

AEMASE III Conference

*A way towards International Centers for Science
Teachers*

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**Agricultural Education in Senegal
Issues, challenges and prospective
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CONTEXT SETTING

- **Agriculture is going through a testing transformative process influenced by both climatic and socioeconomic factors.**
 - erratic weather patterns, demographic pressure, high illiteracy and unemployment prevalence, acute natural resources degradation, and unpredictable local and global markets.
- **Biggest challenge is youth unemployment and its subsequent urban and abroad migration.**
 - About 75% of the total population is under 35 years, and largely unemployed.
 - Most unemployed lack adequate skills and are poorly educated.
 - Sector faces an increasing shortage of skilled labor, mainly due to its poor public image and poor perception of jobs opportunities it can offer.
- **There is a clear disconnect between demand and supply of skilled labor force**

Education and Employment

- On the demand side, there is no established mechanism to assess and monitor the needs for skill development, training and education.
- On the supply side, there is a shortage of capacity and attractive curricula.
 - Only a very limited number of public and non-public institutions dispense specific agricultural education ranging from secondary vocational to high learning institutions.
 - There are no formal linkages between the mainstream school system and agriculture.
 - Unfortunately, schemes to initiate youth to agriculture which used to be part of every primary school curriculum, are today absent, thus shutting away the hands-on aspects of classes that kept students' early interest early in life science and in agriculture

Policy and Institutional issues

- The lack of connection between the government policies, agricultural industry and secondary education is one of the main issues steering youth and teachers away from farming careers.
- There is no effective awareness raising mechanisms to inform students on the many emerging job and training opportunities
- The Government has promoted many programs to boost agricultural education and address the skill shortage issue, but their implementation, evaluation and monitoring have been so far very poor.

Way Forward

- If the agricultural education profession is going to grow and prosper, governments and its partners must address the following three concomitant requirements:
 - (i) improving image of agriculture and its education
 - (ii) ensuring an adequate supply of qualified teachers and
 - (iii) sparking interest and enrollment of new student.
- Among actions needed to attract and retain qualified teachers are:
 - improved work environment, more attractive career development paths,
 - improved faculty-student relationships, balancing school and home, and financial rewards.
 - effective national and international institutional networking mechanisms,

WAY FORWARD

- As for student enrollment, efforts should be made to agricultural education more attractive and better linked to modern economy.
- The use of new ITC, the promotion of more informed linkages between the education system and industry, and increased collaboration and networking among and between agricultural research and academic institutions at regional and international scales are all paths forward.