

Submitted Abstract

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First Author First Name Last Name	Kesaraporn Sreechun
Submitting Author First Name Last Name	Kesaraporn Sreechun
Correspondence	ketcnx@gmail.com
Co-Authors >> E-Mails will be not listed	Thamsuwan, Natthawan; Yusuk, Pedcharada
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Abstract

Mountainous regions in Thailand covers 53% of total areas of 20 provinces mostly located in the North and Southwest. Located in marginalized and remoted areas, a million of a mountain people have lived in harsh conditions and extreme poverty. Since 2005, Highland Research and Development Institute (HRDI) a public funded organization has delivered holistic livelihood development programs that includes decent jobs creation and income generation, fostering mountain ecosystem where is the water tower of the nation and self-help groups empowerment.

As agriculture is predominant in mountain, the first HRDI entry of economic development is agricultural extension with high productivity of alternative crops and live stocks and compliment with local crafts and artisan. The extension program is based on an area-approach delivered through the HRDI field officers and backed up by in house development-oriented research team. As a results, 160,000 farmers have learned and adopted hand on farming practices that generates food and income for their household of which one third is running farm enterprise and cooperatives of both annual and perennial crops that take advantages of climatic condition in mountain.

Despite favourable development results in the first decade, it is notably obvious that most beneficiaries' farmers are 40-50 years old whereas there is less than 10% of young people in the circle. As the initial phase of development programs had mainly targeted mid-career farmers, this may unintentionally neglect young people. But the most challenge is current and future situation of Thailand that is becoming aging society in 2022. The matters of youth future in mountain in not only decreasing number of young people but also increasing dependency ratio of house hold members with today youth. Relevant policy recommendations to attract young people mountain to live in mountain with decent jobs and self-esteem in harmony with mountain nature needs to be taken with urgency.