



13. The relative influence of rural people is declining

As a result of the demographic, institutional, and urbanization processes identified in many of these other observations, the overall ability of rural people and groups to influence economic and social policy has declined. This is reflected in declining political representation, the relatively limited economic flexibility of small municipalities, increasing income disparities between rural and urban regions, and the reorganization of property rights.

Implications: Rural communities and people must find new ways to represent their interests and influence policies.

Strategies to consider:

a) Develop networks with urban-related people and organizations.

- b) Identify common interests of rural and urban people, then focus on them to build alliances.
- c) Build political alliances across rural diversity.

Questions to ask:

- a) How are rural and urban people, groups, and activities related?
- b) Which urban-centric policies, programs, and structures undermine rural revitalization? Which support it?
- c) What are the common interests of rural and urban people?
- d) What political alliances reflecting urban interests are currently represented? How effective are they in furthering rural interests?