

THE COMING CRISIS IN YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

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“It is not easy to be young in the labour market today”

ILO Global Employment Trends for Youth 2017

- Open unemployment
- “Working poverty” rates
- Casual, precarious informal sector employment
 - all higher for youth than for adults
 - especially high for rural, and female youth

Today's youth

- more endowed with 'human capital' than any previous generation, but
- for them, more than any previous generation, human capital theory does not work

The (relatively) educated un(der)employed

- ‘timepass’ (India)
- ‘waithood’ (Africa)
- informal internship/volunteering (everywhere)

Why does human capital theory not work for today's (poor, rural) youth ?

- The 'push-down' effect
- rapid, labour-displacing technological change

JM Keynes (1930):

a 17-hour working week by 2030?

‘relative surplus population’ ?

Chronic un(der)employment even when economies are growing:

- ‘jobless growth’
- new forms of part-time, temporary, intermittent and super-exploitative work > ‘a new category of labour, the precariat’ (Antunes 2018)

Rural youth

- compared to urban: longer school-to-work transitions, more casual/precarious employment
- “school-to-entrepreneur” transition: not an option for the majority

‘The agrifood sector is and will remain the single largest employer of the labour force and young people [...] given its capacity to absorb labour and the sheer number of young people engaged in this sector, [it] provides the most likely entry point for creating inclusive economic growth and improving youth livelihoods’

[Chicago Council 2018)

Average age of farmers

| Country (Year) | Average age | Notes |
|--------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| Vietnam (2006) | 37 | |
| India (2013) | 48 | |
| New Zealand (2015) | 48 | |
| Malaysia (2005) | 53 | |
| Philippines (2012) | 54 | |
| Thailand (2008) | 55 | |
| Australia (2016) | 56 | |
| Ireland (2017) | 57 | Women: 62 |
| Japan (2013) | 70 | 75% are over 60 |

The world's farmers are getting older – rapid changes in one generation

| | AUSTRALIA | | INDONESIA | |
|--------------|-----------|------|-----------|------|
| Year | 1981 | 2011 | 1983 | 2013 |
| Age | | | | |
| Under 35 | 28 % | 13 % | 25 % | 13 % |
| 35-54 | 47 % | 37 % | 57 % | 54 % |
| 55 and above | 25 % | 50 % | 18 % | 33 % |

‘What do you want to be when you grow up?’

Rural youth aspirations

- Produced *relationally* (social acceptability filters)
- Overwhelming preference for secure, formal-sector jobs
- But farming a possible option, IF
 - land and inputs available
 - commercially viable
 - combined with other income sources

Returning migrants: ‘late continuer’ farmers

In Kaliloro (Java)* the typical ‘young farmer’

...is in his (or her) 30s or early 40s and has a history of prior non-farm employment (usually involving migratio) before returning to farming [...] young people’s livelihood pattern – like that of their parents – is one of pluroiactivity, living from smallholder farming plus other sources (livestock, wage work, petty trade, services, etc.

*(from the ‘becoming a young farmer’ project – see Hanny Wijaya presentation this afternoon)

Mainstreaming youth in social policy discourse and practice means:

- young people as subjects, actors and citizens
- support for small-scale agriculture and opportunities for young rural men and women to engage in farming, as a cornerstone of rural youth policy
- where necessary to safeguard wage incomes, regulating technological change in the agrifood sector
- active youth labour market programmes
 - public sector jobs in ‘socially useful work’
 - wage subsidies to private-sector employers
 - meaningful work experience programmes
- making rural places more attractive for young men and women to live and work