



THE COMPARATIVE STUDY OF YOUTH BASED AGRICULTURE INITIATIVES: OPTIMIZING THE ROLE OF INDONESIAN YOUTH IN IMPROVING FOOD SECURITY

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ABSTRACT

According to the Agricultural Census of Indonesia in 2013, there was only 4% (less than 3.5 million) youth aged 15-35 working as a farmer. This low number is perceived as one of the threats to the nations' state of food security. With the ever-increasing population, the risk of food insecurity is also escalating since this surging population is not followed by increasing youth farmers and arable land as 200,000 hectares of crop fields in Indonesia have been converted every year. In addition to the lack of arable land, the general perspective of working in agriculture sector seems unpromising for most youth. This worsens the state of food insecurity unless there is a breakthrough to ignite youth's interest to be involved in agriculture sector. While the proportion of youth population both in rural and urban areas are relatively similar (23% and 25% respectively in 2018), different approaches to engage youth from both areas might be needed. Fortunately, many initiatives have been conducted globally to appeal to more youth. In principle these approaches allow youth to acquire agriculture skills, from enabling land access for youth to exposing the agriculture sector to the digital world. The current generation of young professionals in Indonesia has also been playing their roles to improve the state of food security. Using the available information acquired from secondary data and interviews, this paper aims to identify, compare, and define the most viable approach amongst the existing initiatives, including land access, crop insurance, and incentive for youth farmers in rural area; and mainstreaming digital platform such as peer-to-peer lending, local product promotion, and vertical farming to engage urban youth. Expectedly, the result of this study will eventually optimize the youth's role in improving the state of food security.

Keywords: food security, youth, agriculture sector, community development.

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