Rural Livelihoods, Diversity and Poverty Reduction Policies: Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi and Kenya

by

Frank Ellis

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ABOUT LADDER

LADDER is a research project funded by the Policy Research Programme of the UK Department for International Development (DFID) that seeks to identify alternative routes by which the rural poor can climb out of poverty. LADDER is working with nearly 40 villages and 1,200 households in Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi and Kenya to discover the blocking and enabling agencies in the institutional environment facing rural people that hinder or help their quest for better standards of living for themselves and their families.

This working paper represents work-in-progress and the reader is advised that it has not been subjected to academic quality control, nor edited for errors of fact or interpretation. The paper forms part of a mosaic of research findings that will contribute towards an overall picture of rural livelihoods and micro-macro links to poverty policies in the case-study countries. The findings and views expressed here are solely the responsibility of the authors and are not attributable to DFID.

All available Working Papers and Village Reports can be downloaded from the project website: <u>http://www.uea.ac.uk/dev/odg/ladder/</u>, which also details other information about the project. For any further enquiries, please email j.mims@uea.ac.uk.

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Summary

This working paper sets out an overview and background to the research, and is an edited version of the Inception Report to the funding body presented at the start of the research process in October 2000. The purpose of releasing it in the current format is to provide the reader with information about the entry points of the research, as well as early ideas about the components and methodology of the research approach. Of course, some of these ideas were modified or adapted in practice and the factors that became interesting to pursue in detail changed as the research gained momentum. An account of the generic fieldwork methodology applied in all four countries is provided as Working Paper No.2 of this series.

This paper contains an updated list of the districts and villages in which field research was conducted (Annex Table 1), the collaborating institutions and individuals in each country with which the project is working (Annex Table 2), a list of UK researchers and their contact details (Annex Table 3) and a list of intended working papers (Annex Table 4).

Project summary

The purpose of the research is to identify and promote policies to reduce the vulnerability of poor rural people in low income countries. This purpose is pursued through the theme of policy reform options to support livelihood diversification in rural areas. The project is being undertaken in Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi and Kenya¹, and comprises three field locations in each country linked to natural resource management issues as well as the examination of micromacro economic and institutional links affecting livelihood diversification in each country and location. Project outputs will comprise involvement of key national agencies in the examination of the factors that enable or inhibit livelihood diversification, guidelines on practical policies to promote more diverse livelihoods, a set of working papers prepared jointly with partners, and a set of dissemination pathways by which policy relevant findings and processes are given wide exposure within and outside the case-study countries. The project intends to contribute to DFID's goals of promoting sustainable livelihoods and enhancing management of the natural environment.

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¹ Note that work in Kenya was added to the research programme in mid-2001, and was commissioned by ICRISAT, not by DFID

The reduction of poverty ultimately requires that individuals and families are able to participate in productive economic activities that enable them to generate an adequate and secure standard of living. In the past it was often believed that agriculture on its own could achieve this goal, primarily by raising agricultural productivity continuously over time, but also by redressing issues of access to key resources such as land by land tenure reform and other devices. It has become apparent, however, that agriculture on its own often cannot provide the means of escaping poverty for the majority of the rural poor (see Ellis, 2000). The poor are observed to diversify income sources in order to cope with risk, seasonality and other adverse factors in agriculture, but almost no recognition has been given to this behaviour by the policy processes hitherto unfolding in low income countries. In particular, diverse livelihoods require quite different enabling contexts from those directed at improving people's prospects in single sectors. More attention needs to be given to the barriers that reduce people's mobility, discourage them from taking a broad view of opportunities and make it difficult for them to deal with spatially dispersed transactions. This research intends to redress this neglect of livelihood diversification as a personal and family strategy to achieve sustainable rural livelihoods and to tackle the critical issue of policy contexts that facilitate mobility and diversity rather than block or undermine these livelihood attributes.

Livelihood diversification as a policy issue for rural poverty reduction

A growing literature identifies the diverse livelihood strategies followed by rural households as a phenomenon the proper recognition of which could lead to an improved policy environment for tackling rural poverty. A number of considerations seem to lead in this direction: rural livelihoods are verified as diverse by numerous studies (Reardon, 1997; Francis, 2000); this diversity may be growing over time in sub-Saharan Africa (Bryceson & Jamal, 1997; Bryceson, 1999a); diverse livelihoods cut across orthodox economic sectors as well as across the rural-urban divide (Jamal, 1995); governments tend to be ill-equipped to service or support diversity because they are organised along sectoral lines.

Research on livelihood diversification to date has tended to be preoccupied with four main aspects. One is the determinants of diversification i.e. the factors that cause families to adopt more diverse livelihood strategies, rather than switching between full-time specialised occupations (Ellis, 2000). A second is the asset basis of livelihoods that permits this diversification to be more or less easily accomplished (e.g. Dercon & Krishnan, 1996). A third is the income distribution effects of different patterns of diversification (Reardon *et al*, 2000); and the potential to identify different income sources as having equalising or disequalising effects on rural incomes (Adams & He, 1995; Leones & Feldman, 1998). The fourth is whether diversification has beneficial or detrimental effects on farm output and productivity (e.g. Evans & Ngau, 1991).

Starting with some brief points on the causes of diversification, the general sub-Saharan Africa case is for this to occur when natural resource-based livelihoods are no longer able to provide a secure long-term livelihood on their own for a variety of reasons. Some of these are (i) land sub-division at inheritance causing plots to become less viable for family food security, (ii) adverse environmental change or cyclical trends that increase the risks associated with natural resource-based livelihood activities, (iii) declines in agricultural markets relative to non-farm wage levels, making agriculture less viable as a source of livelihood, (iv) rises in input costs due to the removal of subsidies under adjustment

programmes, and (v) deterioration in access to rural public services such as health or education due to poor economic performance, civil war, or cost-recovery policies under SAPs. These reasons are in addition to what might be called the "classic" or generic reasons for diversification, namely, mitigating seasonality and spreading risk in order to reduce individual and family vulnerability to adverse events and trends (Ellis, 2000).

The proposition has been advanced by Bryceson (1999a, 1999b) that livelihood diversification in sub-Saharan Africa has been accelerated by the negative impacts on the viability of natural resource-based livelihoods of structural adjustment programs. This process is referred to as 'deagrarianisation''. Some causes that fit into this hypothesis have already been mentioned in the preceding paragraph, viz. removal of agricultural price supports, removal of input subsidies, higher price risks due to market liberalisation and cost-recovery in rural service delivery. It must be remarked, however, that this proposition is quite difficult to verify. There exist very few reliable longitudinal studies that would permit the inference that livelihoods are more diverse now than they were, say, twenty years ago. Some researchers have reached different conclusions, for example, that SAPs have enabled positive diversification, by choice, rather than due to negative impacts on farm-based livelihoods (e.g. Booth *et al*, 1993).

Findings on other aspects of diversification yield some interesting insights. Diversification can certainly improve food security in the face of high risks of drought or other climatic disturbances (Reardon *et al*, 1992). Indeed it is those most reliant on agriculture in marginal areas like the Sahel that are most vulnerable to such risks. The capability to diversify is enhanced by human capital in the form of higher education level (Dercon & Krishnan, 1996). However, wealth in virtually any capital e.g. land, or cattle, or education confers a greater ability to diversify (Dercon, 1998) because this overcomes barriers to access faced by the asset poor (lack of financial resources, inability to navigate officialdom). Education level is a critical determinant of the type of labour markets in which diversification takes place. Those with more education can gain jobs in skilled and salaried labour markets, while those with less education must often make do with casual, unskilled and part-time work in low wage labour markets.

This latter consideration helps to answer a frequent finding in diversification studies, namely that the poor and the better off may display the same proportional degree of diversification out of agriculture (e.g. non-farm income corresponding to 60 per cent of total income), yet the absolute level of non-farm income of the better off will be several times that of the poor (see Reardon *et al*, 2000). Whether participation in non-farm labour markets equalises or disequalises rural incomes depends on both asset and activity considerations (Adams & He, 1995). For those having little or no access to land (in Asia, the landless rural poor), improved access to non-farm income sources may have a beneficial effect on rural income distribution overall. However, improving the income streams of activities that depend on assets that only the better off are likely to possess will have an opposing effect.

In sub-Saharan Africa, in general, there are marked gender and age differences in occupational mobility, so that women and children often continue to reside in the rural homestead, while men seek work in distant labour markets. In the past, this feature has been held to explain lack of success in achieving rises in farm productivity (Low, 1986). More positively, it may be male migration that ensures the food security of the rural homestead (David *et al*, 1995) given high levels of environmental uncertainty (c/f Reardon *et al.*, 1992). A pertinent finding of the David *et al* (1995) study in the Sahel is that migration did not alter

patriarchal patterns of decision making, nor the normative gender divisions of labour at household and village level. Key resource allocation decisions remained in the domain of male household heads despite their prolonged absence working in distant or urban labour markets.

The results of studies that have examined in detail the relationship between diversification and farm productivity are fairly mixed. On the one hand, there has been the observation for some locations that cash resources generated off-farm may be used for on-farm investment and therefore results in positive environmental change (Tiffen *et al*, 1994). Other researchers have found similar results, especially related to the positive impact on risk reduction that is conferred by having diverse income sources (Evans & Ngau, 1991; Taylor & Wyatt, 1996; Carter, 1997). On the other hand, there is the widespread recognition that removal of ablebodied labour from the rural setting can result in diminished ability to respond to adverse environmental trends; it also alters the participatory structure of community institutions, a point which is pertinent to one of the two major research questions that inform this project.

Relevance to sustainable improvement of livelihoods

From the foregoing it may be inferred that there are two aspects of rural livelihoods that are critical for the sustainable improvement of livelihoods and that remain relatively under-researched. The first of these is to do with the policy and institutional context of diversification; the second is to do with the relationship of diversification to natural resource management institutions. In the following paragraphs, these two policy issues are explored in more detail.

Little is known about policy and institutional contexts that facilitate or encourage rather than inhibit or block diversification. Clearly local level initiatives like microcredit or microenterprise development are designed to help people to create new forms of self-employment, or, at a larger scale, to start up businesses. However, these initiatives are often limited in scope and they take as given the wider policy and institutional context. There is a whole area around licensing and regulation, traditional authority, decentralised government authority, governance in decentralised institutions, and related policy and institutional factors that may hinder or help people who wish to diversify their livelihoods (Hussein & Nelson, 1998; Johnson, 1997; Leach *et al.*, 1997; Mosse, 2000). There may be hidden barriers that give some people routes out of poverty while denying similar routes to others. Dimensions of gender, ethnicity, religion and age may often prove significant in this regard.

Decentralisation, in particular, represents both an opportunity and a threat to the achievement of sustainable rural livelihoods in the case-study countries and elsewhere. It is an opportunity to the extent that top-down directives from central government are replaced by responsive district policies guided by knowledge of local-level needs and democratization of decisionmaking processes. In theory, space should be created for policies that are better informed about local needs and constraints, and that permit the poor a "voice" in determining priorities. However, opposing dangers are also present. Decentralisation could result in a proliferation of poorly remunerated local officialdom with a blocking rather than enabling view of rural livelihood contexts, bye-laws may be passed that constrain rather than open up choices and opportunities, local revenue generation may impose burdens on local enterprise and stifle local initiatives rather than providing resources that support and expand these efforts. The research will explore the experience hitherto of decentralisation and related processes and will seek to identify best practice for opening up livelihood possibilities rather than closing them down.

An important implication of diversification is that natural resource-based activities may become more or less permanently "part-time" in character, rather than the full-time job that is often implicitly or explicitly assumed about work or employment. Hence part-time fishing, part-time farming, part-time reliance on forest products, etc. may become more the norm than full-time engagement in these things. The part-time nature of natural resource activities may alter the way they are managed, the technology that is appropriate for them and the relevance of community institutions that govern access to them. The latter is an important issue in the case-study countries because community natural resource management is being widely adopted within them in the fisheries, forestry, irrigation and wildlife/tourism sub-sectors.

Diversification has implications for natural resource management institutions (both traditional and advocated), that need to be considered quite carefully. For example, the advocacy of community management may not work for the rural poor where diversity and mobility are cornerstones of their ability to construct viable livelihoods. Some considerations are:

- (a) community management places a premium on residence and participation as the basis of resource access decisions;
- (b) this may exclude those whose lifestyles are based on mobility and diversity, reducing their access to key resources;
- (c) an example drawn from lakeside communities are fishing livelihoods that depend on the ability to move to where the fish are to be found; here territorial use rights established under community management institutions may result in a reduction of access and therefore in a reduction overall in the capability of fishing as an activity to contribute to the livelihoods of the poor; and
- (d) diversity and mobility are also often associated with ethnic or cultural differences, for example, the ethnicity of those who have sedentary lifestyles may differ from those who have mobile lifestyles, and community management could potentially result in social exclusion on that basis.

The relationship of diversification to natural resource management institutions, especially institutions that are being advocated or put in place while the research is proceeding, thus constitutes the second important area about which we have little systematic knowledge at present. The research design explicitly recognises this, exploring both the nature of people's livelihoods in selected locations (differentiated by wealth categories) and the relationships to the natural resources to which they have access and the institutions that determine or modify access to these resources for different people.

Proposed research activities

This section sets out the research activities that are proposed during the period October 2000 to March 2003. This period broadly falls into three main phases. The first phase involves the conduct of fieldwork and related activities in the three case-study countries and is designed to be completed by October 2001. The second phase comprises analysis, writing up and dissemination across the four countries to take place from October 2001 to October 2002. A third phase occurring in the final six months of the project involves cross-country comparisons and an international conference.

At this point it is worth emphasising that the research is principally conducted by partner institutions in each country, including establishing research teams, conducting fieldwork, entering data, analysing data and writing up results. The main research partners are the Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC) in Uganda, the Department of Agricultural Economics, Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA) in Tanzania, and the National Economic Council in Malawi (see Annex Table 2). However, these are not the only partners: policy and livelihood-oriented NGOs are involved in each country, as also are personnel from relevant government departments. The role of the UK researchers, who will visit each country for relatively short periods, will be to engage in jointly agreed decisions about the conduct of the research, to provide inputs into start-up workshops for research teams, to provide inputs into data analysis and to assist in the joint production of working papers and other research materials.

While allowing for inter-country variation in the research process arising from partner priorities, it is nevertheless intended that a broadly replicable research methodology will be applied across countries and research locations. The purpose of this is to facilitate cross-country comparisons and contrasts, in addition to those that are observed within country. In what follows, general features of this methodology are set out first, followed by a more detailed description of research activities that are specific to each country.

The general approach of the research is to combine micro-level livelihood studies, with exploration of micro-macro links, and engagement in ongoing policy processes that are evolving simultaneously in all three case-study countries. Key generic features are as follows:

- micro-level livelihood studies undertaken at three locations in each country
 - purposive selection of locations in order to explore key natural resource management issues that vary between locations (e.g. fisheries, forestry, farming, etc.)
 - purposive selection of 3 villages in each location to represent differing facets of the natural resource management problem being addressed
 - qualitative research in each village and location designed especially to examine the institutional context of livelihood diversification
 - livelihoods sample survey comprising 35 households in each village, thus 105 households in each location, 315 households in each country and 1,260 households overall
 - stratification of sample by income-wealth groups in order to bring out clearly the critical constraints experienced by the rural poor in particular
 - analysis and writing up of micro-level studies conducted jointly by UK and partner researchers
- studies of key micro-macro policy links in each country
 - tracing the relationships between micro-level outcomes (as discovered by the micro studies) and macro level policy processes
 - investigation of the micro-macro economic links between macro reform policies on the economic side and livelihood outcomes at micro level
 - investigation of the micro-macro institutional links between decentralisation and related policies on the institutional side and the institutional context of livelihoods at micro level

- engagement in ongoing policy processes in each country
 - interaction with the key agencies and individuals involved in the Poverty Reduction Strategy Plan (PRSP) process in each country
 - feeding of preliminary research findings and results into PRSP processes
 - interaction with the key agencies and individuals involved in the decentralisation process in each country
 - interaction with sector-wide approaches (SWAs) to agriculture in each country, especially the Plan for the Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA) in Uganda which is cross-sectoral and multi-disciplinary in concept and intent
 - interaction with community resource management initiatives in each country, particularly those occurring in fishery, forestry, and wildlife/tourism management and parallel issues that arise with respect to irrigation management and community initiatives with respect to service delivery in agriculture

Summary

In summary, the key research questions addressed by this project, the basic research design and the research methods utilised are as follows:

Main Research Questions

- A. linking from micro up to macro, what are the policy contexts that enable or disable, encourage or discourage, livelihood diversification?
- B. what are the links, positive and negative, and mediated by wealth, income, location, gender, etc., between livelihood diversification and natural resource management policies?

Research Design

- 4 countries: Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Kenya
- 3 locations: representing different natural resource management concerns
 - → Uganda: farming, livestock, fishing
 - → Tanzania: farming, small-farm irrigation, wildlife
 - → Malawi: farming, forestry, fishing
 - → Kenya: farming, fishing, livestock
- micro-macro links: economic
- micro-macro links: institutions and processes

Research Methods

- *each location*: qualitative policy, processes and changing institutional context
- *each location*: quantitative assets, activities and changing vulnerability context

- analysis of micro-macro links: decentralisation, governance, institutional contexts
- all locations: gender; on-farm, non-farm and cross-sectoral diversification options

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LADDER Field Research Villages 2001

No	Village	NR Feature	Division ¹	District	
	NDA				
1 1	Bukhasusa	coffee-banana	Butiru	Mbale	
$\frac{1}{2}$	Buwopuwa	maize-cotton	Butiru	Wibaic	
$\frac{2}{3}$	Bunabuso	coffee-banana	Bududa		
5	Dullabuso	Conce-banana	Dududa		
4	Iyingo	fishing & farming	Kagulu	Kamuli	
5	Kinamwanga	fishing & farming	Kidera		
6	Kiribairya	fishing & farming	Buyende		
7	Kabbo	coffee-banana-livestock	Kasambya	Mubende	
8	Kansambya	coffee-banana-livestock	Maddudu	Iviubende	
9	Kalangaalo	coffee-banana-livestock	Bulera		
9	Kalangaalo	Conce-banana-investock	Duicia		
TAN	ZANIA				
10	Chanzuru Kati	farmer irrigation	Kimamba	Kilosa	
11	Chanzuru Darajani	farmer irrigation	Kimamba		
12	Chanzuru Chekereni	farmer irrigation	Kimamba		
13	Chakwale Kilimani	semi-arid maize	Gairo		
14	Kongwa Kibungo	wildlife-tourism	Mvuha	Morogoro	
15	Duthumi-Bonye Sogea Mbele	wildlife-tourism	Bwakira	Rural	
16	Sesenga Kibungo	wildlife-tourism	Bwakira		
17	Mlali Cuduaudu	rainfed maize	Mlali	Moregone	
17	Mlali Gudugudu Pinde			Morogoro Rural	
18	Nyandira Lundi	upland vegetable upland vegetable	Mgeta Mgeta	Rufai	
19			Mgeta		
MAL	AWI				
20	Kanyezi	maize-tobacco	Pemba	Dedza	
21	Kunsinja	maize-groundnuts-dimba	Pemba		
22	Lumwira	maize-vegetables	Kasumbu		
22	Chiwamba	forest management	Kasumbu		
24	Mpango	forest management	Kasumbu		
25	Phomula	maize-woodland	Kachindamoto		
26	Katanda	fishing & farming	Kuntumanji	Zomba	
20	Saukaphimbi	fishing & farming	Mwambo	Zomba	

continued.

KEN	\mathbf{YA}^2			
28	Kapsoya	tea & pyrethrum	Bomet Central	Bomet
29	Kiptunoi	maize & livestock	Songiroi	
30	Kiplabotwa	semi-arid maize	Sigor	
31	Mengit	semi-arid maize/millet	Longisa	
32	Siwot	hillside mixed crops	Longisa	
33	Nypuodi	maize, beans, sorghum	Lambwe	Suba
34	Makende	maize, beans, sorghum	Central	
35	Roo	fishing & farming	Central	
36	Gingo	fishing & farming	Central	
37	Nyaranda	fishing & farming	Mbita	

Notes:

- 1 Sub-County in Uganda, Division in Tanzania and Kenya, Traditional Authority (TA) in Malawi
- 2 The research in Kenya was funded by ICRISAT/UNDP

LADDER Research Teams in Uganda, Tanzania and Malawi

Name	Institution	Role and Skills
UGANDA		
Godfrey Bahiigwa	EPRC	Team Leader
Arsene Balihuta	Institute of Economics	Micro-macro economic
Sallie Simba	Faculty of Social Sciences	Micro-macro institutional
Andrew State	Faculty of Social Sciences	Social anthropologist
Josephine Ahikire	Dept of Gender Studies	Gender specialist
William Nanyenya	NARO	Livestock specialist
Godfrey Kayobyo	NARO	Field supervisor
Agnes Akwang	NARO	Field supervisor
Godfrey Turiho	Dept of Agric Economics	Research officer
TANZANIA		
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Sam Wangwe	ESRF	Micro-macro policy links
HKR Amani	ESRF	Micro-macro economic
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Brian Cooksey	TADREG	Agricultural sector review
MALAWI		
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Dennis Kayambazinthu	Forestry Research Institute	Forestry co-management

LADDER UK Researchers and Contact Details

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LADDER Working Papers (Version September 2001)

(in collaboration with in-country co-authors)

	PROPOSED WORKING PAPERS	Author	Date Due
1	Rural livelihoods, diversity and poverty reduction policies	FE	October 2001
2	Methods manual for fieldwork	Team	October 2001
3	Institutional context of rural livelihoods in Uganda	PF	October 2001
4	Decentralisation in Malawi	SC	October 2001
5	Livelihoods and Rural Poverty Reduction in Uganda	GB & FE	October 2001
6	Macro-micro economic links: Uganda	KKS	October 2001
7	Rural livelihoods and illnesses: Tanzania and Malawi	SK	November 2001
8	Community natural resource management: a critical review	PMB	November 2001
9	Institutional context of rural livelihoods in Tanzania	RJ	November 2001
5	Institutional context of crop marketing: Tanzania	BC	November 2001
11	Fisheries management policies and livelihoods: Uganda	EHA	November 2001
12	Crop-based farming policies and livelihoods: Uganda	JMD	November 2001
13	Livestock policies and livelihoods: Uganda	SA	November 2001
14	Water management policies and livelihoods: Tanzania	BAL	November 2001
15	Rural livelihoods and adaptability	DB	November 2001
16	Macro-micro economic links: Tanzania	KKS	November 2001
17	Gender and diverse livelihoods: Uganda	CSD	December 2001
18	Macro-micro economic links: Malawi	KKS	February 2002
19	Institutional contexts of rural livelihoods in Malawi	SC	February 2002
20	Livelihoods and rural poverty reduction in Tanzania	FE ++	February 2002
21	Gender and diverse livelihoods: Tanzania	CSD	March 2002
22	Wildlife and tourism management: Tanzania	CA	March 2002
23	Fisheries management policies and livelihoods: Malawi	EHA	March 2002
24	Crop-based farming policies and livelihoods: Malawi	JMD	March 2002
25	Forest management policies and livelihoods: Malawi	CHL	March 2002

continued.

26	Livelihoods and rural poverty reduction in Malawi	FE	March 2002
27	Institutional contexts of rural livelihoods: comparison	RJ/SC	June 2002
28	Macro-micro economic links: Comparison	KKS	June 2002
29	Livelihood strategies in Uganda, Tanzania and Malawi	JM	June 2002
30	Policy contexts for rural poverty reduction in eastern Africa	FE	June 2002

Note: The numbering of these WPs is provisional and they may appear in a different sequence and a different numbering from the list given here