

Viabale Economic Opportunities for Rural Youth

**Understanding Rural Youth Perspectives and
Rural Development Strategies**

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I will organize my presentation around these questions:

What do we need to know about rural youth vs. young people in general?



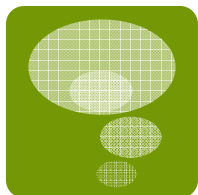
How do we identify viable opportunities for young people in rural areas?

Check your assumptions about young people against their lived reality.

“Rural youth are similar to each other in all the ways that matter for my program.”

KEY VARIABLES OF DIFFERENCE:

- Education achievement and ambition
- Links to other (rural and urban) spaces and opportunities
- Stage in the life cycle



“Rural youth are different in significant ways from urban youth in their aspirations.”

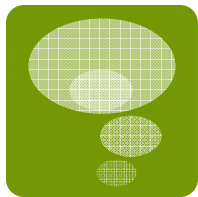
KEY SIMILARITIES:

- Education achievement AND (realistic) aspiration
- Links to other spaces and opportunities
- Stage in the life cycle

In sum, rural youth may be more different from each other than we expect, and be more similar to urban youth than we think. So we need to ask, what differences/similarities matter for our programs?

In addition.....for opportunities in agriculture:

Know the history of young people and their communities with a particular type of farming/crop.



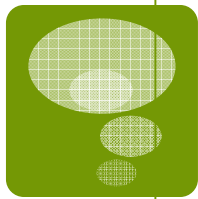
Example: cocoa vs. pineapple

Cocoa as a traditional crop with stable market offering long-term income versus pineapple as a newer, export crop offering short-term job opportunities. Therefore, attract different kind of workers—those in cocoa were interested in farming cocoa specifically, while those in the pineapple sector were after wage employment, often in the short-term.

ALSO pineapple offers a broader spectrum of activities that comprise the agri-food sector, including producing, retailing, exporting and marketing.

For BOTH agriculture and non-agricultural opportunities

Ask, 'Does it match young people's aspirations?'



And what is the nature of these aspirations? Are they for...

- 'Quick money' – for consumption, for capital?
- Primary livelihood activity
- Marginal income (on-the-side)
- Stop-gap