

# Youth Participation and Diversification Strategies in Rural Economy: Issues and Evidence from Senegal

**Thierno Malick Diallo**

Status/designation  
Affiliation/University

## Background

- About 60 percent of Senegal's population are under the age of 24 years.
- Youth involvement in economic activities remains relatively low, alongside a high rate of unemployment which has attracted significant interest among policy makers in the country.
- Despite the importance of youth employment in the economic development process, the country is yet to fully benefit from its high percentage of youth in the population.
- Studies in recent years have reflected a stagnation in formal employment.
- The informal sector is projected to supply between 80 to 97 percent of jobs, in areas like family-run businesses or farming, trade and urban-based services.

- Most rural youth have limited access to basic infrastructure needed to expand their economic activities.
- In fact, only 4 percent of rural youth live in communities with access to all-weather roads, and the proportion of rural youth living in communities with access to food markets does not exceed 6 percent.

## Statement of problem

- According to ILOSTAT, 63% of young females and 29% of young males are not in employment, education or training.
- According to this study, rural youth have low level of education, 72% of rural youth are uneducated.
- 14% have completed the primary and secondary levels of education, respectively.

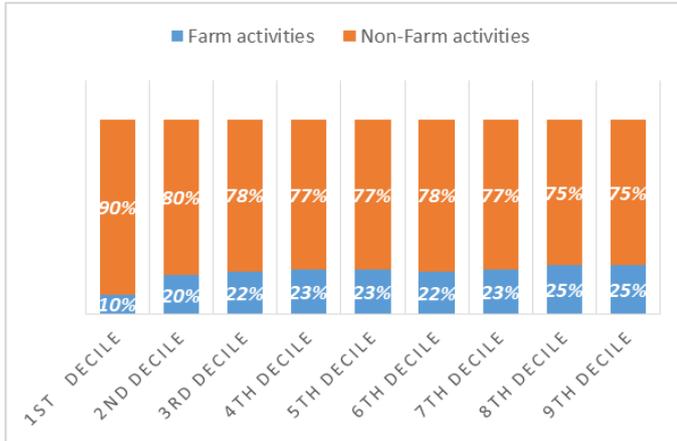


- University graduates constitute less than 1%.
- This situation indicates that many youth are out of school and out of work in Senegal.

## Youth labor market outcomes in rural Senegal

Four rural employment categories are identified:

- Farm wage employment
- Non-farm wage employment



Data from the Poverty Monitoring survey

- Farm self-employment
- Non-farm self-employment
- Non-farm self-employment emerges as the most important monthly income source for rural youth in Senegal.
- Farm activities provide the lowest earnings.
- Results indicate that rural youth derive a large part of their income from non-farm activities.

## Results

- Adopt a comprehensive vision of rural economy with strong synergies between the farm and non-farm sectors.
- Create and implement policies that will increase rural youth human capital and the level of education among rural youth. Those with primary and tertiary education have been found to earn relatively more than their non-educated peers.
- Increase investments in rural infrastructure. The lack of infrastructure services, such as access to roads and markets, is associated with low employment opportunities and incomes for rural youth.
- Policy-makers can improve the access to basic infrastructure services so that youth can benefit from the expansion of rural activities.

