Rural youth and land access: The case of Madagascar

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Youth between 15 and 24:

- 1/5 of the population and 1/3 of the workforce
- 75% live in rural areas

- Every year: 250,000 rural youth enter the labour market
- Urban labor market cannot absorb all these youth. No significant economic alternative in rural areas

- Agriculture: the most realistic prospect, even if articulated with others off-farm activities

- However, the national data testifies the scarcity of land = average size farm about 1 ha

Malagasy context
Central research questions

✓ What are the ways for rural youth of accessing to land?
✓ What strategies do rural youth adopt to cope with land constraints?
Methodology

- Analyzes from statistical treatments of a database from a survey of 1,862 rural households in 9 communes (including 26% young households)

- Qualitative study in one rural commune with seniors and youth
HOW DO YOUTH ACCESS TO LAND?
Start farming without parents’ support …
…and buy a small land area

• More than a half of youth inherit land at least one agricultural plot from their parents … but belatedly

• 41% of them do not inherit land from the family to start farming!

• Then, more than a half of youth have to access to land through the market (56%)

⇒ If in some cases, they access to land from families at favourable prices and conditions, in many cases, they need to acquire a start-up capital … and very often they can afford to buy only one small plot …

• Smaller land areas … Smaller than the seniors: on average 1.5 ha against 2.16 ha for seniors (but one-third of youth have less than 0.5 ha)
Limited land access for young women

• No law discriminates against women but in practice, strong inequalities

• **70% of young women do not inherit land** (against 22% of men)

• But they obtained more donations (20% of them against 10% of young men): case of divorced women that receive very often land from their parents or brothers when they come back to the village

• Whatever the way they access to land, **young women have less land = less plots and less land area**
  ➞ 70% of women have less than 0.5ha (against 29% of men) and **47% have even less 0.05ha** (against 5% of the men)
WHAT STRATEGIES DO RURAL YOUTH ADOPT TO COPE WITH LAND CONSTRAINTS?
• **Diversification:**

  Rural youth **diversify their activities**: intensive breeding, handcraft (masonry, basketry, mechanics, sewing), small store keeping, daily work

• **Migration:**

  - **Few youth definitely migrate** to look for available land
    - deep attachment to the family and the *tanindrazana* (ancestral land),
    - access to social network and solidarity devices
    - discouraged by previous settling programs (insecurity, lack of infrastructure, no secured land, no solidaritary networks, limited possibility to diversify activities)

  - **Rather temporary migration** (few months or few years): they capitalise and come back to the village to invest in farming (buy one agricultural plot) or invest in off-farm activities
CONCLUSION
• Specific actions to help rural youth

➢ To stay on their territories: youth need to enjoy solidarity access and need support to diversify activities..

But, in some localities, no more land is available

➢ To tailor an innovative migration policy

▪ to consolidate existing rural migration and not to try to organize them with top-down approaches.
▪ to capitalise on the failure of the top-down settling programs as on the success of private initiatives;

➢ In both case (support on their existing or new territories): to adopt a holistic approach

▪ land access is not the only obstacle for entering in agriculture, there is a need to develop the value chains, tailor-made credit and training, etc.
▪ to ease the diversification of activities...
➢ To get a better land access through market:
  ▪ strengthening of information devices on market, notably at the level of the Communal local land office (Guichet foncier), developed thanks to land reform;

➢ To improve land access through the redistribution of under or non-valuated land, notably the State-owned land.
  ▪ These types of land should be identified in an inventory and transferred to the commune or/and to the youth.
  ▪ The types of redistribution and actions accompanying them should take the lessons from other international experiences.

➢ To optimise the use of small land area through technical support to develop specific activities such as market gardening, pig farming, etc;
Misaotra indrindra tompoko naharitra nihaino

Merci pour votre aimable attention

Thank you for your attention