

# Making Youths the Engine for Rural Diversification and Structural Transformation

*Promoting Youth Employment in fighting Rural  
Poverty*

April 2016



International  
Labour  
Organization

**Alfredo LAZARTE HOYLE**  
Rural and Local Employment  
Employment Policy Department

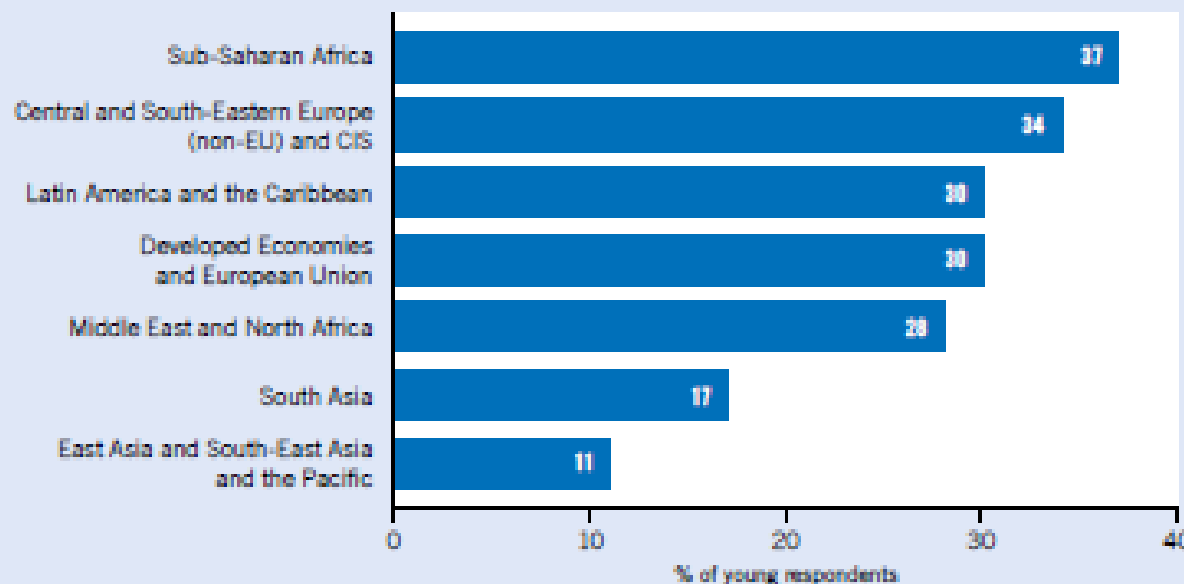


## Challenges faced by young people in rural areas

- Youth aged 15-24 number 1.2 billion, accounting for approximately **18 percent of the global population. Over half of them live in rural areas of developing countries.** Up to 70 percent of the youth in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia live in rural areas, and over half of those in the labour force engage in agriculture.
- While agriculture remains a significant employer of young workers in rural areas, manufacturing and services increasingly provide another outlet in a range of household-based and farm and off-farm activities, where the main problem is **under-employment.**
- Rural areas lose a vital part of their workforce as young people **migrate to cities or abroad** in search of economic opportunities.
- These young rural migrants contribute to unemployment and the swelling of the informal economy in urban areas.
- Migrating is not always the preferred choice among rural youth as it includes much personal sacrifice and uncertainty.
- The potential of rural youth as contributors to development is insufficiently acknowledged in domestic and international development policies
- Young rural women are **doubly disadvantaged** as a result of traditional gender-based stereotypes and division of labour.
- Young rural women and men continue to face higher rates of poverty and marginalization, thus contributing to a cycle of poverty.

# Youth Employment and Migration

Willingness to migrate, by region  
(% of young respondents), 2014



Notes: The question asked was, "Ideally, if you had the opportunity, would you like to move permanently to another country, or would you prefer to continue living in this country?" The graph includes the percentage of respondents who answered "like to move to another country". The age group is 15–29.

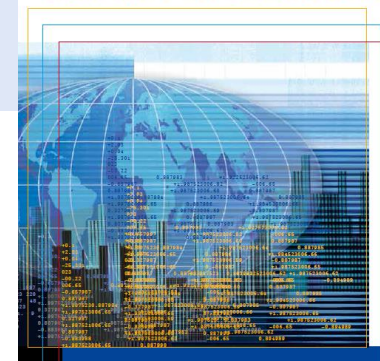
Source: World Gallup Poll, 2014.

The predilection to move abroad is closely linked to local economic opportunities weighed against the perceived opportunities to be gained abroad



International Labour Organization

## GLOBAL EMPLOYMENT TRENDS FOR YOUTH 2015



In 2010, there were 27 million international migrants aged 15 to 24 in the world, accounting for 12.4 per cent of the 214 million international migrants worldwide

Lack of job prospects in rural areas force youth to migrate to urban centres at home, or to move abroad. Migration has contributed to the steady decline of the proportion of rural youth since the 1950s, with sharper decreases predicted for the future. The absolute number of rural youth continues to grow, especially in sub-Saharan Africa and South East Asia.



Nevertheless, young people in rural areas are the future of agriculture and other rural industries, but often lack the guidance and support necessary to fully contribute to the development of their communities, thereby fuelling the vicious cycle of rural underdevelopment and poverty. Acknowledging and addressing their needs and aspirations is vital for local and national growth.



# Why action is needed

- Employment plays a central role in the social integration of young people.
- Young rural women and men can be true engines of rural transformation as they are more open to technology and innovation, are full of energy, dreams and enthusiasm, and can thus revitalize their communities.
- The potential of rural youth as contributors to growth and development is insufficiently acknowledged in domestic and international development policies.
- Rural youth are often less educated than their urban counterparts. Poor quality and lack of relevance of education and training curricula to local needs, as well as the high cost of schooling (direct and indirect), and insufficient prospects for decent work discourage parents from keeping older children in school.
- Rural areas lack opportunities for educated youth to employ their skills productively, thus encouraging out-migration that results in a 'rural youth drain'.
- Migrating to urban areas or abroad is not always the preferred choice and many would prefer to remain with their families in their rural communities if given opportunities for productive jobs and good working conditions.

## Rural youth with “voice” and a role in Development: Some Policy options

- Acknowledge the multiple capabilities and potential of young rural women and men.
- Focus on rural youth and children as priority groups through targeted development policies and programmes.
- Take into account the views and needs of rural youth, as well as how they will be impacted, when planning major investment measures, development policies and programmes.
- Ensure that rural initiatives pay special attention to empowering young rural women, as they are often marginalized, and lack proper voice and access to development projects and programmes.
- Facilitate rural youths' access to ICT, radio, and other means of communication to allow them to gain as well as exchange information about labour markets and entrepreneurship opportunities.
- Integrate agricultural education within formal education structures to promote farming and work in related industries. This also facilitates passing on new information, knowledge, and techniques to older generations via youth and children.
- Ensure that rural education and training provide rural girls and boys with the skills necessary for living and working productively in rural areas.
- Provide career guidance to rural youth at an early age to inform them of job prospects in their region, as well as about the technical and personal skills needed for those jobs.
- Promote rural innovation, diversification and industrialization to provide youth with broader opportunities for decent work.
- Support entrepreneurship of young men and women through proper training, access to credit, and other business development services

## ICT related initiatives in Senegal and Vietnam

- In **SENEGAL**, a communication system based on ICT for young rural men and women has been initiated in 8 areas: Matam, Saint-Louis, Louga, Thies (northern region ) and Kaolack, Kaffrine, Fatick and Diourbel (Central region). In order to promote access to relevant information and strengthen the resilience of rural youth.
- Young rural have limited access to qualitative information on social protection, markets opportunities, technical/management training, workers rights etc. A study was carried out in October 2013 to identify appropriate and relevant channels to raise their awareness. It was concluded that SMS as the most appropriate means and identify key partners to be involved:
  - The National Agency for the Promotion of Youth Employment (ANPEJ) and the Job-placement agency, staffed by counsellors and deployed in the departments.
  - The Chambers of Commerce which have a database and a computer system established by the ILO: Regional Information System for Handicrafts (SIRA).
  - Advisory services from Vocational Education and Training institutions (TVET)
- The partnership has been established and expanded to Labour Inspections (for information on labour law), the Ministry of Health (health coverage), Trade Unions (for workers rights), the Youth College from the National Council for Dialogue and Rural Cooperation (CJ/NCRC) and Local Committees.
- A similar experience is on implementation in **VIETNAM** since 2013 in Quang Nam, Thua Thien – Hue, Bac Kan and Hanoi provinces

# Relevant ILO Links

- <http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/economic-and-social-development/rural-development/lang--en/index.htm> Unleashing rural development through productive employment and decent work.
- <http://www.ilo.org/employment/units/rural-development/lang--en/index.htm> The ILO Rural Employment and Decent Work programme prompts multi-disciplinary responses to tackle decent work deficits that inhibit the capacity of rural areas as drivers of growth, job creation, crisis resilience and equitable development
- <http://www.ilo.org/empent/areas/lang--en/index.htm> Includes among others:
  1. Conducive environment for sustainable enterprise, including COOPs
  2. Entrepreneurship and enterprise development
  3. Local Economic Development (LED)
  4. MNEs contributors to creation of employment
  5. The Start and Improve Your Business Programme
  6. Value Chain Development (VCD)
  7. Women's Entrepreneurship Development (WED)
  8. Youth Entrepreneurship Development
  9. Business Development Services (BDS)
- <http://www.knowaboutbusiness.org/>: global knowledge sharing and resource platform

