

## **Entrepreneurship in Agricultural Communities of Africa**

### **Guest editor:**

George Acheampong  
University of Ghana Business School  
RT 3, UGBS Main Campus, Volta Road,  
University of Ghana, Legon-Accra, Ghana  
E-mail: geoacheampong@ug.edu.gh

### **Background to the special issue**

The majority of Africans live in the bottom of economic pyramid (Acheampong and Esposito, 2014). This has contributed to the prevalence of hunger and malnourishment in much of Africa that has persisted from 2010 and worsened in recent times (Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 2018). The prevalence of undernourishment in Africa is approximately 22.8% which is about 12% worse off from the global average of 10.8%. In terms of food insecurity, about 53.1% of Africans face food insecurity and 22% worse off from the global average of 25.4% (United Nations, 2019). The worsening situation has been driven by adverse climatic conditions, locust invasions, conflicts, high population growth rates in Africa and difficulties in the global economy. Food production would need to increase considerably to meet rising demand. This has had severe repercussions because much of Africa's farmers operate in smallholder agricultural communities.

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) notes that agriculture has a significant role to play in Africa (IFAD, 2014). They note that agriculture contributes to 30% of GDP of African economies and 60% of Africans work in agriculture. Again, less than 10% of the African land surface has been cultivated and smallholder agriculture communities use less fertilizers compared to farmers operating in other continents. In lieu of this, the FAO (2020) has noted that there are several opportunities for entrepreneurial-led growth in the agricultural sector in Africa especially in smallholder communities in rural environments. These opportunities are expected to be driven by growing African food markets, availability of digital platforms and shifting demographics. The Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa also note that agriculture is a proven path to prosperity and remains Africa's surest bet for growing inclusive economies and creating decent jobs mainly for the youth (AGRA, 2017). However, this transformation has to be market-driven with a business agenda and not just a focus on production. This will entail transforming smallholder farming communities into small commercial farming entities.

However, academics urge caution with this meta-narrative from policy-making institutions. Diao et al. (2010) indicate that Africa will face several new challenges that were not faced by Asian countries, despite the fact that these African countries cannot bypass a broad-based agricultural revolution to successfully launch their economic transformations. This requires addressing these challenges that are community and country specific. Another major concern is that there is no reassurance that smallholder farming communities will respond appropriately to commercialization initiatives. "The local context and farmer characteristics and attitudes need to be much better understood in order address the strengths and weaknesses of the sector participants and the opportunities and threats of the external environment" (Poole et al., 2013). These cautions make it critical for knowledge creation within of commercialization of agriculture in smallholder communities.

Achieving the commercialization objectives in smallholder communities, require the application of entrepreneurial strategies appropriate to these contexts (Zelekha and Dana, 2019). This is because study of a community of an agricultural community of farmers report a high failure rate among these enterprises (Acheampong et al., 2017) and weak ability to meet local demands (Dana, 2007).

Entrepreneurship has been defined as taking the risks of venturing and assumption of the benefits (Hisrich et al., 2009). It is widely accepted that entrepreneurship has the capability of helping achieve the meta-narratives on agricultural transformation in Africa (Dana et al., 2018). However, specific entrepreneurial strategies are required. These can be either of causal, effectual or bricolage form (Fisher, 2012). Under the causative strategy, entrepreneurs determine an outcome that is to be achieved and mobilize resources towards that end (Saravathy, 2001). This strategy can be utilized to explain how agents in agricultural communities determine their goals and act towards those in various contexts in Africa. The effectual strategy suggests a dynamic and iterative process to new venture creation (Saravathy and Dew, 2005). This strategy suggests that entrepreneurs act within their means, take affordable risks, create partnerships and leverage contingencies. This strategy can be useful in understanding resource configurations in agricultural communities as well as how entrepreneurs deal with uncertainty in these communities. The final strategy is bricolage - making do by applying combinations of resources at hand to new problems and opportunities (Baker and Nelson, 2005). This strategy can also be useful in understanding how entrepreneurs in agricultural communities particularly smallholders deal with resource constraints. These can offer new insights into the area of entrepreneurial communities with emerging strategies of entrepreneurship.

A search for literature on agricultural entrepreneurship in Africa turns up very few publications (see Adobor, 2020; Acheampong, 2019; Gazibo, 2013; Stryker and Baird, 1992). When the level of analysis is gauged at the community level at which the majority of smallholder farmers operate the situation is even more dire. This indicates the paucity of literature on the subject in Africa. This special issue seeks to address this issue and contribute significantly to the literature in this area. We seek to ensure that our findings lead to an understanding of how entrepreneurship in agricultural communities can lead to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 of Zero Hunger in Africa.

### **Indicative list of themes**

- The nature of entrepreneurial strategy in agricultural communities in Africa
- The role of entrepreneurship in enhancing outcomes for smallholder farming communities
- Entrepreneurial financing for agricultural communities
- Agricultural insurance for agricultural communities
- Entrepreneurship and poverty alleviation in agricultural communities
- Female entrepreneurs operating in agricultural communities on the continent
- Role of development partners in enhancing entrepreneurialism in agricultural communities
- Agricultural entrepreneurship and community well-being
- Social entrepreneurship in agricultural communities
- Entrepreneurial skills and agricultural communities
- Formality and informality in agricultural communities
- Entrepreneurship in rural and urban agricultural communities
- Entrepreneurial marketing in agricultural communities
- Innovation in agricultural communities
- Government role in entrepreneurship in agricultural communities
- Country specific cases of entrepreneurship in agricultural communities

### **Submission Deadlines**

Submission Deadline: December 31, 2020

Expected Volume/Issue number: Vol. 15, Issue 4 (September 2021)

Please use [author guidelines](#) when submitting your paper to the [JEC ScholarOne](#)

## References

- Acheampong, G and Esposito, M (2014). The nature of entrepreneurship in bottom of the pyramid markets *International Journal of Entrepreneurship Small Business*, 21 (4) (2014), pp. 437-456
- Acheampong, G. (2019). The Nature of Corporate Digital Agricultural Entrepreneurship in Ghana. In *Digital Entrepreneurship in Sub-Saharan Africa* (pp. 175-198). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.
- Acheampong, G., Narteh, B., & Rand, J. (2017). Network ties and survival: a study of small commercial poultry farms in Ghana. *The International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Innovation*, 18(1), 14-24.
- Adobor, H. (2020), "Entrepreneurial failure in agribusiness: evidence from an emerging economy", *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JSBED-04-2019-0131>
- AGRA. (2017). *Africa Agriculture Status Report: The Business of Smallholder Agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Issue 5). Nairobi, Kenya: Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA).
- Baker, T., & Nelson, R. E. (2005). Creating something from nothing: Resource construction through entrepreneurial bricolage. *Administrative science quarterly*, 50(3), 329-366.
- Dana, L. P., Ratten, V., & Honyenuga, B. Q. (Eds.). (2018). *African Entrepreneurship: Challenges and Opportunities for Doing Business*. Springer.
- Dana, L-P (2007) Promoting SMEs in Africa, *Journal of African Business*, 8:2, 151-174,
- Diao, X., Hazell, P., & Thurlow, J. (2010). The role of agriculture in African development. *World development*, 38(10), 1375-1383.
- FAO (2018). *State of Food and Agriculture in Africa: Future Prospects and Emerging Issues*. FAO Regional Conference for Africa. Khartoum-Sudan. <http://www.fao.org/africa/events/detail-events/en/c/1258469/>
- Fisher, G. (2012). Effectuation, causation, and bricolage: A behavioral comparison of emerging theories in entrepreneurship research. *Entrepreneurship theory and practice*, 36(5), 1019-1051.
- Gazibo, R. (2013). Promoting agricultural entrepreneurship in Niger. *Appropriate Technology*. 40(4), pp. 68-70
- Hisrich, R. D., Peters, M. P., & Shepherd, D. A. (2009). *Entrepreneurship (African ed.)*. McGraw-Hill Education.
- IFAD (2014). *Fulfilling the promise of African agriculture*. IFAD. Rome. [https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/39148759/africa\\_agriculture\\_e.pdf/1b8a4bf7-8570-411a-9237-ecc8e3627cac](https://www.ifad.org/documents/38714170/39148759/africa_agriculture_e.pdf/1b8a4bf7-8570-411a-9237-ecc8e3627cac)
- Poole, N. D., Chitundu, M., & Msoni, R. (2013). Commercialisation: a meta-approach for agricultural development among smallholder farmers in Africa?. *Food Policy*, 41, 155-165.
- Sarasvathy, S. D. (2001). Causation and effectuation: Toward a theoretical shift from economic inevitability to entrepreneurial contingency. *Academy of management Review*, 26(2), 243-263.
- Sarasvathy, S. D., & Dew, N. (2005). New market creation through transformation. *Journal of evolutionary economics*, 15(5), 533-565.
- Stryker, J. D., & Baird, K. E. (1992). Trends in African agricultural trade: Causes and prognosis. *Policy Studies Journal*, 20(3), 414-430.
- United Nations (2019). *Special edition: progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals*. High-level political forum on sustainable development, convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council.
- Zelekha, Y., & Dana, L. P. (2019). Social Capital Versus Cultural Capital Determinants of Entrepreneurship: An Empirical Study of the African Continent. *The Journal of Entrepreneurship*, 28(2), 250-269.