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Training and Employment Opportunities to Address Poverty Among Rural Youth: A Synthesis Report

A Joint Study By FAO, ILO and UNESCO

Training and Employment Opportunities to Address Poverty Among Rural Youth: A Synthesis Report, A Joint Study By FAO, ILO and UNESCO.

Bangkok: FAO, ILO, UNESCO Bangkok, 2009.
28 p.

1. Training. 2. Employment opportunity. 3. Poverty. 4. Rural youth.

ILO

ISBN: 978-92-2-121918-7 (Print version)

ISBN: 978-92-2-121919-4 (Electronic version)

UNESCO

ISBN: 978-92-9223-255-9 (Print version)

ISBN: 978-92-9223-256-6 (Electronic version)

Authors:

FAO, ILO, UNESCO

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Published by the
UNESCO Bangkok
Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education
Mom Luang Pin Malakul Centenary Building
920 Sukhumvit Road, Prakanong, Klongtoey
Bangkok 10110, Thailand

Printed in Thailand

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ESD/09/OS/004-500

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www.unescobkk.org/esd

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Thailand

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11th Floor, United Nations Building
Rajdamnern Nok Avenue
P.O. Box 2-349
Bangkok 10200
Thailand

UNESCO Bangkok

ESD Unit
Mom Luang Malakul Centenary Building
920 Sukhumvit Road
Bangkok 10110
Thailand

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Youth carving wood in Yen Tap commune, Viet Nam. ©Vietnam Handicraft Research and Promotion Center.

A girl member of a youth club in Lambayong Sultan Kudarat, Philippines, enjoying weaving a cornhusk bag. ©Cesar V. Galvan

Thatching roofs with imperata leaf in Baan Sob Pong, Mae Hong Son Province, Thailand.

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Selected Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
DoVE	Department of Vocational Education (Thailand)
DSD	Department of Skill Development (Thailand)
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ILO	International Labour Organization
LFPR	Labour Force Participation Rate
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (Viet Nam)
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MOI	Ministry of Industry (Viet Nam)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NYC	National Youth Commission (Philippines)
RA	Republic Act (Philippines)
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNGEI	United Nations Girls Education Initiative
WB	World Bank

Acknowledgements

The promotion of education, training and decent work to address poverty among rural youth and their communities is firmly placed within the global commitment towards poverty reduction, in line with the Millennium Development Goals. This is also in line with the mandates of three specialized agencies of the United Nations which have jointly undertaken this study, namely the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

The aim of this multi-country study is to identify relevant training and employment needs and opportunities, which can improve on, and off-farm income generation for young women and men in rural areas. This research is timely since young people make up the majority of migrants streaming into towns and cities from the rural areas in search of jobs placing pressure on urban labour markets. The current global financial and economic crisis only serves to increase such pressure and augment the incidence of youth unemployment, underemployment and poor working conditions.

Based on a qualitative survey conducted in several villages in three South-East Asian countries (the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam) this study examines the needs and opportunities concerning employment and training of rural youth in order to reduce poverty. This joint initiative will reinforce inter-agency collaboration towards improving access to education, training and employment opportunities for those young women and men in the rural areas who are marginalized and somewhat isolated from the broader policy debates.

Enhancing employment opportunities and necessary skills not only facilitates secure livelihoods, but it also contributes to achieving self-worth. The main options for employment for rural youth include, inter alia, agriculture (including agro-processing and cottage industries), community-based entrepreneurial activities and migration to urban areas.

While rural youth may engage in one or more of these options, limited qualitative information is available as to the advantages and disadvantages of each in terms of sustainability of income and employment, decent working conditions, as well as the well-being of the youth, their families and communities. Similarly, there is only limited information on education, training, and apprenticeship opportunities as well as other support services (e.g. career guidance, job search assistance, enterprise support) required to improve opportunities for wage and self-employment.

Special gratitude is expressed to Malcolm Hazelman of the FAO, Rika Fujioka and Urmila Sarkar of the ILO and Derek Elias of UNESCO for their technical supervision and overall coordination. We would also like to thank Elizabeth M Remedio, consultant, for her dedication in the preparation of the Philippines country study, Le Ba Ngoc, consultant and his team from the Vietnam Handicraft Research and Promotion Center for preparing the Viet Nam country study, Sabina Dewan, consultant, for synthesising the country reports, Madeleine Moss and Leah Mosel from the ILO for their technical support, Steven Kapsos and Phu Huynh from the ILO, for their verification of data, Ampai Harakunarak and colleagues of the Thailand Environment Institute for their preparation of the Thailand country study and Steven Usher and Kamonrat Chayamarit of UNESCO, for their support. Sincere appreciation goes also to Daniel Calderbank of UNESCO for assisting in editing the text and Pilanthorn Palm Kulapongse of UNESCO for designing the final publication.



Changchui He
Assistant Director-General &
Regional Representative
FAO Regional Office
for Asia and the Pacific



Sachiko Yamamoto
Regional Director
ILO Regional Office
for Asia and the Pacific



Gwang Jo Kim
Director
UNESCO Bangkok
Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau
for Education

Executive Summary

This report is a synthesis of three case studies conducted in the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam and aims to enhance understanding on training and employment opportunities, challenges regarding employment and the training of rural youth. The findings from the three country studies suggest the need for enhanced policy coordination to address limited human and financial resources, particularly in terms of reaching the local and community levels. This is also to allow broad-based participation in the efforts to improve employment and training prospects of the rural youth.

The followings are the main issues highlighted in the country studies to promote employment and training opportunities with the aim of reducing poverty.

- **Employment and Income Generation**

Rural youth face an ongoing struggle to find decent work opportunities. A large number of them habitually migrate to urban areas only to find limited chances of finding meaningful employment. An alternative is to create employment opportunities in rural areas by reinforcing on, off, and non-farm income generating opportunities in line with the local contexts. This concerns improving productivity in the agricultural sector and exploring effective livelihood diversification. It also concerns the promotion of youth entrepreneurship, which in turn can provide greater opportunities for employment, skills development and innovation in products and services.

- **Training**

In order to enhance the quality and relevance of training and encourage families and the rural youth to recognize the benefits of training, it is important to access labour market needs in the given local context, and formulate training meeting needs and preferences of the rural youth. A lack of information and awareness among the youth, their families and communities on the availability and usefulness of training (particularly those meeting labour market demands) is a major problem. The media, such as newspapers, television and radio, can be utilized to communicate the benefits of training, in addition to broader dissemination of information on available training opportunities, scholarships, youth programmes and job fairs.

- **Formal Education**

Access, affordability, quality and relevance are the four key barriers to promoting education, which in turn enhances employment opportunities for the rural youth. It is essential to realize equality among migrant, minority and otherwise marginalized, disadvantaged groups, as well as gender parity. Greater investment is needed to ensure adequate materials, safe and well-maintained school environments, quality of teachers, along with better remunerations and incentives. Specific efforts must be made to stem the drop-out rates in schools by emphasizing the importance of education, improving its relevance and quality, and mitigating the associated costs.

- **Labour Market Information**

There is a scarcity of labour market information in general, particularly in rural areas. This hampers a government's ability to devise informed policies. It also makes it harder for the rural youth to make informed decisions on employment and training. It also provides a challenge to matching the supply and needs of the rural youth with the demands of their respective labour markets. It is important to further disseminate information on the opportunities and services available to the rural youth as well as the risks and benefits associated with migration to urban areas, or abroad, while also enhancing employment assistance and career guidance.

Introduction

Worldwide, there were 1.2 billion persons aged between 15-24 years old in 2007, of which 738 million persons were in the Asia-Pacific region (United Nations 2007a: XV, 2). The vitality and creativity of youth are among a country's greatest assets. When these positive traits are effectively promoted, the youth can play a fundamental role in national economic and social development - and in efforts to reduce poverty.

However, global youth unemployment has been on the rise (by 14.8 per cent between 1995 and 2005, from 74 million to 85 million), of which the largest increase was in South East Asia and the Pacific (i.e. 85.5 per cent, from 5.2 to 9.7 million). In East Asia youth unemployment declined by 8.2 per cent, from 13.1 to 12 million, due largely to a decline in youth labour force participation (ILO 2008c). While young people do face disadvantages in the labour market, for many of the young working poor, unemployment is an unaffordable luxury. They have no choice but to work hard and for long hours, unprotected against hazards and risks, on informal or precarious contracts with low pay and few prospects for the future. In the developing countries of the Asia-Pacific, there are also significant gaps between women and men - in income and in access to productive resources and credit. Moreover, while young women are participating more in economic activities, they still take on a disproportionate share of unpaid work, including household responsibilities and childcare.

Neglecting the potential of young people is an economic and social waste. Achieving decent work early in their working life would help avoid a vicious cycle of unemployment or underemployment, poor working conditions and social exclusion. In a situation of widespread poverty and lack of opportunity, the growing number of disaffected youth has been associated with an escalation of urban crime, outbursts of ethnic violence and political instability. Unless the causes and implications of the youth employment challenge are tackled, progress towards better economic and political governance in the region will remain uncertain (ILO 2008b).

Such problems serve to perpetuate the vicious cycle of poverty not only among the youth themselves, but also among the family members that they support. Those stricken by poverty in turn lack the income to translate their needs into effective demand (FAO, 2002). This is especially true of the rural youth that constitute a large and critical share of the youth population in developing countries. These arguments make a strong case for focusing attention on the development of the rural youth.

In recent years we have seen a gradual shift from the traditional focus on agricultural production to a wider focus on rural development, of which agriculture is a part (FAO and UNESCO, 2003). Concomitantly, there is a push to expand off, and non-farm employment, in addition to on-farm employment¹, so as to increase the income generation opportunities available to the youth. These demand side measures to increase employment for the rural youth, need to be accompanied by supply side measures, namely education and training. The latter are two of the most powerful weapons in the fight against rural poverty and for rural development. Unfortunately, these are also among the most frequently neglected aspects of rural development (FAO and UNESCO, 2003).

This report is a synthesis of three case studies conducted in the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. It highlights the differences and similarities of the main findings and recommendations of the three case studies. The report aims to enhance understanding on training and employment opportunities and challenges to employment and training for rural youth, all of which are critical to

¹ In this report, on-farm employment is referred broadly to work in agriculture, including livestock raising, fishing and forestry.



poverty reduction. This synthesis report also seeks to present a predominantly qualitative view of the situation of rural youth in the three countries.

The report consists of four sections. Following this introduction that explains the rationale, the objectives of the study and the methodology for the field studies, section two provides an overview of the national economic context and relevant national policies and regulations highlighting the similarities and differences between the three countries. Section three presents insights from field surveys conducted in the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. Section four summarizes the opportunities for training and employment in the survey sites and identifies the pertinent gaps. It also presents recommendations on how these gaps in employment and training for rural youth may be addressed.

The case studies of the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam utilize both primary and secondary sources. The primary data was collected from a survey of two villages in each of the three countries. The first selection criteria in the assessment of the villages was the high incidence of poverty. The second criteria was the evidence of assorted migration patterns. Specifically: (a) youth engaged in village-based employment on a permanent basis; (b) youth opting for seasonal employment in nearby urban cities, while still residing in the village; and (c) youth migrating to, and residing in, urban cities for specific periods of the year. Thirdly, similarities emerged in socio-economic contexts among field survey sites, such as the proximity to the capital or other major urban cities, the infrastructure and the major sources of livelihoods. The potential for respective government and UN support to help address these challenges was also considered.

Surveys were conducted by means of face-to-face interviews and/or group discussions in the local languages of the survey sites, based on a set of questions. These questions covered the following subjects: the overall situation of the villages; the backgrounds of the respondents and their families; their education, work and experiences; employment needs and the obstacles involved in searching for better employment; perceived gaps in education and training; and the potential for village, district and province-based employment.

With regard to the definition of youth, it varies from one country to another, and may vary among government agencies within a country. For example, in the Philippines, the Republic Act 8044 defines youth as those individuals aged between 15-30 years, while the Department of Labour and Employment defines youth as those between 15-24 years of age. In Viet Nam, according to the Youth Law (2005), a youth is aged between 16-30, while the Development Strategy for Youth defines a youth as a person aged 15-34. In Thailand, the official definition of youth includes those between the ages of 15-24. Such variations in the definition of youth make it difficult to accurately assess their situation in the labour force and it also hinders cross-country comparisons². Unless specifically noted, this study applies the United Nations definition which defines youth as individuals aged 15-24 (UN, 2007a).

² The Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam country studies often refer to local data sources. For the purpose of comparison, this synthesis report refers to data from international organizations, such as the World Bank, FAO, ILO and UNESCO, as deemed relevant.

Training and Employment of Rural Youth

A. Overview of National Context

The populations of the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam were approximately 86 million, 65 million, and 86 million in 2005 (United Nations 2007b). Respectively, youth constituted approximately 19.8 per cent, 15.3 per cent and 20.5 per cent of the total population (United Nations 2007a). In Thailand and Viet Nam, the highest share of the youth is employed in the agricultural sector (43 and 58 per cent) (ILO, 2007). In the Philippines, the highest share of youth employment is in the service sector, accounting for 48 per cent. Agriculture is second with 37 per cent (ILO, 2007). Despite high rates of employment in agriculture, the GDP share of agriculture has been relatively low and has been declining (see Table 1).

Since the 1990s, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam have seen high annual GDP growth, ranging from three per cent for the Philippines in 1990, and 11.2 per cent for Thailand in 1990. However, despite such high growth, poverty continues to be a persistent problem, with a notable share of the population being under the poverty level (see Table 1). Table 2 illustrates the youth labour force participation rates (LFPR) and the youth employment-to-population ratio for the total youth population, disaggregated by gender, for the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. Youth LFPR refers to the sum of persons aged 15-24 in the labour force as a percentage of the working-age population. The youth employment-to-population ratio, also referred to as the youth employment rate, is the number of employed persons aged 15-24 as a percentage of the working-age population (ILO, 2006b). In the Philippines and Thailand, the female youth LFPR and employment-to-population ratio is lower than that of males. The difference is larger in the Philippines than in Thailand. In Viet Nam, the young female LFPR is higher than that of males.

Meanwhile, work that rural women are engaged in is different from that of urban women. Approximately 57 per cent of rural Vietnamese women are unpaid home workers, 28 per cent are self-employed and only 15 per cent of rural women are able to find a paid job.

Micro-level empirical studies of developing countries suggest that unemployment rates in rural areas are lower than urban areas, which also holds true for the youth (ILO, 2006b, World Bank, 2006). One reason for this is that the sharing of low-productivity work in agriculture in rural areas is a common practice in developing countries. However, this leads to the problem of underemployment (FAO, 2002; ILO, 2006b). For instance, the Vietnamese field study notes that underemployment in rural areas is a significant concern and that youth account for 91.5 per cent of the total underemployed.

Table 3 presents the unemployment rates in the three countries³ applying the ILO definition of unemployment⁴. Among the three countries, the Philippines has the highest youth unemployment rate, while Thailand and Viet Nam have roughly similar rates.

³ Data on youth unemployment in rural areas is not easily available. It should also be noted that the definitions used and the sampling and survey methods used are different in the three countries. For example, "unemployed" in Viet Nam and the Philippines refers to those out of work but are currently searching for work. The term in Thailand includes also those who are not searching for work.

⁴ The ILO definition of unemployed persons are those, who during the specified short reference period, were: (a) without work; (b) currently available for work; and (c) seeking work. A person is also considered unemployed if she/he is not currently working but has made arrangements to take up paid or self-employment at a date subsequent to the reference period (ILO, 2006b). The unemployment rate expresses unemployment as a percentage of the total labour force (persons employed and unemployed). The indicator is widely used as a measure of unutilized labour supply (ILO, 2006b).

Table 1: Gross Domestic Product – Growth of Output / Poverty

	1990	1995	2000	2005
Philippines				
GDP growth	3.0	4.7	4.4	4.9
Agriculture (% of GDP)	21.9	21.6	15.8	14.3
Industry (% of GDP)	34.5	32.1	32.3	31.9
Services (% of GDP)	43.6	46.3	52.0	53.7
Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line	n/a	25.1	n/a	n/a
Thailand				
GDP growth	11.2	9.2	4.8	4.5
Agriculture (% of GDP)	12.5	9.5	9.0	10.2
Industry (% of GDP)	37.2	40.7	42.0	44.1
Services (% of GDP)	50.3	49.7	49.0	45.7
Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line	n/a	9.8	13.6	n/a
Viet Nam				
GDP growth	5.1	9.5	6.8	8.4
Agriculture (% of GDP)	38.7	27.2	24.5	21.0
Industry (% of GDP)	22.7	28.8	36.7	41.0
Services (% of GDP)	38.6	44.1	38.7	38.0
Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line	n/a	n/a	28.9	n/a

Source: ADB. 2007 Key Indicators of Developing Asian and Pacific Countries; World Bank. 2008. Millennium Development Goals.

Table 2: Youth Labour Force Participation rates and Employment to Population Ratio

Country	Youth LFPR, 2007 (%)	Employment to Population Ratio, 2006 (%)
Philippines		
Total	47.2	44.3
Male	56.5	53.8
Female	37.6	34.4
Thailand		
Total	48.8	46.3
Male	56.3	52.6
Female	41.1	39.8
Viet Nam		
Total	54.9	66.1
Male	55.6	64.5
Female	54.1	67.7

Source: ILO. 2007. Key Indicators of the Labour Market: 5th Edition.

Table 3: Youth Unemployment Rate (%)

Philippines	(2005) 16.4
Thailand	(2005) 4.8
Viet Nam	(2004) 4.6

Source: ILO. 2007. Key Indicators of the Labour Market: 5th Edition.

B. Laws, Regulations and Policies on Rural Youth

In the Philippines, mandated by the Youth in National-Building Act (R.A. 8044), the National Youth Commission is the main agency responsible for coordinated policies on youth development. This agency developed the Medium-Term Youth Development Plan (2005-2009) that targets four categories of the youth population, namely in-school youth, out-of-school youth, working youth and youth with special needs. This plan addresses the areas extending beyond those related to the employment and skills development of youth to include youth participation and health. The Philippine government adopts a direct approach in addressing problems pertaining to the development of youth by making policies that specifically pertain to the youth segment, including those related to the promotion of employment and skills for youth. Meanwhile, the Thai and Vietnamese governments tend to adopt a more general approach, mainstreaming concerns on youth employment in overall national development and employment strategies.

Thailand's Eighth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1997-2001) included guiding principles to advocate systematic occupational development for rural youth. To this end, the government implemented an information service to assist the youth in their search for employment. Moreover, the government has sought to provide additional services that guide the youth in making effective use of the available labour market information, and to guide them in making appropriate career choices.

The Vietnamese government established the National Committee on Youth Issues to serve in an advisory capacity to the prime minister. The committee is responsible for proposing policy and legislation related to youth in Viet Nam. The Socio-Economic Development Strategy for Viet Nam (2001-2010), has a component entitled "Viet Nam Youth Development Strategy by 2010" that outlines the government's approach to tackle youth issues. This strategy is managed by the committee. The main aim of this strategy is to strengthen education and training and support for young people in Viet Nam (Anh et al., 2005). There is also a Viet Nam Youth Law that includes a major component on employment creation for young people. This creates a solid legal environment in support of youth employment.

Hence, the governments of the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam all recognize the need to address problems related to youth employment. In particular, there have been interventions in the following areas:

- Formal Education
- Training
- Employment and income generation, especially entrepreneurship development and support
- Labour market information, including services to guide and facilitate employment searches

(i) Formal Education

The intrinsic worth of education is widely recognized. In addition to the rights-based argument, education is considered to be a critical factor in facilitating a smooth transition from school to work, and to availing better opportunities in the labour market afterwards. Nonetheless, in the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam, like in many developing countries, large numbers of children and youth have limited access to education (UNESCO, 2007). In addition, as the three country studies reconfirm, the quality, affordability and relevance of education are a major challenge, particularly in rural areas. Many young are not completing primary education for a number of reasons, including the costs of schooling, the need to supplement family income, take care of siblings, unfriendly school environments and poorly equipped schools with inadequately trained teachers. Early school drop-out often results in child labour, as well as unemployed or underemployed youth group who lack the skills to form a high-quality workforce (ILO, 2008).

According to the Asia and the Pacific Education for All (EFA) Mid-Decade Assessment report, the Philippines implemented programmes promoted by both the government through the Department of Education (DepEd) and partner NGOs. The Alternative Learning System (ALS) programmes managed by DepEd generally target out-of-school youth and disadvantaged school-aged groups not reached by the formal school system. The NGOs, people's organizations, and other civil society groups focus mainly on street children, child labourers, indigenous people, small farmers, single parents, children in conflict areas not reached by the formal school system, rebel returnees and prison inmates. The DepEd is exploring the possibility of incorporating more practical skills into the secondary education curriculum. The primary objective of this initiative is to strengthen life skills among basic education graduates so that they may be more or less ready for the world of work if they are unable to proceed to tertiary education (UNESCO Bangkok, 2008).

All countries in the Mekong Sub-Region, including Thailand, have specific strategies and programmes for the provision of life skills to disadvantaged target groups. There is substantial diversity, however, and there appears to be little commonality. One of the most interesting programmes is the Thai approach of providing vouchers or credits especially for the disadvantaged to

Thatching roofs with imperata leaves in Baan Sob Pong, Mae Hong Son Province, Thailand.



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allow them access to education and training, as appropriate (UNESCO Bangkok, 2008).

There has been strong improvement in the access to continuing education, literacy, post-literacy, lower secondary complementary education and life skills programmes since the year 2000 in Viet Nam. Specifically, a number of illiterate people were provided with opportunities to attend literacy and post-literacy programmes. As a result, the literacy rates by different age group, gender, region, rural/urban and ethnicity have been improved during 2000-2004. Other challenges for Viet Nam related to access for rural youth are that access by ethnic minorities is still limited and many out-of-school youth have not been provided with opportunities to attend complementary education classes at primary and lower secondary levels (UNESCO Bangkok, 2008).

The Philippine, Thai and Vietnamese governments have all undertaken efforts to improve educational attainment. At the national level, the Philippines appears to be well on its way to achieving the targets set forth by the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in terms of universal primary education and gender parity (ADB, 2004). In 2005, the Philippines spent 53.6 per cent of its current public expenditure for education on primary education, 27 per cent on secondary and 13.8 per cent on tertiary education (UNESCO, 2008). Noting the importance of education, the Thai government significantly increased its

expenditure on education between 1995 and 2004 (ADB, 2007). In 2001, the government spent 33.6 per cent of its public expenditure for education on primary education, 19.1 per cent on secondary and 20.4 per cent on tertiary education (UNESCO, 2008). The Thai government also undertook several reforms to improve the provision of formal and non-formal education guided by the National Education Act of 1999. In 2002, the Thai government instituted free, twelve-year education for all students across the country. The government of Viet Nam maintains education as a critical priority and an area for investment. Spending on education in the country is fairly high relative to the country's revenue, with 17 per cent spent in 2002, and 18 per cent in 2005 (ADB, 2006).

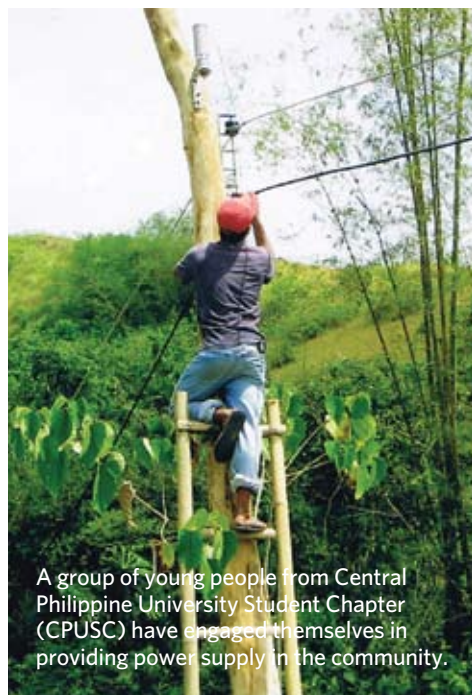
Despite these initiatives by the governments, challenges still remain. While most rural residents live within reasonable reach of a formal primary school, secondary schools tend to be less accessible (World Bank 2007). Illiteracy remains relatively high in rural areas. In Viet Nam, there are an estimated 1.4 million illiterate rural labourers. Access to education for migrant and ethnic children, women and other disadvantaged groups is particularly limited. The quality of education is affected by a lack of resources, such as teachers and infrastructure. The Philippine country study highlights a shortage of textbooks, large average class sizes and a high pupil to teacher ratio as limitations of the formal education system.

Poverty is often concentrated in rural areas, which makes affordability of education an issue. In light of limited opportunities for employment other than agriculture, education is often considered to be of limited relevance. Nevertheless, substantial evidence suggests that education must be promoted to enhance the productivity of on-farm activities as well (FAO and UNESCO, 2003).

Given the important role that education plays in improving youth employment, while mitigating child labour, removing the barriers to education is critical to poverty reduction and long-term development of the country. Children who drop out of school and begin working at an early age will likely have poor employment prospects, be unable to lift their own families out of the poverty trap, give their children a decent life, and be unlikely to contribute fully to national development (ILO 2008a).

(ii) Training

The essential requirement for successful skills formation is a close alignment of training systems with the needs of the labour market. However, training systems in the region tend to operate in isolation of labour market demand and with little or no employer participation (ADB, 2008). To compound the problem, skills development arguably is the most difficult subsector to organize and manage in the education sector. It cuts across organizational boundaries, caters to diverse clients, involves multiple delivery mechanisms and keeps changing in market characteristics (ADB, 2008).



A group of young people from Central Philippine University Student Chapter (CPUSC) have engaged themselves in providing power supply in the community.

All three country studies highlight a lack of skills among the youth. According to the Philippines country study, in 2006, the largest proportion of youth was employed as “labourers and unskilled workers”. In addition to enhancing access to education among their populations, the governments of the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam attempted to provide more opportunities for technical and vocational education and training (TVET) for youth.

TVET was given priority in order to help the youth enhance their qualifications and meet labour market demands. Such vocational education and training is particularly useful for those that may otherwise enter the labour market without appropriate skills (UNEVOC and UIS, 2006).

The National Youth Commission (NYC) in the Philippines has launched several programmes that seek to prepare the rural youth for the labour market. The Presidential Youth Fellowship Programme is a summer internship programme that provides young people with an opportunity to be involved in government. Additionally, there is the Government Internship Programme. This is also spearheaded by the NYC, and it makes arrangements with government agencies, as well as private sector companies, to hire private sector companies to take on out-of-school, or unemployed youth as interns so that their employment prospects are improved. These internships provide the beneficiaries with relevant training as well as a monthly stipend.

In Thailand, public policies and measures pertaining to technical and vocational education and training fall under the mandate of the Department of Vocational Education (DoVE) of the Ministry of Education and the Department of Skill Development (DSD) of the Ministry of Labour. The DSD is charged with implementing the Skill Development Promotion Act of 1992.

In Viet Nam, the government has devised schemes to facilitate the formation of vocation specific associations such as horticultural associations. In collaboration with the Bank of the Poor, the government has also attempted to increase access to microcredit, especially for socially disadvantaged groups, by applying a subsidized interest rate. This is to encourage investments in small infrastructure projects and to develop small-scale industries such as handicraft making. There are also schemes under the Agriculture and Industry Extension Programmes, funded and organized jointly by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD), the Ministry of Industry (MOI), and other agencies. These programmes seek to provide training in skills such as cultivation techniques, animal raising and handicraft making. In addition to the government, unions such as the farmer’s unions and the Ho Chi Minh Communist Youth Union are also active in efforts towards promoting jobs and training.

Labour export programmes are gaining popularity in developing countries, including the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. These programmes encourage the youth to migrate overseas to countries such as Malaysia, South Korea, Taiwan and Japan for work in order to develop skills they can then bring back to their own countries. The Viet Nam country study notes that between 2001-2005, nearly 300,000 persons were sent abroad as export labourers, and in 2006, 78,000 persons.

(iii) Employment and Income Generation

Measures, such as education and training, to improve the skills of the rural youth labour must be accompanied by measures to improve the demand for their improved education and skills. Two points are critical in this regard. First, it is essential to create on, and off-farm employment opportunities. Second, the supply and demand for labour must be matched via accurate labour market information, which is a point that will be discussed in greater detail in the next sub-section.

Although expanding trade and technology have brought new employment opportunities, many of these opportunities are concentrated in urban areas. In rural areas, agriculture continues to be the main activity (FAO and UNESCO, 2003). Rural youth who are unsatisfied with their low productivity, agricultural jobs in which they work hard, but get paid little, may migrate to urban areas in search of better opportunities. However, jobs in urban areas often do not meet the expectations of migrating rural youth. The urban labour market is unable to absorb the influx of people, creating pressure on jobs and services, and sometimes, tension between migrants from rural areas and urban populations. In addition, the competitive advantage of developing countries in terms of cheap labour has led to a specialization in low value added, labour intensive activities that do not have significant educational requirements, nor capitalize on the education that one might already have (UNGEI, 2008). The country studies from the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam point out that many young women migrating to urban areas in search of better employment opportunities often find themselves engaged in domestic work or other forms of low value added activities.

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A member of a 4-H club Lambayong, Sultan Kudarat demonstrates how to weave cornhusk.

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The 4-H club and Rural Improvement Club (RIC) collaborated in conducting a cornhusk utilization training and produced these finished products, South Cotabato, Philippines.

The country studies emphasize that the development of rural industries is an important alternative to creating jobs and generating income for the rural youth. The governments of the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam have undertaken legal and institutional reforms to promote small-and-medium enterprises in an effort to stimulate job creation, particularly in rural areas, in addition to supporting young entrepreneurs and self-employment. The Vietnamese government issued a decree in 2006 to promote the development of rural industries. The Community-based Youth Entrepreneurship Programme of the Philippines is an example of a multiversity that conducts entrepreneurship and business planning and training and provides mentorship and assistance in finding access to microfinance for the rural youth. The Philippine Department of Education adopted the ILO Know About Business Entrepreneurship Programme which promotes entrepreneurship in secondary and vocational and technical schools.

(iv) Labour Market Information

It is important in promoting education and training, to facilitate a match between the skills possessed by the youth and labour market demands. The supply and demand have to be matched appropriately via labour market information. In this regard, youth that have both an education and training, but are unable to find appropriate work may be susceptible to discouragement because he or she felt that searching for a job would be a futile effort, and may be classified as currently inactive (ILO, 2006b).

The country studies on the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam indicate that facilities to obtain labour market information are particularly sparse in rural areas. The report also highlighted a lack of services that provide employment search assistance and career guidance programmes to the rural youth. The governments of the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam have devised measures to address the need for such services. The Youth Hub in the Philippines is an example where young people are given access to a tele-centre with computers and Internet facilities to aid in their job search and to support their entrepreneurial activities by providing them with access to labour market information.

Field Studies

Section three begins with a short introduction to the sites of the field studies. It then presents the major findings of the field studies in the areas of education, training, employment and labour market information. Where appropriate, references are made to the national contexts of the three countries presented earlier.

A. Field Study Sites

Table 4 provides the sites selected for the field surveys and the number of respondents in each of them. In the Philippines, the two provinces of Siquijor and Cebu in Region VII (Central Visayas) were selected and 30 interviews conducted in each. The samples in both locations had more men than women. In Cebu, the two municipalities of Alegria and Malabuyoc were chosen.

In Thailand, a total of 69 respondents were interviewed in villages selected from Pang Mapha district, which is situated in the Mae Hong Son Province, 37 from Baan Sob Pong and 32 from Baan Mae La Na.

In Viet Nam, a total of 60 young people were selected, 30 each from Yen Tap and Phu Lac communes in Cam Che District. In addition to the interviews with the respondents, when possible and appropriate, the survey team had discussions with government officials and other local residents in order to gain a broader understanding of youth issues at the respective field sites.

Poverty is the main problem in all the survey sites. In the Alegria and Malabuyoc municipalities in the Philippines, poverty is reflected in the housing and living conditions of the respondents. Mostly constructed of cogon, nipa, anahaw and galvanized iron sheets, in Alegria, the houses are small with 40 per cent of households having only about 10-19 square meters of living space. Households in both municipalities rely heavily on spring, lake, river and rainwater as their source of drinking water, and in Alegria, only 17 per cent of households have a privately owned faucet.

The Mae Hong Son region in Thailand is one of the poorest provinces in the country. The National Economic and Social Development Board in 2004 estimated that approximately 34 per cent of the provincial population lived below the poverty line as compared to an average of 11 per cent for the national average. This is due to a low level of economic development and a lack of access to income generation opportunities other than agriculture, difficult terrain, limited opportunities for the expansion of agriculture, a low level of human capital and a lack of accurate labour market information (NESDB and UNDP, 2005). In Viet Nam, 73 per cent of the population in Phu Tho province were employed in the agricultural sector. In Cam Khe district, 35 per cent of the local population are estimated to be living below the national poverty line.

The high incidence of poverty reinforces the need to address the employment and training challenges confronting the youth in these areas so that they can assist in reducing poverty. The following section highlights the main findings from the three countries in this regard.

Table 4: Field Study Sites and Number of Respondents

Country and field survey sites	Number of Respondents
Philippines (Region VII – Central Visayas)	
Cebu	30
Siquijor	30
Thailand (Pang Mapha District – Mae Hong Son Province)	
Baan Sob Pong	37
Baan Mae La Na	32
Viet Nam (Cam Khe District – Phu Tho Province)	
Yen Tap	30
Phu Lac	30

B. Key Findings

Based on the findings from the country studies on the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam, this section highlights gaps between opportunities and challenges in the areas of: (i) education; (ii) technical and vocational education and training; (iii) employment and income generation; (iv) and labour market information.

(i) Formal Education

A primary education is fairly accessible among the respondents, but drop-outs at higher levels of education as a result of poverty and family pressure, are a concern.

In Cebu in the Philippines, the majority of respondents had an elementary education. Some graduated from high schools, while a few respondents had a college education. In Siquijor, the majority of the respondents had a secondary education or were high school graduates, while some attended short-term colleges. In both locations, a small number had no education at all. In Thailand, more than half of the respondents in Baan Sob Pong had a secondary education, followed by some who had just completed primary school, a much smaller contingent that had no education and a minority who had at least a bachelor's degree. In Baan Mae La Na, the largest proportion of respondents completed secondary school, and a smaller number had only completed primary school, or had graduated with a bachelor's degree.

In Viet Nam all the respondents in Phu Lac graduated from secondary school. In Yen Tap, the majority had graduated from secondary school, and a fewer respondents graduated from high school. No respondents had a university degree. While most respondents believed that a university education would lead to better employment opportunities, some did not feel they would be able to pass the qualifying examination in order to enter higher educational institutions.

Similar to the national contexts, the findings from the field studies suggest that the surveyed sites made progress towards achieving primary education for most of the residents. In some areas, even higher levels of education seemed fairly accessible. However, the school drop-out rates appeared to be a concern at the higher levels of education. Respondents in all survey sites identified poverty, the resultant financial difficulties and family pressure as key reasons for dropping out of school. In particular, girls tend to get married at an early age. Nevertheless, several respondents considered education an important factor in obtaining a good job, and noted that if they had not been compelled by financial constraints and family pressure, they would have liked to continue their education.

(ii) Training

There is a general lack of training, and when it is available, its quality, relevance and sustainability are limited. In the Philippines, there are several institutions, both public and private, that offer training, scholarships and grants for youth in areas such as business and entrepreneurship, tourism, and information and communication technologies (ICT). Nonetheless, formal training was still uncommon among the rural youth interviewed, indicating that while training opportunities may be available, they are not always accessed for a variety of reasons. In Cebu province in the Philippines, 26 out of the 30 respondents had some exposure to informal training, but in Siquijor province, just over half had such exposure. However, only a small number had formal training or orientation under their current employment. Some respondents considered that training would enhance their employment prospects by equipping them with new skills, improving pre-existing skills and increasing productivity. This was the case because it was difficult to find good jobs without relevant skills. Some respondents noted that the training they received helped in their first jobs, but was

no longer relevant for their current jobs, and probably would not help in the future. The skills they did acquire seemed to have become obsolete. This indicated that notwithstanding national level measures to enhance training, effective training continued to be a challenge in the poorer, rural areas.

In Thailand, the majority of respondents in both villages did not receive any work-related training. This is in spite of the national government's efforts to enhance systemic occupational development for rural youth. Those that received some training identified their parents, local government and private firms as providers. Several respondents considered that appropriate training would help increase their income. Thai youth identified a number of subjects that they would like to be trained in, such as English language skills, computer skills, agriculture, trade and business, craftsmanship and dressmaking. In Baan Mae La Na, a small number of respondents noted that they would be interested in work related to skills development, as well as training on narcotics control and small business.

In Viet Nam, most respondents did not receive any vocational training. Almost three quarters of respondents in Phu Lac did not have a career orientation and were open to receiving training in any areas that would facilitate better and stable employment for them. Meanwhile, this was only the case for a fifth of respondents in Yen Tap, where the majority of respondents preferred to be trained in handicraft and garment making. This was due to their desire to work in a major bamboo and rattan enterprise located in the commune.

The dearth of training among the respondents in the three countries, particularly that to enhance employment options, is due to the following factors. Firstly, their families were not always enthusiastic about training. This was because training did not always lead to improved employment opportunities due to poor quality and/or a lack of demand for the skills enhanced by the given training. Occasionally, the families viewed the time spent in training as an undesirable trade-off when alternatively youth could be generating income in agriculture (although this implied potential underemployment). Therefore, even when training opportunities were present, the respondents and particularly their families were not always convinced of their relevance and benefits in terms of providing better jobs and stable incomes.

Secondly, the majority of respondents did not have training in part because they were not aware of the opportunities available to them. Respondents in some survey sites noted that the training facilities were located in urban areas, although in reality this was not necessarily the case. For example, in Phu Tho province in Viet Nam in which Yen Tap and Phu Lac communes are situated, there were 27 facilities which offered training, including a university, five colleges, 11 vocational schools and 10 training centres, spread over various districts. Training activities ranged from the operation of sewing machines, weaving, cultivation, animal rearing, informatics, to handicraft making. The budget for training however was limited, and the courses were often short in duration.

Thirdly, there was an apparent mismatch between the occupations that youth were engaged in and their aspirations. They were not always interested in obtaining training that related to their current line of work, but rather, preferred to be trained in skills that would allow them to switch careers and pursue jobs that they aspire to. For example, in the Philippines, some respondents expressed a desire to be employed in "professional work" and expressed an interest to be employed as teachers, office workers, policemen, security guards, engineers, seamen, doctors, accountants and computer analysts.

(iii) Employment and Income Generation

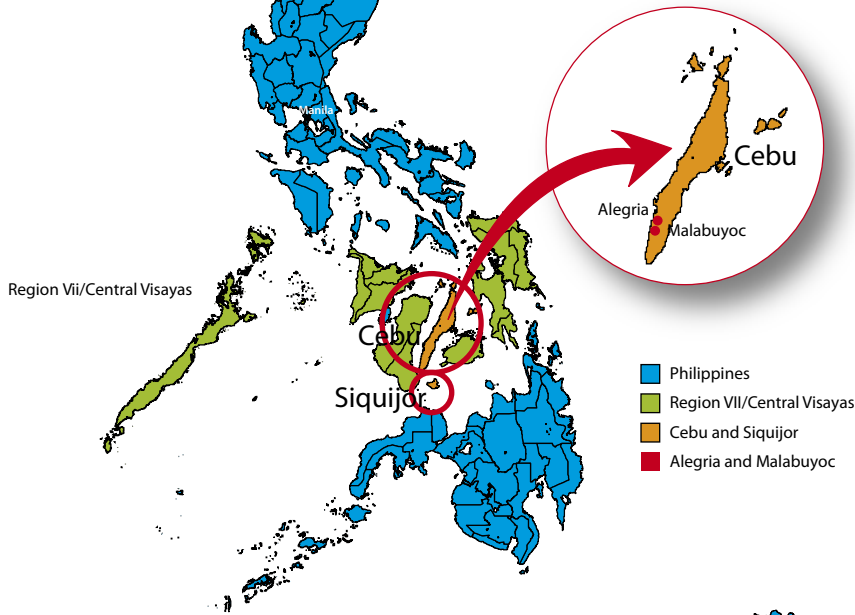
Finding work for rural youth is not necessarily the problem, but finding decent work that offers decent pay, good working conditions, that is not temporary and/or informal, is difficult.

On, off, and non-farm work were a major source of employment in all survey sites. In the Philippines, 40 per cent of respondents engaged in work related to farming and fishing. About 15 per cent of respondents in Baan Sob Pong and 27 per cent in Baan Mae La Na worked in the field every day. About 70 per cent of the people in Yen Tap and Phu Lac in Viet Nam relied on agriculture as their main source of income.

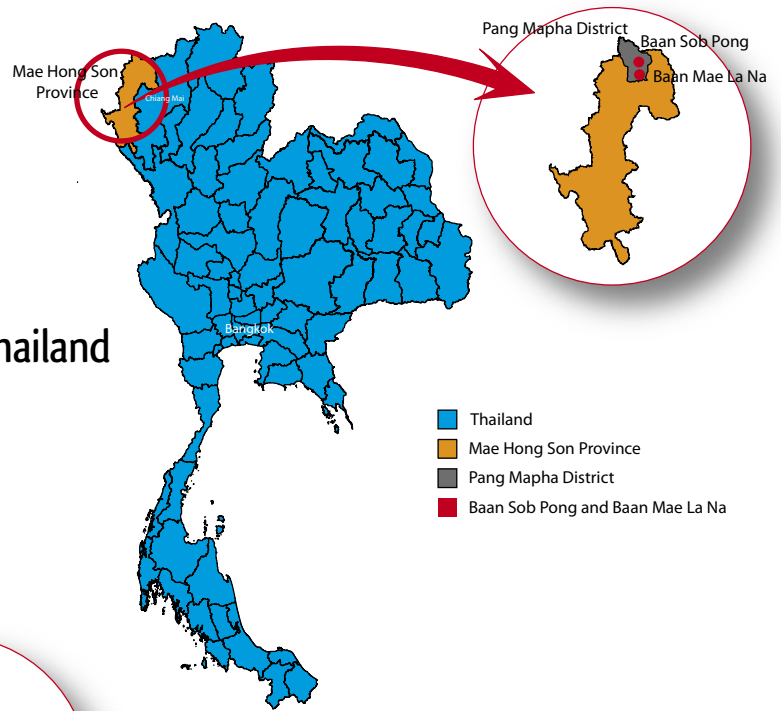
Since the survey sites were selected on the basis of a high incidence of poverty, low income was a general problem. In the Philippines, approximately 50 per cent of the respondents had a very low household income ranging from 1,000 to 5,000 Philippine pesos per month.

Another 30 per cent earned between 5,001 to 10,000 Philippine pesos per month. In Baan Sob Pong in Thailand, the average monthly income of 41 per cent of the respondents ranged from 1,001 to 3,000 baht. Some 18 per cent of respondents had average incomes between 3,001 to 5,000 baht per month. In Baan Mae La Na, 33 per cent of respondents had an average monthly income between 1,001 and 3,000 baht, 30 per cent had less than 1,000 baht, and 18 per cent earned between 3,001 and 5,000 baht. In Viet Nam, per capita average monthly income in the Phu Lac commune was USD\$21, and in the Yen Tap commune,

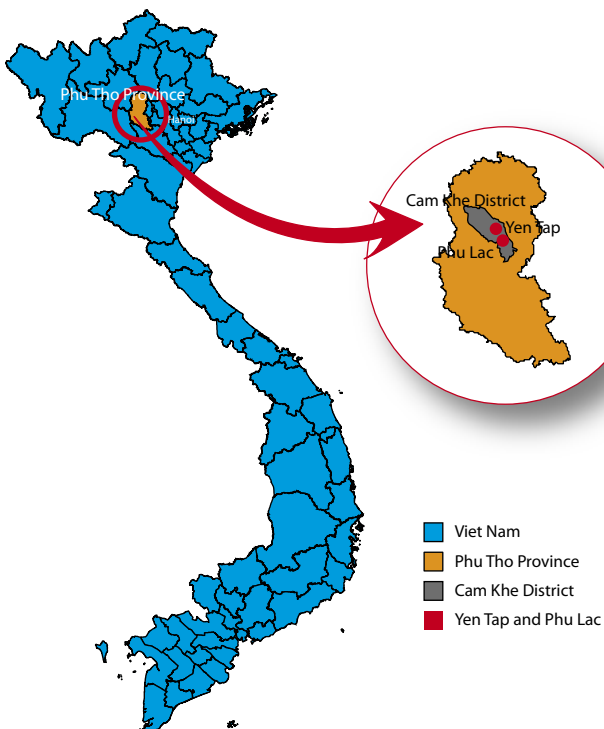
Map of the Philippines



Map of Thailand



Map of Viet Nam





Talking with relatives of labour who are working far from home in Yen Tap commune, Viet Nam.

less than USD\$18. Rural youth in these sites were generally underemployed and expressed an interest in undertaking additional income generating work.

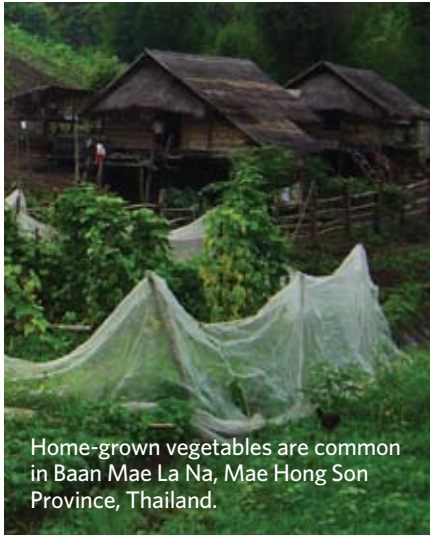
Resulting from its geography, namely an archipelago of several thousand small islands, individual family land or farm holdings in the Philippines tend to be small and a significant contingent of the population is landless. These landless farmers and their families tend to shift towards non-farm work, however, non-farm work for the poorly educated, ill-trained rural youth is often sub-standard. Fishing and service employment were also prevalent. Since the survey sites in the Philippines were island provinces with large coastal areas, fishing was an important activity, but some respondents and their families were also engaged in farming activities ranging from corn and coconut growing to charcoal making and livestock rearing, often on rented farms. More than 50 per cent of the respondents were engaged in service-related work such as driving utility motorbikes, acting as security guards, cooks, delivery persons or domestic workers. Approximately 30 per cent worked in petty trading or in small-scale enterprises and about a fifth of respondents, in government service work. Most Filipino respondents expressed an interest in learning how to use technology to improve their productivity and increase their incomes.

In Baan Sob Pong in Thailand, approximately 44 per cent of the respondents were informal workers. The occupations of the rural youth spanned from being employed in agriculture, working for small business owners, to owning their own small businesses. A lesser contingent was employed in construction and industry. Of the three categories of target rural youth as mentioned above, those that were engaged in village-based employment on a permanent basis tended to have a lower income than those opting for seasonal employment in urban cities nearby, while residing in the village, and those youth that migrated and resided in urban cities for specific periods of the year.

Female youth labour received lower pay compared to their male counterparts in general. In Baan Mae La Na, 20 per cent of the respondents were employed in the informal sector. Construction, working in small businesses owned by others, and other forms of low-skill work summarizes the occupations of the majority of respondents. Approximately a third of respondents had a second job and slightly more than a quarter worked on farm. The majority of the youth in both villages suggested that their ideal occupation would be work in the government, followed by trade and small business. A smaller number of respondents identified industry, agriculture and construction as their preferred occupations. About a quarter of respondents cited a lack of an official ID card as a major obstacle in obtaining employment. This indicates a disadvantage of ethnic minorities residing in Thailand in finding decent employment opportunities.

In Viet Nam, a large share of the population in the surveyed villages relies on agriculture for income and all of the respondents had some farming experience in various stages of rice, maize, tea and sweet potato production. About a third of respondents in both Yen Tap and Phu Lac had experience in off-farm activities such as carpentry, bamboo and rattan weaving and medical herb processing, in addition to brick making in Phu Lac. No respondents had formal written employment contracts. Their off-farm work was organized through verbal agreements. The income among families who have members working in the public sector, such as teachers and commune officers, and in private enterprises, tended to be higher than those who relied on farming. Furthermore, the income from families with the youth engaged in off-farm activities, either locally or in cities, tended to be higher than the incomes of families relying solely on farming.

The Vietnamese field study suggested that families and youth would prefer to work in the villages if there were sufficient training and employment opportunities. Several respondents expressed an interest in undertaking additional work in their communities, such as making handicrafts (e.g. bamboo products, rattan crafts and embroidery). About a fifth of respondents noted that their



Home-grown vegetables are common in Baan Mae La Na, Mae Hong Son Province, Thailand.

families did not want them to work outside of their communes and instead preferred to have them assist in daily on-farm activities. The majority of families nevertheless seemed to favour sending their youth to work in cities to generate more income for the family, irrespective of their educational qualifications, or previous work experiences.

Several respondents from all the surveyed sites had to abandon school in order to engage in paid employment. However, a lack of education and training was a major obstacle in finding decent work. A few respondents that tried to balance work and school admitted that it was very difficult to do so.

The survey findings indicate that a major problem regarding employment for rural youth was less a difficulty in finding work, and more a problem of the low paid, temporary, seasonal and/or informal nature of their work. In Thailand and Viet Nam, low remuneration was a main reason for rural youth to switch jobs. In the Philippines, however, over half of the respondents said that they were satisfied with their pay. Nevertheless, all three country studies suggested a need not just to create more jobs, but to improve income, security and working conditions.

The field survey findings suggest further that on-farm income is generally lower than off, or non-farm income. Work in an urban city tends to offer higher paid work than that in the rural areas. Limited opportunities for off-farm work in rural areas tended to compel a large number of rural youth to seek employment in urban areas. Their need for higher pay was nonetheless not always met, as the crowded urban labour markets were unable to absorb migrants from rural areas. Furthermore, it is important to note that when considering expenses such as travel and accommodation in cities, the difference in real income between those working in rural areas and those working in urban areas was not so large. In this connection, the local governments in the Philippines promoted tourism as an additional means of non-farm employment.

(iv) Labour Market Information

All three country studies highlighted a lack of labour market information. The Philippine study referred to the Youth Hub that gives access to a tele-centre with computers and Internet facilities to aid in the job search and support entrepreneurial activities of the rural youth.

In Thailand and Viet Nam, such facilities were not mentioned. There seemed to be a lack of facilities to guide youth in their choice of occupations and training to meet labour market demands and individual interests. When such facilities existed, rural youth were often unaware of them.

The common sources of labour market information for rural youth in the survey sites included the radio, newspapers, public newsstands, television, and by word of mouth between family members, relatives and friends.

Challenges and Recommendations

This section summarizes the opportunities and challenges concerning the promotion of training and employment among the rural youth, and presents recommendations.

A. Summary-Training and Employment Opportunities

Several organizations in three countries, including NYC in the Philippines, DoVE and DSD in Thailand, and MARD in Viet Nam, have undertaken measures to provide training for the rural youth. However, there was limited access to formal training in all the survey sites. This was either because such training programmes did not exist, or the respondents were unaware of them. While a few respondents in each surveyed sites had informal training from their parents, almost all respondents expressed an interest in receiving formal training.

In terms of employment, an evident trend is the influx of rural youth into the urban areas in search of employment. This is against the backdrop of the concentration of employment opportunities in urban areas, especially those created due to trade and technology advancements in the manufacturing and service sectors. Meanwhile, the field studies suggested potential for community-based employment opportunities.

The areas of employment common to the three countries are tourism, handicraft making (such as bamboo, rattan crafts and embroidery), and service related work (such as motorcycle delivery, security guard and domestic work), in addition to fishing (in the case of the Philippines), and agribusiness and construction (in the case of Thailand), and brick making and infrastructure projects, and public sector works, including teaching and commune office work (in the case of Viet Nam).

B. Recommendations

Policy coordination

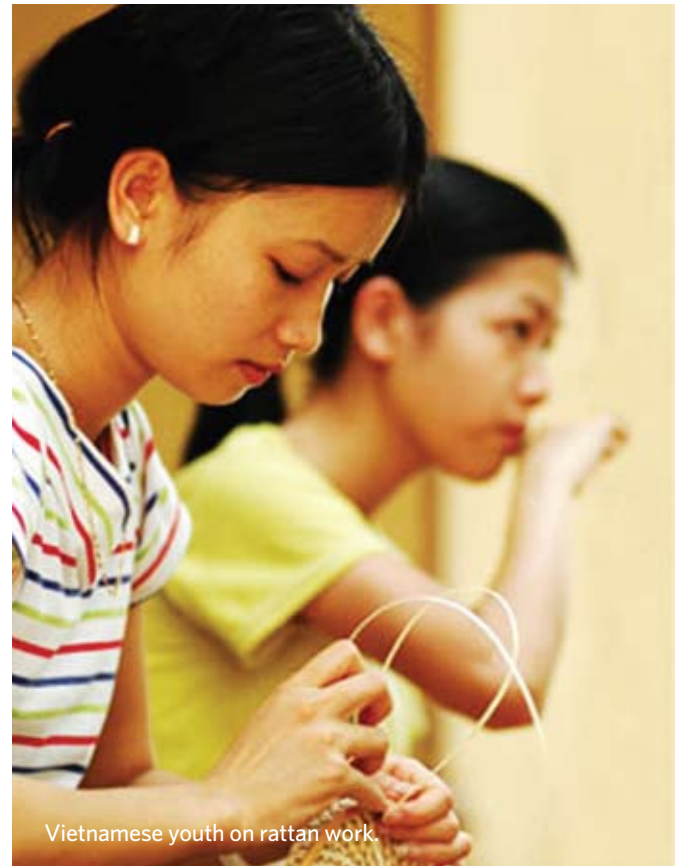
The findings from the country studies demonstrated that there are four, interrelated areas of major challenges with regard to employment and training of the rural youth. These areas are education, training, employment and income generation, and labour market information. While the governments of the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam have all sought to address concerns in these areas, local level impacts have been limited. This is due to the limited human (both in number and quality) and financial resources particularly in terms of reaching the local and community levels.

- *Recommendation 1: There is a need for better policy coordination, both among national level government agencies and between the national and local level government agencies, as a means to address the challenges relating to resource limitations including their use and effective policy implementation. In addition, decentralization of implementation may also be pursued, on the condition that appropriate monitoring and evaluation are provided by the respective central and/or decentralized governments. It is also essential to ensure broad-based ownership in improving the employment and training prospects of the rural youth, through capacity building of the staff involved, as well as collaboration with other stakeholders, such as labour market institutions (i.e. employers' and workers' organizations, and representatives of interest groups, such as youth associations).*

Employment and Income Generation

Rather than a lack of employment opportunities per se, a major issue is a lack of decent work opportunities. While large numbers of rural youth migrate to urban areas, they are often disappointed by a lack of such opportunities. The youth may prefer to stay in rural areas provided that employment and income generation opportunities are improved.

- *Recommendation 2 a): Given the important role of agriculture in rural communities, priority must be directed towards improving productivity in the agricultural sector, which can contribute to economic development and poverty reduction in rural areas. Livelihood diversification, along with the application of improved agri-business and technology application, can be explored.*
- *Recommendation 2 b): It is critical to create options for the rural youth to seek employment in rural areas through creating and improving the quality of employment in the on, off and non-farm sectors. In this undertaking, it is important to take local contexts into account to ensure that knowledge and skills attained are in line with rural labour markets and employment needs.*
- *Recommendation 2 c): There is a need to promote an entrepreneurial culture and enabling environment for youth in wage- and/or self-employment sectors. Entrepreneurship provides greater opportunities for employment, skills development, as well as innovation in products and services. Consideration needs to be taken that entrepreneurship does not come at the expense of education.*
- *Recommendation 2 d): It is important to place greater emphasis on improving access to micro-credit schemes, financial/business training, business development services and market information, as a means to encourage youth entrepreneurial activity/self-employment.*



Vietnamese youth on rattan work.

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Training

In addition to the availability and affordability of training, a major issue facing the rural youth is the lack of information and resultant awareness among the youth, their families and communities on the available training, particularly the ones meeting labour market demands. In addition, the youth or their families do not deem the time spent in training as a desirable trade-off to earning immediate income which may come from a low-paying and low-productivity job.

- *Recommendation 3 a): In order to ensure the quality and relevance of training, efforts must be made to first assess the labour market needs in the given local context, and then to create opportunities for skills training to meet these needs, as well as the preferences of the rural youth.*
- *Recommendation 3 b): It is important to encourage families and the rural youth to recognize the benefits of training, while disseminating information on available training opportunities, scholarships, youth programmes, and job fairs through the use of appropriate media, such as newspapers, television and radio. The promotion of training should not come at the expense of higher level education, but can be promoted in such a way as to supplement formal education.*
- *Recommendation 3 c): It is important to secure funding for training programmes to benefit the current and future youth, and make training affordable and accessible to women and disadvantaged groups.*

Formal Education

The main barriers to formal education identified from the case studies are access, affordability, quality and relevance, particularly in rural areas where physical access to secondary schools is difficult and the incidence of poverty is high. An added problem is a lack of teachers, appropriate learning equipment and infrastructure.

- *Recommendation 4 a): Countries should continue to strive for free, quality education and training up until the minimum working age. For those countries still striving to achieve free basic education, lowering the direct (e.g. school fees) and indirect costs (e.g. text books, uniforms, transport) of education can help prevent early school drop-out among poor families and ensure that young people have a*

smooth transition from school to work in the rural and remote areas.

- Recommendation 4 b): There is a need for continuous efforts to ensure gender parity and raise overall equality in education for migrant, minority, working children, and otherwise marginalized, disadvantaged groups in order for inclusive and easily accessible education.
- Recommendation 4 c): In order to improve the quality of education available for rural youth, greater investment is needed to ensure adequate classroom materials, safe and well-maintained school environments, quality of teachers through training, along with better remuneration.

Labour Market Information

There is a scarcity of labour market information in general, particularly in rural areas. This is an obstacle for governments to devise informed policies and also for the youth to make informed decisions on employment and training. It is also a challenge in matching the supply and needs of rural youth with the demands of the labour market.

- Recommendation 5 a): It is essential to strengthen the promotion and dissemination of information on the opportunities and services that are available to rural youth, as well as the risks and benefits associated with migration to urban areas or abroad. Appropriate media needs to be used, such as radio, newspapers, television, internet and leaflets, in addition to schools and training institutions, as well as call centres and private companies.
- Recommendation 5 b): It is important to enhance employment assistance and career guidance for rural youths by creating and improving facilities in rural areas with trained professionals and access to technologies such as Internet-based information databases.



Hemp textile by Hmong ethnic group, Lung Tam commune, Quan Ba district, Ha Giang, Viet Nam.

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Country specific observations and recommendations

The following country specific observations are highlighted as possible areas for country specific recommendations and follow up action:

Philippines

- “Ladderized education”, (i.e. the breaking-up of the four-year curricular programme into several associate programmes that can be completed in one or two years) can be explored. Upon the completion of one associate programme, students can either seek employment or pursue the next level associate programme until a Baccalaureate degree is obtained.
- Emphasis should be placed on creating jobs in the areas of business and entrepreneurship, ICTs, tourism related services and environment and sustainable development related occupations. There is also the need to focus more on ICT employment opportunities in rural areas, such as call centres, business procurement outsourcing, and internet cafes. The youth are generally knowledgeable about ICT, and are well placed to take advantage of such job opportunities. ICTs are also a source for labour market information.
- Institutions such as the National Youth Commission and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, as well as local NGOs are well placed to disseminate information regarding grants, and scholarships available to youth, and the labour market.

Thailand

- His Majesty the King’s philosophy of a “sufficiency economy”, which stresses balanced development and highlights the importance of development of each area/region relevant to their resource conditions, is considered essential to the development and integration of the principles of the sufficiency economy into the school curriculum. This concept should be further encouraged and strengthened. The principles and farm-level diversification should be further explored to reduce unemployment among the rural poor.

- Educational opportunities for youth in remote and poor areas should be broader, more diverse and more flexible to meet diverse backgrounds, needs and abilities. In addition, strategies should be developed to promote cooperative enterprises and social services, as well as an entrepreneurial culture. These initiatives are an important means of enhancing job opportunities for the rural youth.

Viet Nam

- It is particularly important in Viet Nam to create community-based employment opportunities, since the country study indicated that many youths would prefer to stay in rural areas provided that better training, employment and income generation opportunities are available. In this regard, areas of off-farm employment to be explored include bamboo and rattan product and handicraft making. These can supply marketable and environmentally friendly products while providing income generation opportunities for the youth.
- The export of labour to other countries is a priority in Viet Nam's employment strategy. This may be pursued as a means to develop the technical skills of the rural youth who, upon returning to their country, could contribute to a raised human resource capacity. This programme needs to be balanced with appropriate and sustained investment in enhancing coordinated education, training and decent work opportunities in rural communities.

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Education for Rural People

Education for Rural People or ERP is one of several EFA Flagship Programmes for which the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is co-leader with UNESCO. The flagship is a call for collaborative action to address rural-urban disparities by targeting the educational and training needs of rural people many of whom are also farmers. The partnership is open to members committed to working to achieve this goal. Rural youth are important stakeholders for ERP efforts.



Decent Work for All

Decent Work sums up the aspirations of people in their working lives. It involves opportunities for work that is productive and delivers a fair income, security in the workplace and social protection for families. It involves better prospects for personal development and social integration; freedom for people to express their concerns, organize and participate in the decisions that affect their lives; and equality of opportunity and treatment for all women and men.



Decade of Education for Sustainable Development

The basic vision of the DESD is a world where everyone has the opportunity to benefit from education and learn the values, behaviour and lifestyles required for a sustainable future and for positive societal transformation. UNESCO was requested to lead the Decade and develop an International Implementation Scheme (IIS) for the Decade which sets out a broad framework for all partners to contribute to the Decade.