RURAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
ALTERNATIVES TO URBANIZATION IN ASIA

S. Malcolm Hazelman
Senior Extension, Education & Communications Officer
Food and Agriculture Organization
of the United Nations

Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
Presentation outline

- Definitions
- Background situation
  - Global
  - Regional
- Rethinking the future
- Investing in rural youth
- Findings from some case studies
- Some examples
- Conclusions
Definitions

• Youth – 14 to 25 yrs old but varies by country and refers to both males and females

• Rurality – “rural” is not uniform; rural generally refers to locations away from urban areas; many are agricultural/ farming/fishing areas/ localities
World population

53% Rural

47% Urban
Population of the world’s poor

30% Urban

70% Rural
Developing countries population

80% Rural  20% Urban
## Population in poverty (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>&lt;$1/day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>35.9</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>.....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao PDR</td>
<td>38.6</td>
<td>26.9</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>26.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>&lt;2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>.....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>20.4</td>
<td>47.4</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>.....</td>
<td>.....</td>
<td>.....</td>
<td>.....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>&lt;2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Nam</td>
<td>37.4</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>44.9</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Young Illiterates (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Countries</th>
<th>Total (000) Yr 2000</th>
<th>% Females</th>
<th>Total (000) Yr2015</th>
<th>% Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>4486</td>
<td>70.7</td>
<td>1251</td>
<td>83.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>963</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>57.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao PDR</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>65.3</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>64.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>46.9</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Myanmar</td>
<td>863</td>
<td>52.2</td>
<td>633</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>40.9</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>48.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>73.4</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>84.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viet Nam</td>
<td>759</td>
<td>47.3</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>37.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Current situation of rural youth

• Vast majority of youth live in the developing world, many in rural areas where problem of poverty exists.

• Many youth lack adequate and appropriate education.

• Youth unemployment is high.

• Youth is exploited
  - unsafe and unfair occupation
  - victims for slave labor and sexual exploitation
Challenges: Findings ex- studies

- Lao PDR, Malaysia, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Vietnam

- lack of job opportunities (youth do not consider working on subsistence agriculture as being employed)

- limited educational opportunities beyond primary or secondary levels (limited opportunities, poor and can’t afford, distance)

- limited vocational training opportunities (limited space, can’t afford, curriculum and teacher concerns; insufficient accommodation for boarding)

- there is a lack of competent technical assistance available
Challenges: Findings ex-studies

- lack of funding opportunities (they do not know how to access funding)

- there is a lack of amenities available (e.g. for sports & leisure; communications etc)

- competition with bad elements (traffickers-drugs & people)
Consequences

• Out migration to urban areas and/or overseas

• Substance abuse

• Other dangerous engagements/risks
Calls for rethinking the future
Reforming national and international policy

• A key to cope with rural poverty is agricultural transformation

• 3 pre-conditions required
  - removal of social constraints
  - access to markets
  - higher productivity
Revitalizing agriculture with aid and technical support

- Rural Reform I’s
  - Incentives
  - Investments
  - Infrastructure
  - Innovation
  - Industry
  - Institutions
Rural Environment Issue

- Rural poverty and environmental degradation are linked.

- Investment in environmental programs in rural areas will provide skills and employment for youth as well as a more prosperous future.
Overcoming gender gap

• Educating girls is one of the keys to development

• The lack of equal opportunity for young women would push them into the informal economy, which is dangerous and unfair.
Investing in youth
Focal points for investment in youth?

• Investment in skills training

• Investment in appropriate technology and micro finance programs

• Investment in capacity building for youth-led and youth serving organizations
Revitalize rural education and training

- Poor quality of government teachers

- Voucher systems for the poor would encourage improvement in government school systems

- Targeting the barriers to education could also be a means of revitalizing education
Enhance rural youth employability through better education

• Two barriers to overcome:
  – lack of investment in rural areas
  – lack of effective institutions

• Education curricula need to be relevant to labor market needs and to the goals & needs of rural youth

• Rural youth need to implement the skills to be productive members of the community and contribute to rural development
Solutions: Findings ex-studies

- Creating an environment supportive for youth development and needs
  - Having national rural youth policies and strategies
  - Using the positive and vital role of rural youth organizations to involve, engage, cultivate youths
  - Having sound, integrated need-based programs including training and development attractive to members and the community
  - Having strong community involvement and support
  - Strong linkages with government and NGOs and a partnership/collaborative approach to youth work
  - Having support and commitment of the members with active engagement
  - Having competent and committed leaders
  - Having a shared and clear vision
  - Having reliable and accountable administration and availability of supportive infrastructure
  - Having continued monitoring and evaluation
  - Having access to sustainable funding
Mobilizing youth through community-based organizations

• Rural youth peer group organizations with effective leadership can:
  - promote learning to build employment skills
  - create cooperative enterprises
  - inspire, empower and motivate youth
  - channel youth energies and talents
  - encourage stable rural communities
  - add enjoyment of life and positive forms of recreation
  - ensure systematic transfer of livelihood skills
Youth employment opportunities
Orienting agriculture extension programs towards youth

Extension services should:

• Target young farmers
• Encourage parents to give land to school leavers
• Set up agriculture credit schemes
• Encourage food production
• Transmit new ideas and methods in agriculture
• Employ as many school leavers as possible
• Establish incentives for young workers to become more professional
Promoting entrepreneurship with bureaucratic reforms

- Make micro finance more available to rural youth
- Bring the informal economy into the mainstream
- Examine obstacles to opening of businesses in the formal economy
- Fight corruption
- Provide training and support networks
- Encourage a culture of entrepreneurship
Document and share success stories

- FAO supported Telefood projects
- ‘Narrowing the digital divide’ in India
- Microfinance and support for rural entrepreneurs in India
- Mobilizing rural youth for agriculture development in Thailand
Rural Youth Organizations/ Clubs

• 4-H Clubs
  – Case studies in Philippines & Thailand
  – Narrowing the digital divide (Thailand)

• Young Farmer Clubs
  – Malaysia, Sri Lanka
Vocational training (Japan & S Korea)
Youth community projects (Indonesia)
Entrepreneurship (Thailand)
“Farmer Field School” learning (Thailand)
Lampang "Community That Learns"
Success case replication (Thailand)
Training for life (Cambodia & Vietnam)
Rural information & education (China)
Capacity building
Conclusions

• Great majority of rural people in Asia are youths and they face many challenges including unemployment

• Education for rural people is key
  – They have a role in food security and sustainable development
  – Improve access, quality and capacities

• Investing in youth is needed

• Create favorable environments – policies, reducing divides, infrastructure, appropriate services & markets, information etc

• Use “best practice/innovation” cases as guides/models
THANKS FOR YOUR ATTENTION!