



Bern University  
of Applied Sciences



# Agricultural livelihoods of rural youth in the drylands of Midelt, Morocco:

An assessment of realities, viewpoints, challenges, opportunities and aspirations

SFIAR Award Ceremony | December 11, 2017 | Bastian Mengel

► School of Agricultural, Forest and Food Sciences HAFL

# *Agenda*

- 1. About the research**
- 2. Findings**
- 3. Implications**

# *1. About the research*


# Background

- ▶ Research study commissioned by the CGIAR Research Program (CRP) on Dryland Systems
- ▶ Organized through Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD)
- ▶ Coordinated by BFH-HAFL
- ▶ Conducted between September 2015 and June 2016
- ▶ Carried out in the Midelt Province, Morocco

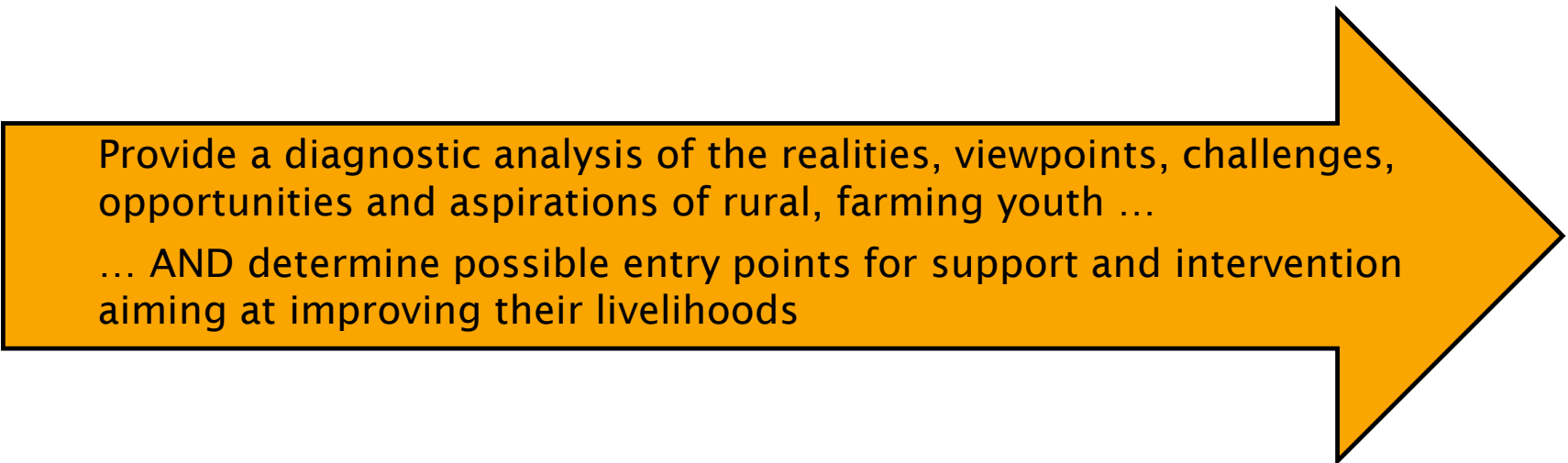


# Rationale – why?

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- ▶ Insufficient knowledge/research around youth and agriculture
  - ▶ General assumption that farming is unattractive ...
    - ▶ Neglecting of agriculture, ageing farming system
    - ▶ Increasing youth populations
    - ▶ Rural outmigration of youth
    - ▶ High youth unemployment
    - ▶ Particularly dry areas affected
  - ▶ ... BUT the sector's future depends on young people's engagement
  - ▶ Youth are too heterogeneous to be seen as one 'social category'

- 
- ▶ Youth must be seen as opportunities
  - ▶ Agriculture and related sectors as an opportunity:
    - ▶ Employment
    - ▶ Reducing rural outmigration
    - ▶ Inclusive economic growth
  - ▶ What are the aspirations of youth? Is agriculture part of it? How?
  - ▶ Context-specific knowledge about different youth needed to account for different situations
  - ▶ Close 'gaps' between realities and aspirations to engage youth in the agricultural sector

## Goal – what?

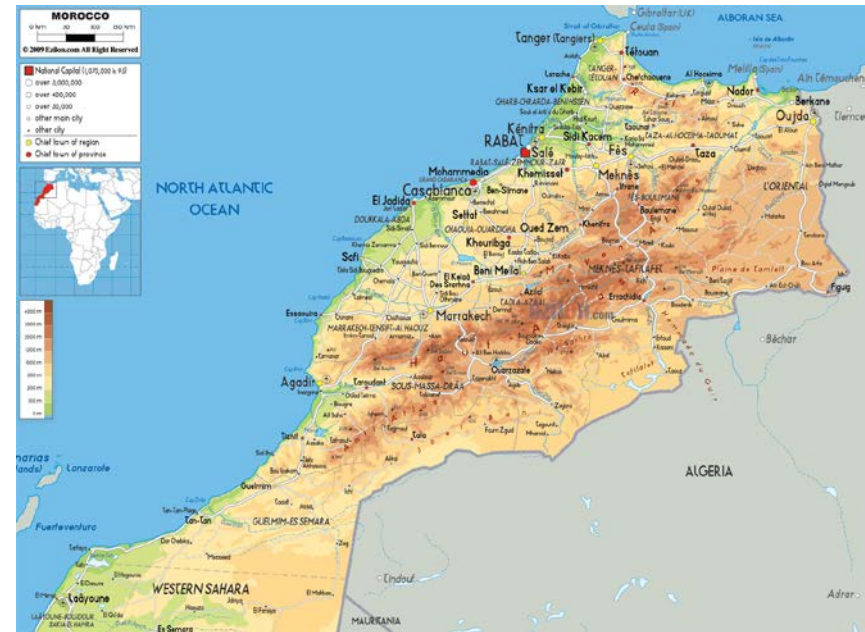


Provide a diagnostic analysis of the realities, viewpoints, challenges, opportunities and aspirations of rural, farming youth ...  
... AND determine possible entry points for support and intervention aiming at improving their livelihoods

- ▶ Covering all three agricultural livelihood systems (ALSs) of dry areas:
  - ▶ Pastoral
  - ▶ Irrigated
  - ▶ Rainfed

# The research site

- ▶ Midelt Province, Morocco:
  - ▶ Population: 50,000/250,000 (town/province)
  - ▶ Rural area between Middle and High Atlas Mountains → rain-sheltered position
  - ▶ Agriculture is main employer
  - ▶ Fragmented smallholder farming systems
- ▶ “All” three ALSs very important



Source: Ezilon.com Regional Maps 2015

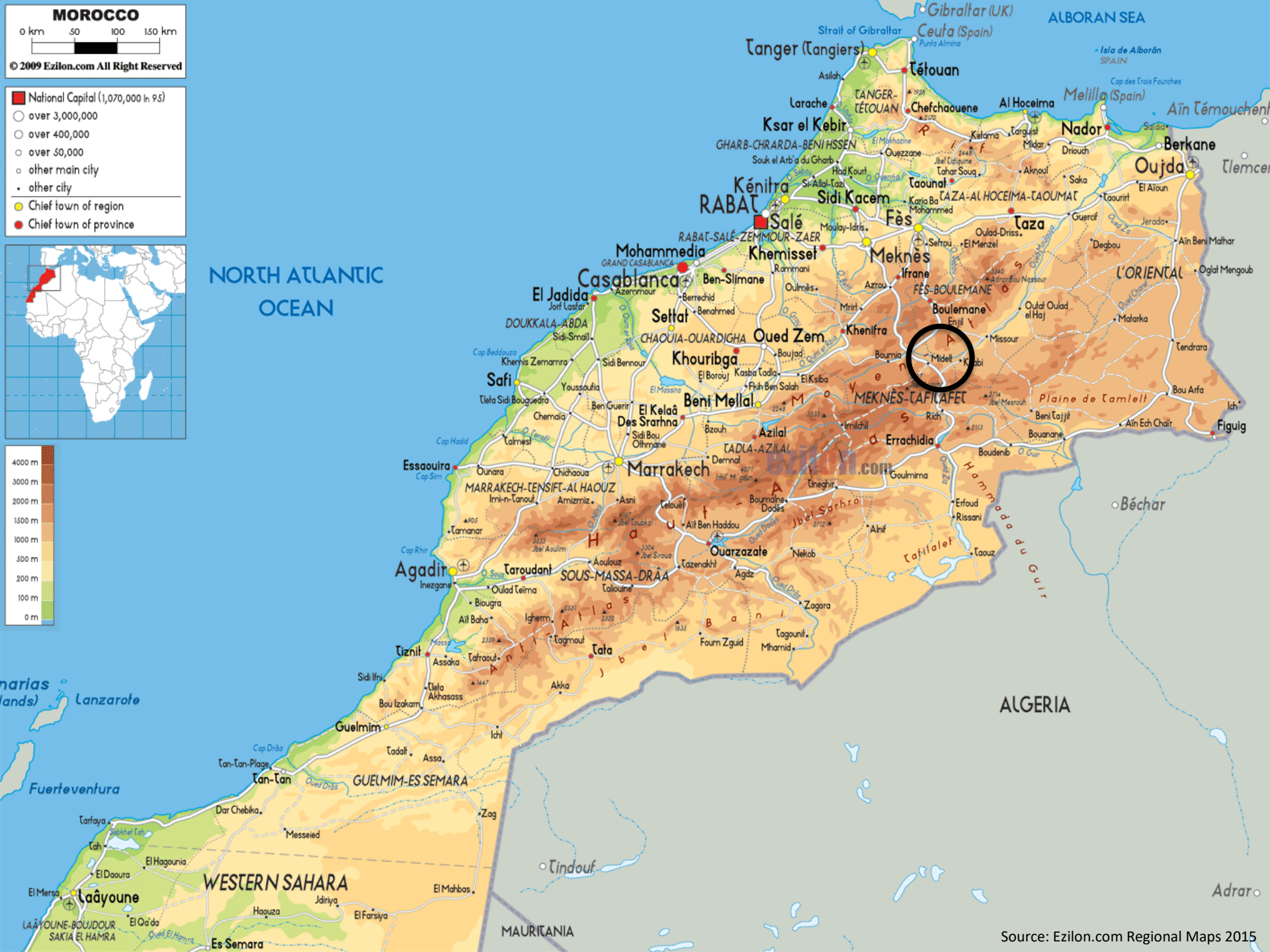
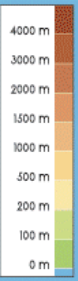


# MOROCCO



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- National Capital (1,070,000 In 95)
- over 3,000,000
- over 400,000
- over 50,000
- other main city
- other city
- Chief town of region
- Chief town of province



NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN

ALGERIA

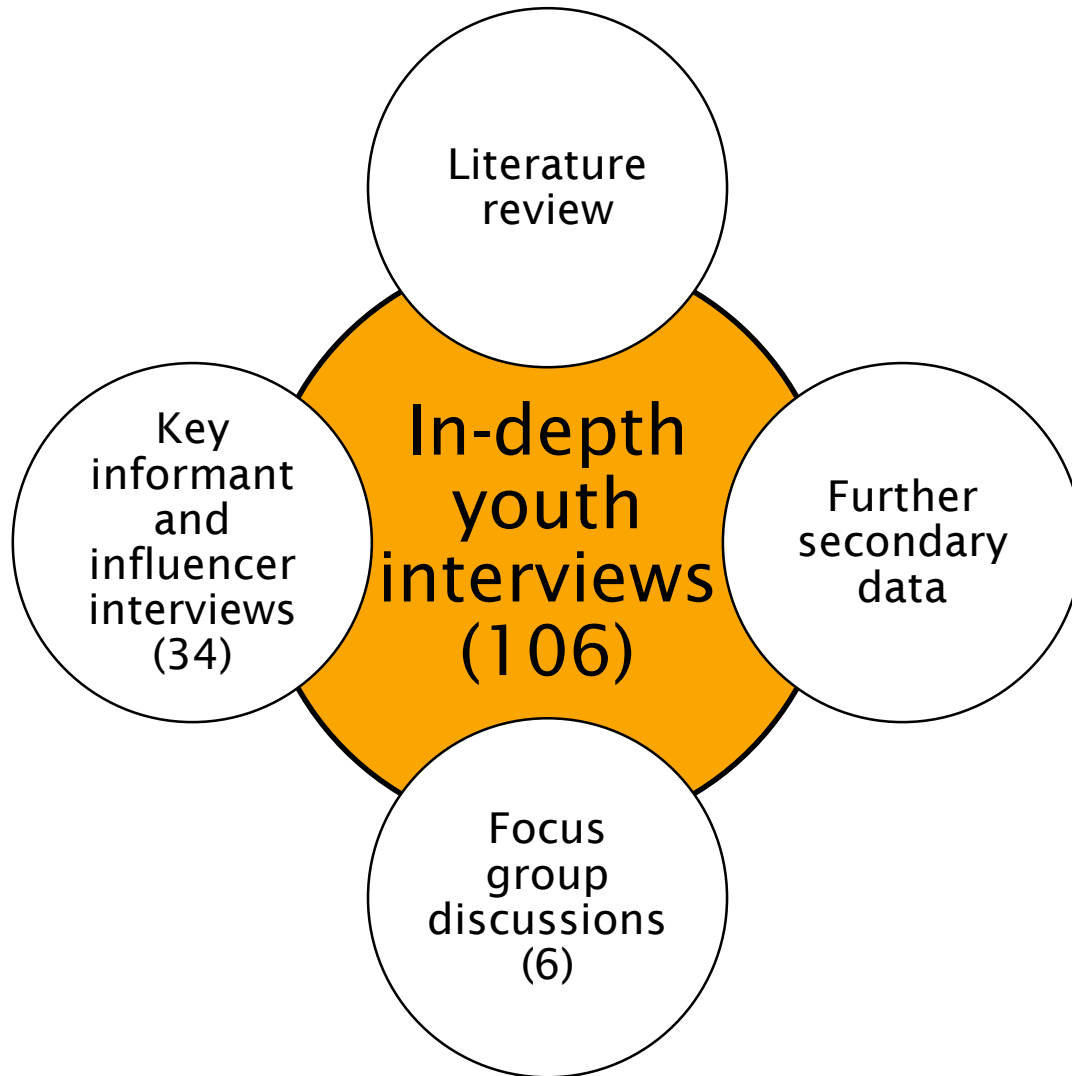
MAURITANIA

WESTERN SAHARA





# Methodological tools of the research



- ▶ **Multi-perspective**
- ▶ **Purposive sampling:**
  - ▶ Youth:
    - ▶ Agricultural background
    - ▶ 15-30 years old
    - ▶ 30 youth interviews per ALS
  - ▶ Identification of the “right” key informants and influencers

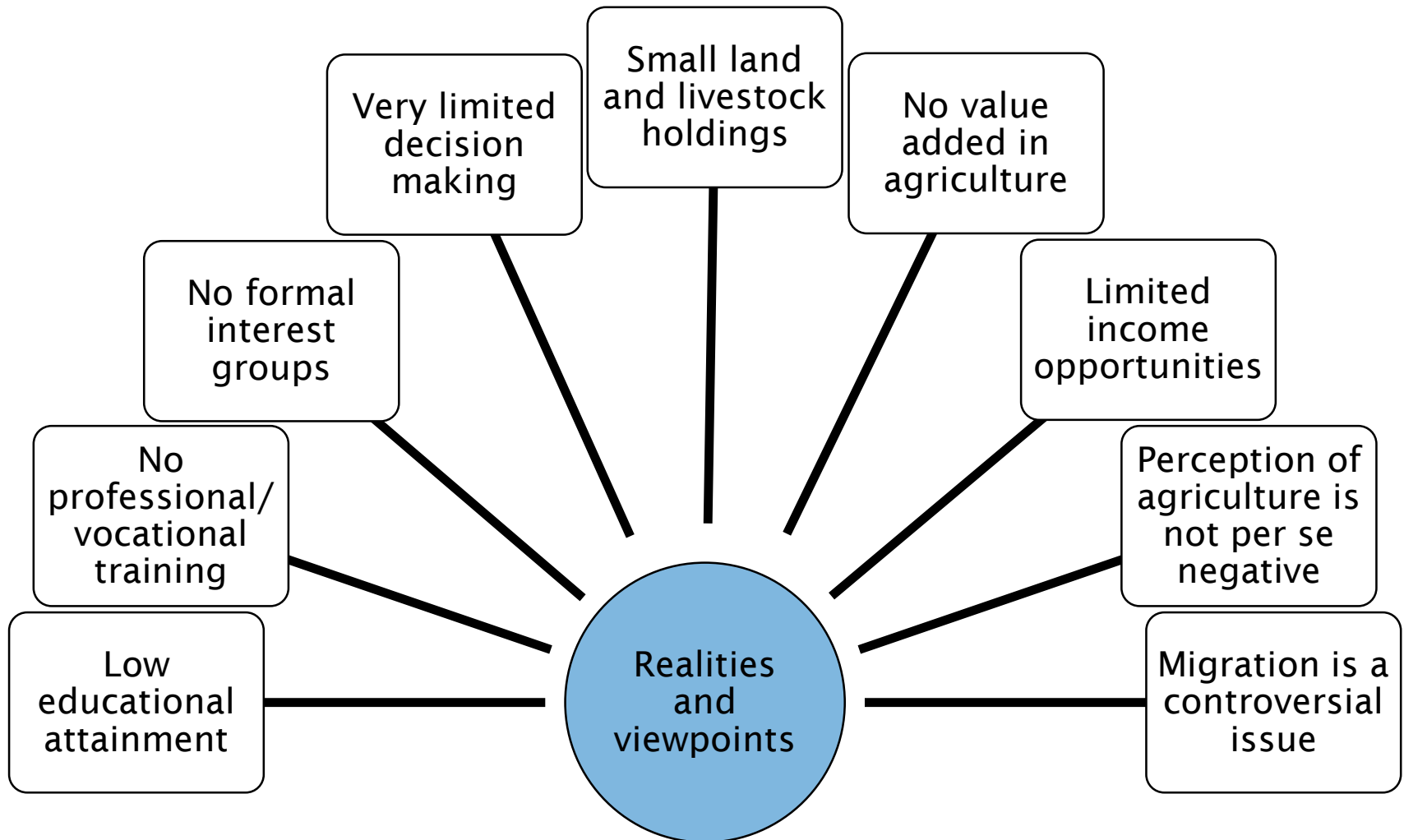




## *2. Findings*

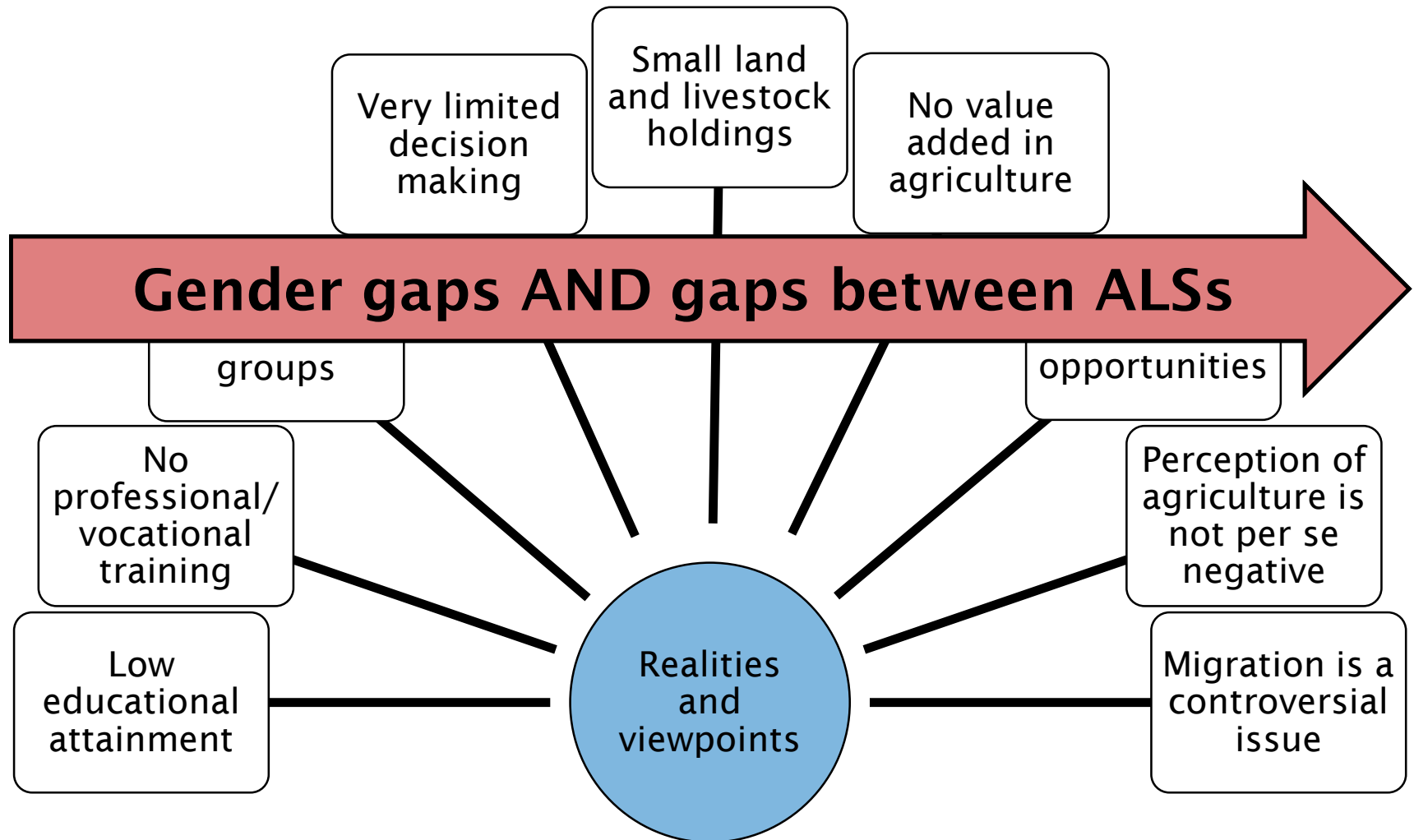
# Findings:

*“What are the realities and viewpoints of youth in the three agricultural livelihood systems?”*



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# Findings:

*“What are the challenges faced by youth from the three agricultural livelihood systems and which solutions/opportunities do they perceive?”*



## Challenges

- ▶ The unfulfilled basic needs:
  - ▶ Low educational attainment, no professional/vocational training
  - ▶ Absence of rural infrastructure – above all roads – has multidimensional impacts
- ▶ State of and limited access to productive resources, i.e. land, water, finance
- ▶ No formal interest groups means that support remains inaccessible
- ▶ Social inequalities and limited decision making confine the youth

## Solutions/opportunities



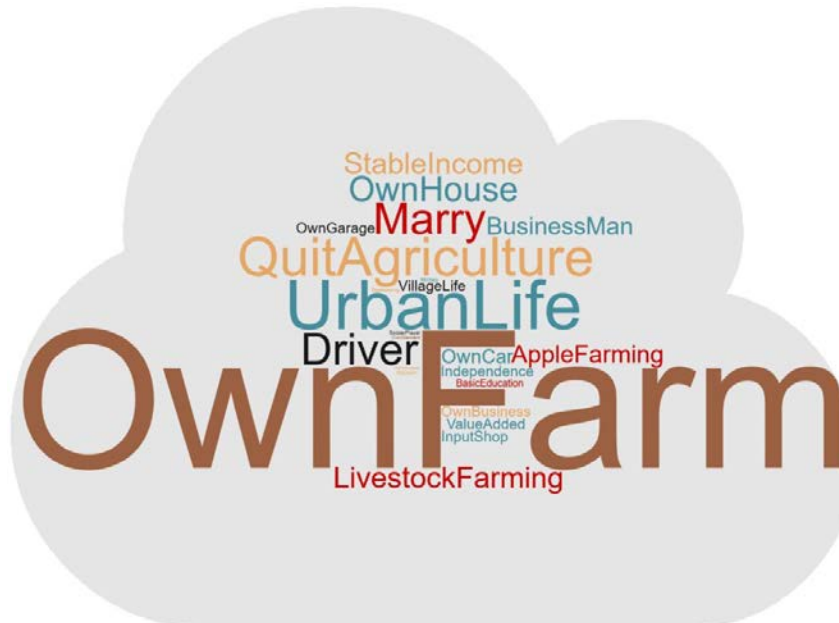
- ▶ Directly linked to challenges
- ▶ Fundamental requirements for any other opportunity:
  - ▶ Fulfillment of basic needs
  - ▶ Securing/improving productive resources
- ▶ Youth’s identified opportunities:
  - ▶ Development of post-harvest infrastructure and value added activities based on local agricultural production
  - ▶ Rather vague ideas



# Findings:

*“What aspirations do youth from the three agricultural livelihood systems have and do their aspirations correspond to the perceived/existing opportunities?”*

## Male youth



## Female youth

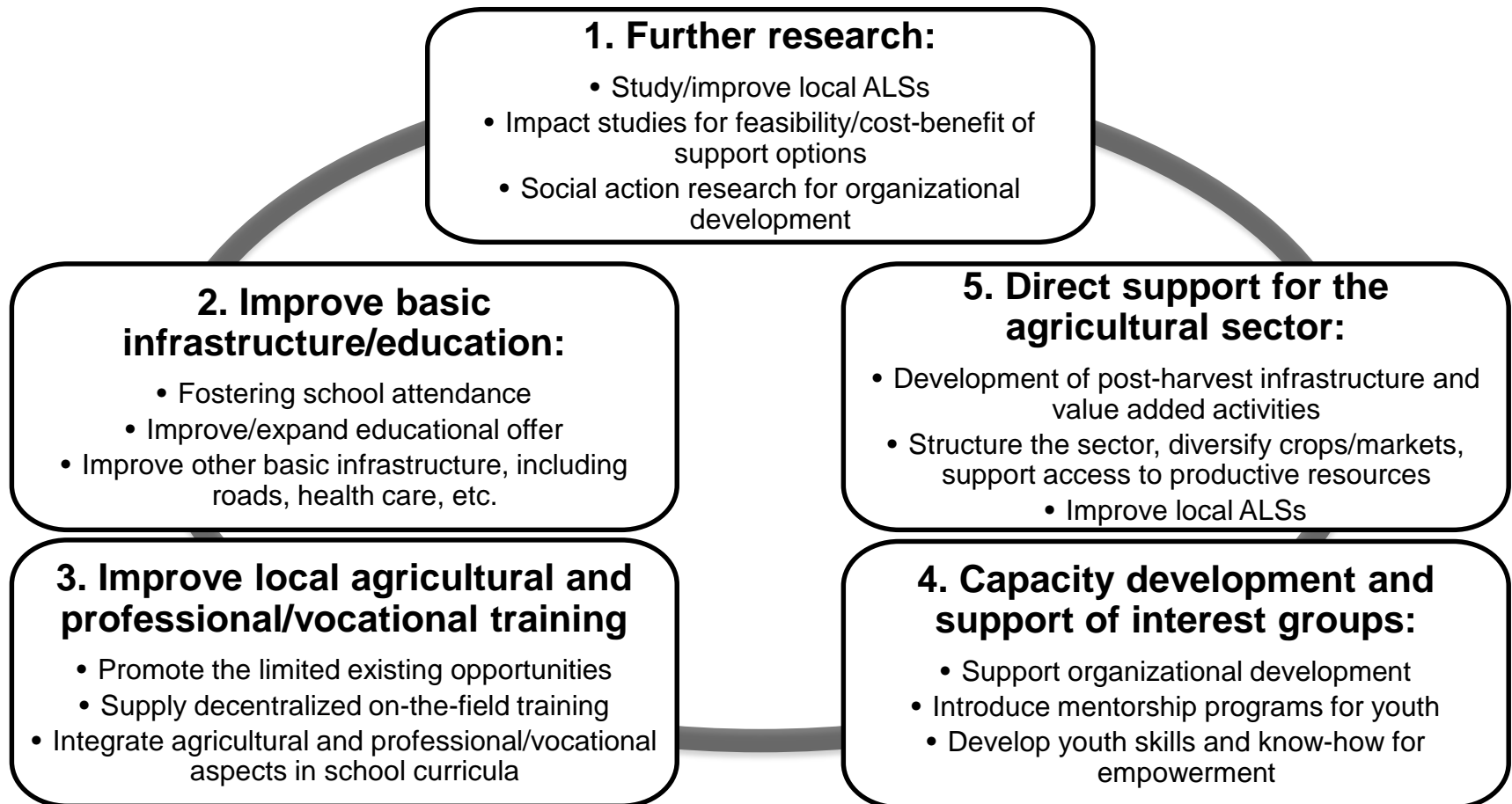


- ▶ Youth may want to combine rurality with modernity – i.e. envision viable farming futures – but are unable to overcome current challenges
- ▶ Opportunities – structural organization of the local agricultural sector, post-harvest infrastructure and value added activities, crop and market diversification – may be matched with youth’s aspirations, but require support

## *3. Implications*

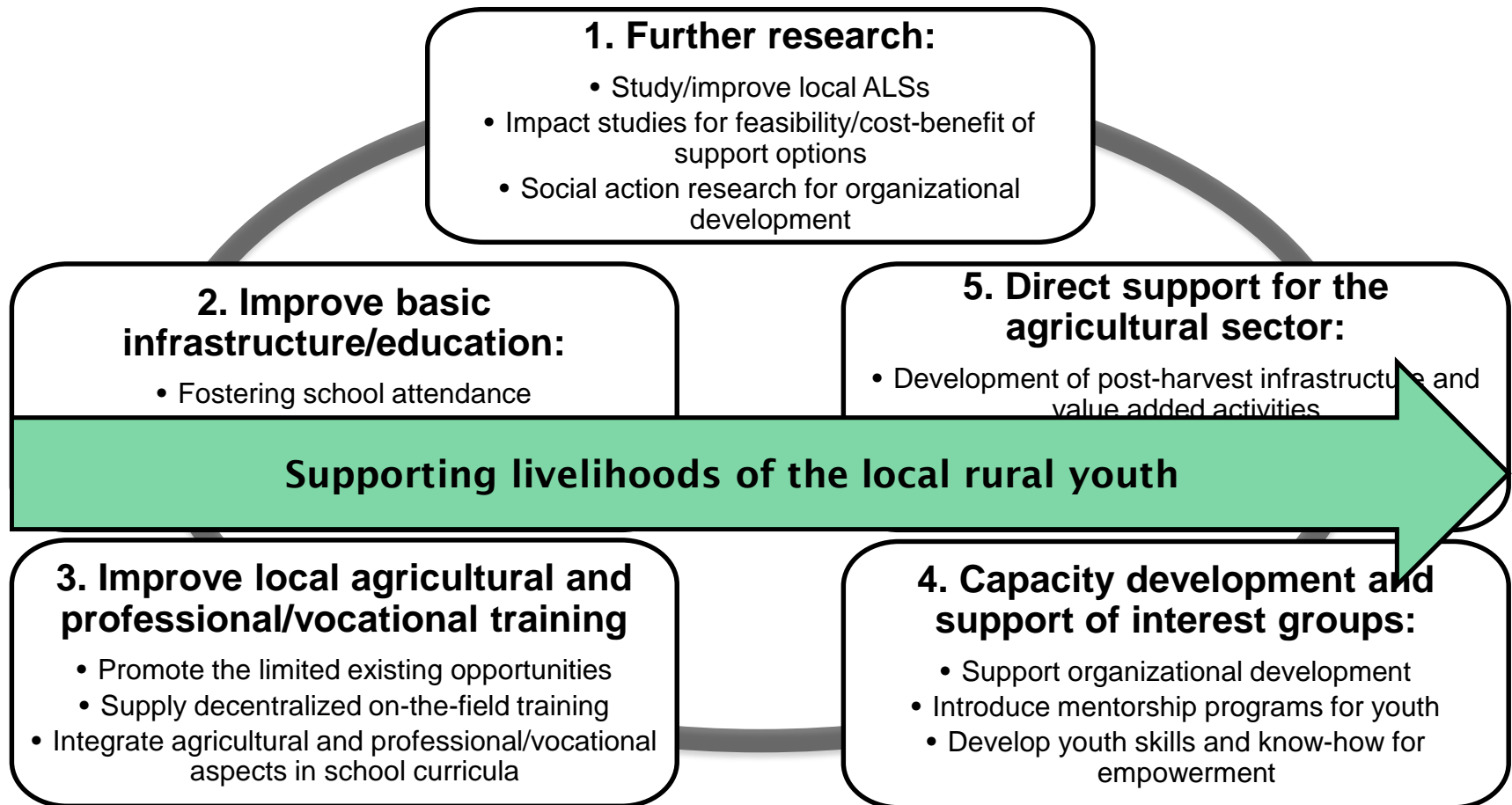
# Implications

*Context-specific conclusions and recommendations*



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# Implications

## General conclusions and recommendations

- 1. Findings highlight the diversity of youth – research, policy and decision makers and support programs must take account of that diversity:**
  - ▶ Different youth must be recognized
- 2. Research was a first and context-specific assessment only:**
  - ▶ Further research recommended
  - ▶ Impact, success and sustainability of possible actions remain unclear
- 3. Similar approaches to be replicated and scaled up and out:**
  - ▶ Inform decision and policy makers about requirements in other contexts
  - ▶ Young people must have a say how they envision their futures
  - ▶ Enable cross-comparisons
  - ▶ Further scientific experiences – achieve best practice to draw from
- 4. Categorically pair diagnostic assessments with concrete actions**

# *Acknowledgements*

- ▶ To the whole research team in Europe and Morocco:
  - ▶ Dr. Alessandra Giuliani, Courtney Paisley, Mariana Wongtschowski, Oliver Oliveros, Ingrid Flink
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- ▶ Photos: Alessandra Giuliani, Nicole Perkins, Bastian Mengel

[Youth and Agriculture in Rural Drylands – YPARD video](#)

[Short Film: Morocco: Youth of the Drylands – CGIAR video](#)





Thank you for your attention

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Time for questions

