

**“Vanishing Youth?”**  
**A Situation on Asia’s Children.**  
**Towards Achieving Solidarity with Children**

(An Abstract)

by  
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How do we see the situation of children globally? This book which has explored the situation of children in ASIA attempts at an understanding of the issue in all its ramifications. In a complex and increasingly globalizing world, any issue demands a multifaceted and not just a monolithic solution.

Through various sources of information -- statistical data from Human Development Report (HDR, 2002), focus group discussions among foreign Asian students in the Philippines, e-mail dialogues with selected informants from other countries and/or through documents on China, India, Japan and the Philippines -- the book “Vanishing Youth” points to a basic insight regarding the need for integrating inner ecology, human ecology and environmental ecology to support a sustainable life-cycle and the development growth of peoples..

It has been found out that the countries with high HDI have fewer children and a fast increasing elderly while those who have low HDI can take pride in having a youthful population where the aging population is still proportionally less in number compared with high HDI societies. In countries with low HDI, there is normally only a small middle class that will have to take care of the great majority of children and youth as well as the increasing elderly. While here, there is a flourishing youth, it is the observation that youth tend to vanish from the rural areas to the cities and to other countries.

The study suggests that birth control is not the adequate solution to the problem of poverty.. Important is to guarantee a balanced population...a strong middle class, a proportionate number of children and youth at the base, balanced with a proportionate number of the elderly. From four countries as cases studied, one asks the questions: How will Japan which ranks no. 1 in terms of Human Development Index (HDI) resolve its problem of increasing elderly and fewer and fewer children? What will happen to China which constitutes more than a billion inhabitants if the one-child policy continues, re-enforced by cultural preference for boys? How will India despite its phenomenal economic and industrializing growth bridge the gap between the rural and the urban areas and the caste/class and gender divide? And how will Philippines which is strong in its collective ideals for the protection and health of children, promote and sustain a movement towards a culture of life, justice, and peace?

Insights gleaned from the study point to a new paradigm of development that is well-being oriented and not just GDP or GNP oriented. The proposal is for communities to follow a program of Co-Creating a Sustainable Bio-Regional Community (CSBCom) rooted in the concept of Dr. Sixto Roxas' Eco-System based Community Centered Organization and Management of a region around a watershed area.

A CD accompanying "Vanishing Youth" portrays the problems besetting children in the Philippines and poses questions to adults of different sectors so that children-and-youth-in-need could be transformed into Children and Youth in Action for a Sustainable Future.

