked to this is to ensure that the impact of the trainings are regularly monitored to allow a tracking of business success.

Agripreneurs will see better market success when they have mastered various post-harvest handling measures that they might not be familiar with. For example, many young entrepreneurs are not initially aware of the importance of sorting and grading produce; proper picking, packing, and packaging techniques; use of cold storage facilities or the need for refrigerated trucks during transportation. These practices should be built into a business training curriculum, possibly through the use of case-studies to demonstrate the usefulness of such practices. Available post-harvest logistics could be used as demonstrations for those interested in this segment of the value chain in order to obtain first-hand experience. The curriculum should allow buyer presentations for entrepreneurs to have actual demands of the buyer.

Each of the stage entails a host of activities that must be fashioned out within the context of South Sudan. For instance, if aggregators and traders are responsible for the transferring of produce from production areas to wholesale markets, the curriculum must capture trading activities include buying and assembling, repacking, sorting, selling to middlemen, transporting, and selling to wholesale markets or retailers. A comprehensive understanding of agripreneurship based on the value chain in which entrepreneurship operates has the greatest potential for success. Young entrepreneurs will know where to access finance, where supply is strong, which goods or services are ready for the market and who the buyers are. This will certainly give meaning and a complete understanding of agripreneurship in South Sudan.

We also recommend special training on tax payment for women and youth-led enterprises to fully understand the tax system. This recommendation is based on our findings that women and youth entrepreneurs have little insight regarding the tax system and stated in the focus group discussion that a high taxation by the city council and Juba County local government was in place. In effect, they underpay or overpay to tax collectors who also apply rules arbitrarily.

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ANNEX I: INSTITUTIONS INTERVIEWED

Action for Recovery and Transformation (ART)

ART is a non-profit organization and started working in the development and humanitarian sector since 2012. ART currently has Memorandum of Understanding with the Central Equatoria State Ministry of Health to provide health and nutrition services in the rural areas of Juba, operating in eight counties of the State. ART's mission is to work with rural poor communities and vulnerable groups to improve their livelihoods and increase self-reliance through awareness creation, education support, health care delivery, food and nutrition support, provision of water, sanitation and hygiene services, capacity building as well as starter kits. ART collaborates with TVET institutions in Magwi and Torit. It supports business trainers to provide feedback on business development and legal advice, life skills development and provision of starter kits.

CARE

CARE focuses on health and nutrition, food security and livelihoods, women's economic empowerment and gender-based violence prevention and response. They also promote peacebuilding in order to reduce poverty, by supporting conflict-affected communities to gain better access to basic services, have a say in local development initiatives, and improve livelihoods through village savings and loan groups, vocational training and lives free from violence.

[CARE's humanitarian work in South Sudan - CARE](#)

Christian Agency for Peace and Development (CAPaD)

Christian Agency for Peace and Development (CAPaD) is a faith-based national, non-governmental organization founded in 2007. CAPaD is working for peace, advancing the voices for youth, women and children to take a lead in transformation and becoming change makers in bringing peace, hope, opportunities, healing and reconciliation within their own communities and regions. CAPaD rebuilds lives and restores hopes to the most affected and disadvantaged youth, women and children who have been devastated as a result of civil wars, poverty and ethnic violence conflicts. CAPaD focus on issues that youth, women, and children are struggling with, that includes lack of access to social justice, ignorant and negative social norms e.g., early and force child marriages, displacement, poverty, gender equality, trauma, sexual gender base violence, social and ethnic divides, illiteracy and poor-quality education, youth unemployment, insecurity & access. Moreover, CAPaD support Youth Group Formation and trainings, the mobilization of local farmer associations and coops by providing skills training, coaching and mentorship and the provision of starter kits.

<http://christianagency.org/>

Central Equatoria State Farmers Union

The Central Equatoria State Farmers Union aims at the mobilization of local farmers associations, cooperative societies and local community leaders to participate in farming. It provides training on modern faming system, mentoring and in-kind financial support in form of seeds and farming tools provision.

Community Needs Initiative (CNI)

CNI aims to build sustainable and resilient livelihoods by saving lives and empowering communities to live productively in harmony and with dignity. It supports the provision of income generating activities to the rural communities through micro finance programmes. CNI provides business and entrepreneurial skills training (business management, customer care, record keeping, savings etc.), mentorship and coaching as well as start-up incentives.

<https://www.communityneedsinitiative.org/>

Co-operative Bank of South Sudan

Cooperative Bank of South Sudan is a commercial bank in South Sudan. It provides business plan development, financial literacy, bookkeeping, saving and lending courses, risk management and leadership

trainings as well as coaching on by-laws for cooperatives. It works as an intermediary between farmers and buyers. It is supporting group cooperative, women, and youth SACCOs in promoting the groups

Consultation Center for Empowerment and Welfare Organization (CCEWO)

Consultation Center for Empowerment and Welfare Organization (CCEWO) is founded in 2016 in Yambio, Western Equatoria State as a Community Based Organization. CCEWO carries out adult literacy courses to women, youth, and children. CCEWO has established a recreation center and supports local football teams in Yambio including running activities that promote Education (Adult Education System (AES), institutional capacity enhancement, governance and livelihood to women, youth and children at grass root in the communities. The organization also, trains grass root women in small business initiatives and provides start-up capital.

Cordaid

Cordaid has been working in what is now South Sudan since 2000, initially through partnerships with local organizations and the Catholic Church in Upper Nile, Juba and Western Equatoria states. In 2012, they commenced direct implementation of humanitarian and livelihoods security projects in the country. Our current South Sudan portfolio covers health care (including nutrition), resilience, security & justice, lobby & advocacy and humanitarian aid.

[Cordaid in South Sudan - Cordaid International](#)

Empower Youth Africa - EYA South Sudan

Empower Youth Africa - EYA is a youth-led organization formed in 2017 with the mission to enhance harmonious resilient communities such as marginalized and schools dropout youth, women, people with disabilities and the local communities to empower them through thematic programs in agriculture, food security and livelihoods, economic empowerment, peaceful co-existence, education, and the promotion of talent and cultural heritage activities. EYA is geographically present in the three regions of South Sudan, in Central Equatorial (Juba), Unity state (Bentiu), and Northern Bahr el Ghazal. It distributes farm inputs, tools and seeds to youth and provides agriculture trainings in modern farming methods/ agronomic practices. It is establishing Village Saving and Loan Associations for youth.

[Empower Youth Africa - EYA | Facebook](#)

FARM STEW South Sudan (FS-SS)

FARM STEW South Sudan is a non-profit organization that was founded in 2018. It is a Christian organization promoting health and wellbeing of rural and small families. FS aims to respond to the ever-increasing social, economic, health and illiteracy challenges facing many people in South Sudan by providing crop production training, vegetable farming, soya production promotion, sanitation, and nutrition. FS provides entrepreneurs training to formed VLSA groups, business skills training including record keeping, customer handling and mentoring & coaching as well as in-kind support and cash-grants. It also organises market fairs events.

<https://www.farmstew.org/branch/southsudan>

Green Planet South Sudan

Green Planet South Sudan is a national non-governmental organization founded in 2018. Green Planet South Sudan major activities are focusing on climate Change advocacy, environmental health, agriculture and livelihoods, wildlife conservation and advocacy. To date, Green Planet South Sudan is operational in Juba and Yei Counties of Central Equatoria State. It provides agri-based trainings as well as trainings on financial literacy and business management.

<https://greenplanetsouthsudan.org/>

Initiative for Peace Communication Association (IPCA)

IPCA aims to foster interaction and collaboration among authorities and civil society on issues of peace and human rights in South Sudan. Since its establishment in 2010, IPCA nurtured and harnessed a community-based contextual peace building and conflict mitigation programming in Central Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria, Western Equatoria and Western Bahr El Ghazal States. It promotes community participation and

ownership of various peace building and conflict mitigation interventions. IPCA also focuses on agricultural extension support services, training of groups on how to build cooperative, business trainings with focus on customer care, marketing, loan management, savings as well as the provision of in-kind support.
<https://www.ipcasouthsudan.org/>

Nile Agro-Tech and Seed Company Limited

Nile Agro-Tech and Seed Company Limited was established in 2017. It provides specialized services in partnership with different stakeholders and humanitarian actors which include breeding and seed multiplication, agro-based consultancy, marketing and market linkages, production, apriary, supplies of agro inputs and produce, value addition, monitoring and evaluation and contractual seed production. It provides training on harvest and post-harvest support and vegetable seeds, market linkages, vegetable production and provides capital to procure seeds from farmers and serves as middle man.

<https://nileagrotech.com/>

Organic Farming Agricultural Organization (OFAO)

Organic Farming Agricultural Organization is a national NGO established in 2016. OFAO service sectors cover food security and livelihood, environmental conservation, youth economic empowerment program, nutrition and research programs. OFAO beneficiaries are farming communities, consumers, traders who purchase produce from farmers. OFAO trains them on Village Saving and Loan Associations, crop and livestock production and the provision of agricultural advisory services. It provides business skills training, mentoring and coaching, advisory services and market linkages.

Pro Seed

PRO Seed Ltd is a local seed company involved in seed production and trading within South Sudan. Pro Seed provides technical skill training for seed producers on seed production and handling practices as well as basic business skills trainings about record keeping, budgeting, planning and saving to their farmers.

<http://www.proseed-ss.com/>

RUFI and Premium Agro Consult Limited

RUFI and Premium Agro Consult are founded in 2017 and work for various private sector development programmes. RUFI and Premium Agro Consult is an ILO certified business advisor and provides trainings for business groups on comprehension of loan borrowing, financial literacy and financial management.

<http://premiumagroconsult.com/>

Rural-Urban Savings and Credit Cooperative Society (SACCO)

Rural-Urban SACCO is a legally registered Savings and Credit Cooperative Society established in 2013 to provide financial services to its members. Rural-Urban SACCO was established to address the problems faced by poor people in rural and urban areas in accessing manageable credit facilities as well as to encourage savings habit among the people in rural and urban areas. It provides saving services to members, asset/ development loans, commercial loans and agricultural loans.

Seed Trade Association of South Sudan

Seed Trade Association of South Sudan was formed in 2015 and offers quality assured seeds for increased farmers' productivity. STASS is an umbrella body formed with support from AGRA in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS). The main purpose of the association is to coordinate and oversee activities of seed production and trading in the country by its member seed companies to ensure that quality seed is produced and made available for every farmer to access.

Setlink Finance Services

Setlink finance Services LTD is was founded in 2011 and works to empowering young entrepreneurs including farmers by supporting them with soft loans to acquire business and farm inputs. It deals with cooperatives, individual farmers, youth and women groups.

South Sudan Grassroots Initiative for Development

South Sudan Grassroots Initiative for Development (SSGID) is a National non-profit, Humanitarian and Development community organization established in the year 2013. It responds to the ever increasing social, economic, and health challenges affecting the predominantly rural / pastoral population of the South Sunda. aims to improve agriculture, food security and livelihoods for women, youth and vulnerable groups by focusing on farming techniques and providing in-kind support.

<http://www.ssgid.org/>

South Sudan Women Entrepreneurs Association

The South Sudan Women Entrepreneurs Association (SSWEA) is a nongovernmental organization, established in 2010 to transform South Sudanese women entrepreneurs to become socio-economically independent through its support to various empowerment activities both economically, socially and capacity development. The organization aims to creating opportunities for women in small and medium size enterprises to grow their business and create jobs, gives a platform to businesswomen entrepreneurs accessing an enabling environment that promotes access to finance, access to market, access to trade and building resilience among. It provides basic management training on record keeping, customer care and business registration. It provides mentoring for women groups and small loans to start business.

Spark

Spark opens pathways for young people, particularly women and refugees, to study, work and grow their own businesses in fragile communities. Their success brings stability where it's needed most. It supports youth and women in establishing new agribusinesses or expanding existing ones so that they may become more resilient, and improve sustainable productivity.

[SPARK - Creating better jobs for young people in fragile states](#)

Start Trust Organisation

Star Trust Organization (STO) is a South Sudanese founded organization based in Yambio. STO started in 2010 as a community-based initiative intended to promote self-reliance by harnessing and utilizing local resources for rural development. STO focuses on empowering communities to boost food production, build livelihoods, improve incomes, and increase access to safe and clean water. It provides business skills trainings focused on financial literacy, savings, record keeping as well as market aggregation and linkages.

<https://sto-ss.org/>

UNDP

UNDP works with local communities in South Sudan to improve social cohesion and foster reconciliation. This is done through creating and sustaining structures to prevent and resolve local conflicts. They work with national partners to address the drivers of conflict and build resilient communities by strengthening institutions that resolve disputes quickly and fairly, empowering people to claim their rights peacefully, increasing safety and security at community level, establishing transitional justice mechanisms and building a national system to stem further human rights violations.

[UNDP in South Sudan](#)

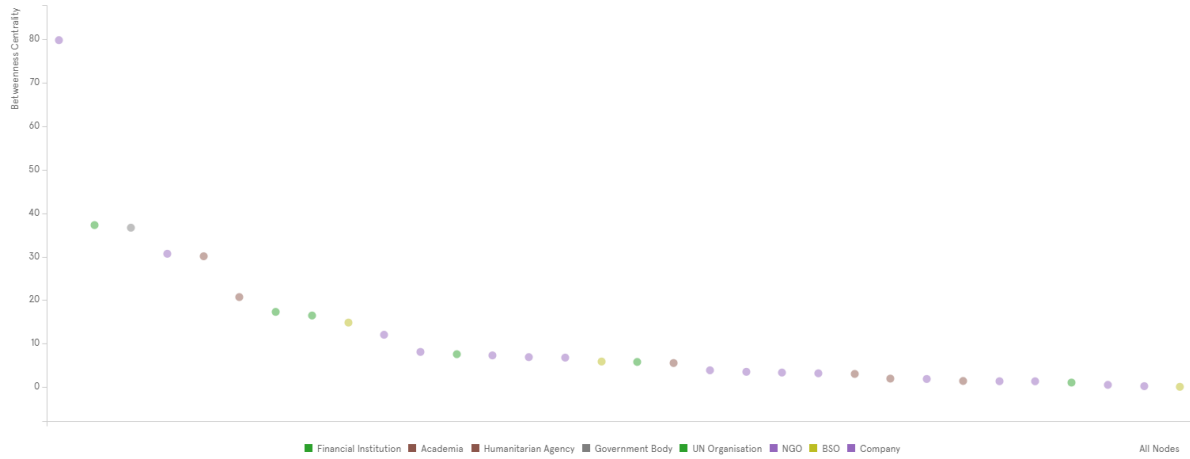
University of Juba - National Transformational Leadership Institute

The National Transformational Leadership Institute (NTLI) is a semi-autonomous institution at the University of Juba that was officially launched in 2016. NTLI vision is to serve as a center of excellence and knowledge hub for training, mentoring and experiential learning programmes for South Sudan leaders at the national and sub-national level of government in order to facilitate accelerated, equitable and sustainable progress in development. It focuses on economic empowerment and leadership. With regard to business management training the concentration is on record/ bookkeeping, saving& credit education, marketing and market linkages.

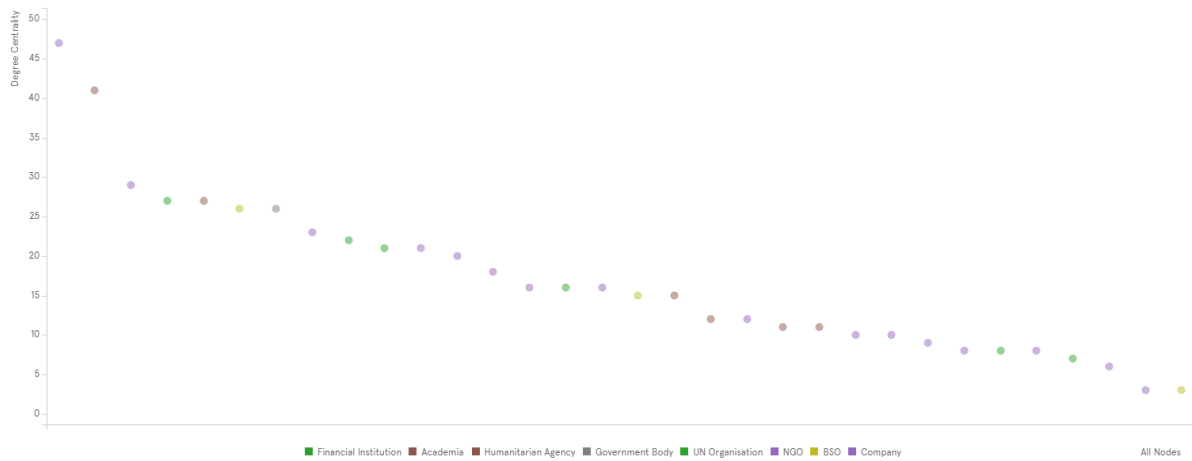
<https://ntliuj.com/>

ANNEX II: ADDITIONAL NETWORK DATA

Distribution of nodes by Betweenness Centrality:



Distribution of nodes by Degree Centrality:



ANNEX III: TECHNICAL ANNEX

ITC Network Analysis Methodology

Questions to Institutions

General Questions

1. How would you categorize your institution? (Youth Association, Community Support Group, Humanitarian Organisation, TVET, Entrepreneurship Organisation, National NGO, International NGO, Company, Industry Association, Ministry/Government Body, Trade Promotion Organization, Chamber of Commerce). If other, please specify.
2. Do you have an office? If yes, where are your office locations?
3. For how long has your organisation existed?
4. What is the role of your organisation in South Sudan?
5. What sectors do you cover? What (agricultural) sub-sectors?
6. If applicable: Do you have notable achievements in supporting entrepreneurship and business development? What are the achievements in agricultural skills training and agripreneurship that you can mention?

Target beneficiaries and support provided

7. Who are your main target beneficiaries for the services you offer (please elaborate on number, type of beneficiaries (youth, women, etc.), average age, if they have a formalized business)?
8. What kind of needs and expectations do target beneficiaries have? What services do they expect?
9. What services do you offer (e.g. entrepreneurship awareness raising, vocational skills training, technical skills training, business skills training, mentoring, coaching, financial support, advisory)? If other, please specify.
10. If applicable: How many businesses are you working with and where? How many graduates (if incubator programme)?
11. If applicable: What support do you offer to start-ups and/or already existing businesses?
12. If you provide training, how did you design the training content? How much do you focus on technical skills vs. soft skills?
13. Do you have specific projects/initiatives to support entrepreneurship or agripreneurship? What is your specific approach (financing/training/coaching/mentoring/investments/incentives/)?
14. Do you have specific projects/initiatives/events to support youth? What is your specific approach (financing/training/coaching/mentoring/investments/incentives/)?
15. Do you evaluate the satisfaction of beneficiaries after the services you provide? If applicable: do you monitor or track the progress of the entrepreneurs that have received support from you? Any key findings?
16. Is there any other institution providing services similar to yours? If yes, please list them.
17. Do you have links with Academia/TVET? If so, with who and what is the nature of the partnership?
18. Who provides you with funding? Do clients need to pay a fee for their services? Do you have a strategy? If yes, who do you have to ask for permission to change your strategy?

Ecosystem roles and linkages

19. What kind of connections do you have with other organisations (refer to the full excel list)? Please check the relevant organisations and add what kind of linkages you have with them
20. Considering this list (refer to the full excel list list), is there any other organisation that you give funding, information or coordinate for service delivery that is not on this list? Are you aware of any other entities that support agripreneurship in South Sudan?

21. If applicable: In how far does your institution support linking women and youth suppliers to buyers?
22. If applicable: For agricultural entrepreneurship, which area do you see your organisation best operating for women and youth? Which area do you see your organisation improving to provide optimal support for women and youth in agricultural entrepreneurship?
23. From your perspective, who are the key actors providing support to (young) agripreneurs?
24. Considering the network as a whole, do you sense any overall trends in the way it operates? (e.g. more or less silos with groups of institutions becoming more or less apparent, more or less concentration of power in a single institution etc.)
25. What trends have you noticed from the entrepreneurs / graduates of the as they navigate the different entrepreneurial stages in terms of challenges, gaps etc what major factors influence the growth of entrepreneurs?
26. From your point of view, what can be done to mitigate the challenges / further bridge the gap?
27. What opportunities do you see in the agripreneurship space that are not being taken advantage of? Do you think there are important players or services missing in the agripreneurial ecosystem? What support services would you like to also provide for agripreneurs?
28. What has worked in the ecosystem? What are the main positive characteristics of the ecosystem?
29. What could be improved in the ecosystem?
30. In your experience, which are the main barriers to effective interaction between actors in the local agripreneurship ecosystem?
31. What funding models do you think could be most effective in supporting agri entrepreneurs? Is investment in agripreneurship given institutional support and/or encouraged?

Questions to Entrepreneurs

Out of the following institutions (support organizations in the sample):

- a) Which ones have you heard of?
- b) Which ones have you already contacted (e.g. weekly / several times per year / annually)?
- c) What is the nature of the connection (e.g. info sharing/ receiving services, receiving funds)?
- d) What (support) do you receive from them? What do you give in return?
- e) Which ones have the most impact on the success of your business? Why? Please name them
- f) Which ones would you consider the most trustworthy and efficient? Why? Please name them

Of even more value is an informal discussion about the ways in which the network supports and constrains business. To get the conversation started you could pose a business challenge, and ask the network user:

- a) You have a new business idea and want to test its viability. You need help to understand the steps to get it started and test the viability of your business idea. You will need to find funding to make your idea into reality. Who would you approach for help (local, national or international support) and why? What kind of support do you expect?
- b) You want to expand your existing business. You need help to understand how (input management, production, market linkages) and where (markets, customers) you can expand. You will need to find funding for this expansion. Who would you approach for help (local, national or international support) and why? What kind of support do you expect?



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