



Rural livelihood transformations and local development in Cameroon, Ghana and Tanzania

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This working paper explores the importance of livelihood diversification and mobility in livelihood transformation processes in dynamic rural areas of sub-Saharan Africa. It focuses on poverty dynamics, food security and local development. Based on empirical research conducted in Cameroon, Ghana and Tanzania, the study shows that improved connectivity is a major driver of rural livelihood transformations and local development in these countries. The transformations in agricultural production systems also create a range of additional rural non-farm labour opportunities for local people, which in turn stimulate positive socioeconomic dynamics in the region.

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Summary

This working paper analyses livelihood transformations and rural-city connections in sub-Saharan Africa to identify some key policy areas for rural development. The empirical analysis builds upon qualitative fieldwork conducted in Cameroon, Ghana and Tanzania in eight different research sites. One common feature of the research sites is that each is a dynamic rural region in which transformation processes are guiding everyday life of rural households. Building on a wide range of empirical examples from these dynamic rural regions, the paper further analyses the general processes shaping rural transformation and rural-urban connections (which refer to multifaceted flows of people, goods, labour and capital). It aims to answer the following research question: how do rural-city connections and livelihood diversification contribute to local development processes in sub-Saharan Africa?

A large improvement in rural connectivity such as through technological infrastructure has contributed to increased mobility dynamics from, to and within the regions. Migration cannot be considered a unidirectional movement from rural areas to cities. It has instead been shaped by a chain of connections in which rural and urban livelihoods interact on a movement continuum. Temporary movement – whether daily, weekly or seasonally – characterises the main mobility pattern of rural households crisscrossing the region for social reasons as well as to search for employment, services, commercial goods and education. These temporary flows of people are complemented and linked with more permanent flows of mobility which makes the areas under study highly dynamic in terms of mobility inflows and outflows.

These rural dynamics have influenced development processes in the region in significant ways. The introduction of cash crops has for instance drawn a variety of traders and external actors who have turned the sites into attractive locations for investment. Several sites attract traders, businessmen and women who want to invest in land and create additional labour opportunities for local people. In turn, these rural people have a better income through which they can afford to travel to town, to cities or other rural areas to look for additional livelihood opportunities. Others start a business in the community; they open a small shop or a phone booth or buy a Chinese motorbike and become a taxi driver. People also invest in improved housing. These investments in real estate also create a vibrant market for building materials and informal jobs in the construction sector.

In addition, remittances are an important factor in contributing to local development. Especially in Ghana and Cameroon, remittances form a significant part of household

income. Most households engage in mobility as part of livelihood survival or consolidation strategies. They use remittances to buy various goods including farming inputs such as fertiliser, as well as cooking utensils, food supplies, cloth, bicycles or small solar panels to power lights at night and to charge mobile phones. Only a minor few succeed in accumulating wealth as a result of international remittances. When migrants organise themselves through hometown or migrant associations, remittances have the potential to be used for local development projects in infrastructure and services, especially when lobbied for at the national government level as in the case of Cameroon.

However, these positive economic dynamics also trigger challenges in terms of local rural development. At the household level, increased mobility of household members places an extra burden on family labour. Sometimes, households must reduce or even stop farming activities – making them more dependent on external money flows. Financial investments in household mobility can also reduce the availability of cash for daily needs.

At the community level, not everyone benefits to the same extent from dynamic rural transformations in the area. Certain population groups are very vulnerable. Fertile land becomes scarce in these regions. In addition, the lack of government support for large-scale investment in infrastructure and regional planning leaves villages highly dependent on private investments and the 'goodwill' of local elites and chiefs to initiate development projects. These are often driven by local power games. The availability of funds and resources can be unpredictable and unreliable. For success, local development initiatives should be further embedded in governmental structures.

The paper includes policy recommendations in relation to mobility, livelihood diversification and local development. Positive government-led measures could foster local and regional development in sub-Saharan Africa – recognising that current processes of livelihood transformation and mobility dynamics are essential not only for individual households' livelihoods, but also for societal development at large. In practice, governments could play a vital role by stimulating the construction and upgrading of regional roads and by investing in information and communication

technologies (ICTs). This might allow a broader range of actors to participate in the market exchange and to facilitate market information from towns and cities to villages. In addition, local governments could create off-season labour opportunities by employing people in road maintenance, construction work or service provision. Such institutionalised, off-season employment opportunities keep labour and economic activities in the region – and as such can foster economic vitality the whole year round.

1

Introduction

1.1 Rural-urban linkages

In sub-Saharan Africa, rural-urban linkages and interactions play an increasingly significant role in local economies and livelihood transformation (Tacoli, 2002), and there is an increased need for understanding the impact of rural-urban linkages on changing livelihoods both in rural and urban areas (Bah *et al.*, 2003; Agergaard *et al.*, 2010). Contemporary mobility processes in sub-Saharan Africa are increasingly complex due to domestic post-independence transformations in demography, urbanisation and policies – as well as processes of economic and cultural globalisation which increasingly connect Africa to different parts of the world. While rural-urban migration is still a crucial component of the mobility patterns in sub-Saharan Africa, mobility flows within rural areas are also of significant importance in shaping rural livelihoods. More and more people living in rural areas travel to small towns and service centres in search of consumer goods, services and labour opportunities. In addition, there are significant urban-rural flows – for instance, urban residents who, either on a regular or irregular basis, seek livelihood opportunities in rural areas or engage in rural- (or non-urban) based activities. A growing number of people living in urban areas are involved in farming activities in dynamic agricultural areas because they see opportunities. These are urban dwellers who farm alongside working in their professions in the city. They rent land in the rural hinterlands and cultivate in agriculturally dynamic places.

In general, rural areas have become attractive investment destinations due to increased agricultural and non-agricultural opportunities as well as better basic infrastructure and services that were formerly only found in cities. This is why certain rural dwellers decide to stay on and even return to the farm to relate to agricultural dynamics in the region. On the other hand, rural dwellers

remain connected to cities but also neighbouring urban centres, towns and service centres. Mobility flows in the region are thus no longer one way, but constitute very complex and fragmented processes of inflow and outflow of people, money, information, goods and services.

1.2. Aim of the paper

In this paper, a variety of mobility flows in rural areas in Cameroon, Ghana and Tanzania are analysed in order to gain an in-depth understanding of rural livelihood transformation processes and their impact on local and regional socioeconomic development. To this end, an analysis of rural dynamics in eight different research sites in Cameroon, Ghana and Tanzania will be presented (see Figure 1). In Cameroon, research areas include Mount Bamboutos, the Moungo corridor and the Noun region. In Ghana, two study sites were selected: these include the Ahanta West district and the Kwaebibirem district. In Tanzania, focal points are the Kilwa district (referred to as 'the Lindi case') and the Njombe and Wanging'ombe districts (referred to as 'the Njombe case'). A third research region in Tanzania is composed of various districts (Ngorongoro, Monduli and Karatu) in the Maasai lands of the Northern border region; here referred to as 'the Northern Corridor'. One common feature of the research sites is that each one is a dynamic rural region in which transformation processes are guiding everyday life of rural households. However, the regions are very diverse in their geographical settings, in the processes driving transformation, and in socioeconomic challenges and opportunities, among others.

1.3 Methods

It is through a triangulation of research methods that the paper aims to gain a better understanding of the particularities and similarities in livelihood transformation

and rural development processes in sub-Saharan countries. Empirical research was conducted in two phases.

In the first stage, a household questionnaire was designed with the intention to scrutinise livelihood transformations in relation to rural-city connections by gathering data on household characteristics, expenditure and savings, migration/mobility and remittances, as well as agricultural, livestock and other household assets. The main goal of the household survey was to analyse how these livelihood activities and rural dynamics have changed over the past 10 years. With a reference period of 2004 to 2014, the household members were asked questions about differences in their livelihood assets and their overall socioeconomic situation. Only in the Northern Corridor of Tanzania a different methodology was used than in the other research sites. Data on the Northern Corridor are based on ethnographic research in which interviews and participant observation are combined.

In the second research stage, the data of the household survey were completed with the collection of empirical data through a standard data collection guide, used in all the different research sites (with the exception of the Northern Corridor in Tanzania), recording migration narratives and through a diagnosis of the main functions of settlements in

the research areas on the basis of focus group discussions. To collect the migration narratives (at the household level), mobility maps were used as a tool to both structure the interviews and to provide a visualisation of the mobility patterns of a household. For the local diagnosis (at the settlement level), the analysis focused on emerging urban centres in each of the research areas in which focus group discussions as well as interviews with key stakeholders were conducted. This latter method allowed insight into the perspective of local investors, business people and governmental stakeholders on the subjects of mobility and rural-urban connections.

1.4 Structure of the paper

The paper is structured into six sections. Section 2 presents the theoretical background to this study. Section 3 examines the socioeconomic context of the different sites in the three countries under study. Section 4 analyses the main processes of livelihood diversification in the study regions. Mobility patterns are explored in Section 5, which gives an account of the inflow and outflow of goods and services, capital, remittances and people. The final section summarises some of the key findings of the research and focuses on the mutual relationship between livelihood transformation and local development.

2

Theoretical background

Although migration in sub-Saharan Africa is an age-old phenomenon, it shows increasing complexity in terms of spatial and time dimensions. Rural-urban linkages and interactions especially tend to play a significant role in local economies and livelihood transformations (Tacoli, 2002). As such, there is an increased need to understand this rural-urban interface and its impact on changing development processes. Toward this end, this theoretical framework examines the major changes in the development landscape of sub-Saharan Africa by focusing on the role of mobility – and more specifically domestic mobility – in transforming local development processes. This section begins with a contextual sketch of the major political changes that are shaping the main development processes on the continent. Thereafter, the theoretical debate on the migration-development nexus is introduced. Finally, this migration-development nexus is further elaborated by linking it to the role of remittances and small towns in local development processes.

2.1 Local development and mobility: a political perspective

Over the past three decades the context of local economic development in Africa has changed radically. As Helmsing (2001) indicates 'Up till the nineties, local development conditions were shaped by central government agencies, the lives of peasant farmers depended on parastatal agencies that provided or were supposed to provide key inputs (such as seeds, fertilisers and extension)'. During this time, little was left to the market and peasant autonomy was somewhat limited to decisions about whether or not to grow cash or subsistence crops (Helmsing, 2001). The crisis of the 1970s, however, forced many African nations

towards debt relief provided by international financial institutions. This led to policies that are predominantly characterised by the neo-liberal agendas of the World Bank, IMF and Western governments. These measures have had a profound impact on African economies, political situations and hence, population movements (Rakodi, 1997; Potts, 1995; 2008; Tacoli, 1998; Adepoju, 2008a and 2008b; Beauchemin, 2011). The impacts of structural adjustment influence different migration patterns and locations. For urban areas, some argue a reduction of in-migration as a response to urban economy declines while others see a continuance of rural to urban flows (Beauchemin and Bocquier, 2004; Bocquier, 2004; Potts, 2008). For some, privatisation policies and public expenditure reductions have encouraged informal and non-labour migration mostly from rural to urban areas (Kanaan, 2000).

The impacts of structural adjustment have also affected rural regions and small urban centres (Simon, 1992). While public expenditure cuts generally had detrimental outcomes, the promotion of small-scale business and access to credit has been more beneficial. In Tanzania, smaller urban centres, where growth has its roots in the value chain of one dominant crop, developed as trade liberalisation began to attract investments across a broader scope of activities. Liberalisation policies, which reduced output as well as employment in certain industries, may also have encouraged a return migration to rural areas (Simon, 1992; Gubry *et al.*, 1996; Potts, 2008). Finally, the required national currency devaluation boosted exports and as such pulled people back into Africa's main export sectors of agriculture and mining; these sectors are largely located in rural areas (Riddell, 1997; Beauchemin, 2011).

From the 1990s, decentralisation reforms also have had an influence on local development processes on the African continent. With a divestment of central economic and

administrative power to the lower governing levels, these reforms renewed interest in regional development and the role of small and intermediate urban centres (Tacoli, 1998). Decentralisation reforms also had a positive influence on rural development because infrastructural and service points were placed closer to rural areas. Additionally, decentralised local governance systems are key in supporting positive rural-urban linkages. Land policies and agricultural transformation are impacted by both liberalisation measures and public regulation. Through the liberalisation of regulatory instruments, new land-tenure systems were put into place which can ensure security of tenure on one hand and large-scale foreign investments on the other.

Within this context of neo-liberalisation and decentralisation, Helmsing (2001) describes two main implications for local economic development in Africa. First, as a result of declined development aid, local resource mobilisation has become very important toward financing public and collective investments. Second, due to the space-shrinking effects of technologies in transport and communication as well as the growing mobility of people, capital and firms across (parts of) the globe, socioeconomic disparities between different locations are likely to increase (Helmsing, 2001: 62). In the following section, the impact of these changes in the local development framework will be further elaborated through a focus on the link between migration and development.

2.2 Migration and development

With the introduction of the livelihoods approach, a growing recognition of the dynamic and multi-dimensional nature of migration and development has emerged; households in fact use all sorts of social and material assets to construct their livelihoods within a broader socioeconomic and physical context (Carney, 1998). To build and sustain a livelihood, people attempt to gain access to five types of capital assets (natural, human, social, cultural and produced), which they combine and transform in different ways (Bebbington, 1999). With this kind of attention paid to asset access, the livelihoods perspective has been appreciated for focusing on what people have rather than on what they lack, and on the agency of poor people (Kaag *et al.*, 2004; Ellis, 1998; Bebbington, 1999; de Haan and Zoomers, 2005).

Livelihood studies have, for instance, focused on multi-locality and migrants' active use of geographical scale as a resource through spatially dispersed livelihood strategies (Bebbington and Batterbury, 2001). However, there seems to be a bias on the role of transnationality in these studies. Olwig and Sørensen (2002: 2) point out that, 'The very diffuseness of the notion of transnationalism may narrow the field of investigation to movements and networks of relations that involve the bodily crossing

of nation state boundaries, because this is the only explicitly and clearly defined feature of transnationalism'. Especially in African migration studies, partly due to the fact that African migration is often considered a 'policy problem' by governments in the global North, there seems to be a tendency to focus on transnational and even transcontinental migration (eg Grillo and Riccio, 2004; Adepoju, 2008b). With such research bias, the fact that domestic migration is much more significant in terms of numbers and volumes compared to international movements (eg Adepoju, 1998; Deshingkar and Grimm, 2004; Bryceson *et al.*, 2003; Castaldo *et al.*, 2012) is easily overlooked (King *et al.*, 2008). Similarly, more attention should be paid to South-South migration as the majority of African migrants who cross international borders move to neighbouring countries and so remain on the African continent (Fischer and Vollmer, 2009; Spaan and van Moppes, 2006).

Remittances form the most tangible link between migration and development and it is generally believed that remittances hold great potential for sustainable development and poverty reduction. A large portion of migrants send remittances back to their places of origin. Major attention is always given to flows of international migration which have been rising in parallel with export earnings and official overseas development assistance. Domestic remittances are, however, believed to be far more significant in terms of poverty reduction potential as flows tend to include more of the very poor (Bryceson *et al.*, 2003; Deshingkar and Grimm, 2004). While international remittances can be estimated on the basis of transfers through formal channels, estimates of domestic remittances are very rare to non-existent.

Another way migration can contribute towards local development is through the organisation of diaspora. This has been the research context of international migration, specifically the participation in co-development initiatives as a new channel for development cooperation (Nijenhuis and Broekhuis, 2010). Although some of these migrant associations do have a domestic variant, there is still a gap in research that considers the existence and contributions of migrant organisations and initiatives in the national context. Some pioneering work in the African context shows that domestic migrant associations can play a significant role for small and medium towns (Tacoli and Satterthwaite, 2002) as they can positively contribute to public infrastructure and services that are generally lacking, such as roads, bridges, schools and health centres (Beauchemin and Schoumaker, 2009).

2.3 The role of small towns

The world is urbanising at a rapid pace, yet the majority of urban populations reside in towns and small and medium cities with less than one million inhabitants (UN Habitat, 2010; Satterthwaite, 2007). Therefore, policymakers as well as academics have a renewed interest in the role

of small towns in regional development processes in the global South, especially over the past two decades (Hinderink and Titus, 2002; Satterthwaite and Tacoli, 2003; Owusu, 2008; Bell and Jayne, 2006). While there is no international consensus on the definition of small towns (Nel *et al.*, 2011) and definitions vary widely between nations, in general small towns are considered to be regional service centres that maintain strong and direct connections with their rural hinterlands.

In the Latin American literature, some debate has occurred over the potential for small and intermediate cities to contribute to prosperous urban development (van Lindert and Verkoren, 1997; Bolay and Rabinovich, 2004; Herzog, 2006; Klaufus, 2010; Steel, 2013; Berdegúe *et al.*, 2014). In the African context, the debate on the role of small towns in regional and rural development is ongoing but tends to embrace a positive stance (Owusu, 2006). Tacoli and Satterthwaite (2002) ascribe four potential roles for small and intermediate centres in local development processes in Africa. They argue that small cities can 'act as centres for the production and distribution of goods and services to their rural region, act as markets for agricultural produce from the rural region, become centres for the growth and consolidation of non-agricultural activities, [and] attract rural migrants who might otherwise move to larger cities' (Tacoli and Satterthwaite, 2002: 2).

The authors show that small towns can operate as gateways to rural areas by performing a variety of functions; these functions range from exchange sites for goods and services to hubs of non-farm employment and as such have the potential to positively influence the development of their rural region. Owusu (2008: 465) also indicates, in the case of district capitals in Ghana, that small towns perform important roles 'as providers of services such as markets, secondary education, hospitals, banking, ICT, etc., facilitate and promote rural-urban interactions and linkages within districts'. These different functions positively influence the mobility of rural as well as more urban-oriented households, permanently transcending the rural-urban divide in search of socioeconomic opportunities. As such, the vast flows of people, goods, services and information strengthen the interaction between small towns and their rural hinterlands

and can give shape to a flourishing regional economy (Satterthwaite and Tacoli, 2003).

However, Hinderink and Titus (2002) challenge these optimistic assumptions on the basis of a comparative analysis in Africa, Asia and Latin America showing that the role of small towns in regional development processes is highly dependent on the national and regional political contexts. They argue that general conclusions on small-towns' role in economic development cannot be drawn without paying attention to context-specific peculiarities and the specific functions small towns have in the broader region. This aligns with the argument of Berdegúe and his co-authors (2014) who show that only small cities with strong linkages with the rural hinterland have the potential to contribute to poverty reduction. Although some towns operate as distribution centres for services, facilities and infrastructure, other small towns explicitly function as market centres that link local producers to national and international markets. The function of small towns is thus a critical factor in their potential contribution to local development processes and as such deserves more attention in empirical research (Bell and Jayne, 2006).

2.4 Why explore mobility?

With this theoretical framework, the stage has been set for an empirical analysis on the role of mobility for rural livelihoods and local development in sub-Saharan Africa. Based on a dynamic and empirically based approach to the migration-development nexus, we will have a closer look at the discussions on the specific contributions remittances and small towns can make to local development processes. It is clear that, due to a transnational bias in the migration-development literature, there is still a dismal lack of empirical data and analysis on the role of domestic remittances and national migrant associations in establishing rural-urban connections and engendering positive change. In response, the following empirical sections aim to provide a systematic analysis of current processes of livelihood diversification and mobility of resources in relation to local and regional development in the respective research areas.

3

Contextual characteristics of the research areas

Cameroon, Ghana and Tanzania are far from identical countries in terms of socioeconomic characteristics and developments. And also within each of those countries huge differences exist between and within the different regions, households and the places where they are situated. Variations in agroecological potentials, land scarcity, access to water for irrigation, or physical connections to markets are just a few of the many geographical conditions that lead to the uniqueness of each of the areas selected for this research. Box 1 illustrates how in the Mount Bamboutos region, for instance, households strongly depend upon agroecological potentials related to the altitude at which the households reside.

This section introduces the regions under study with a concise overview of the main geographical characteristics and recent socioeconomic transformation processes of each of those regions. Subsequently, attention is given to more specific changes in the local economic production systems that are occurring nowadays.

3.1 Socioeconomic transformations

This section briefly outlines the main socioeconomic characteristics and changes in the eight study sites (for an overview see Table 1). These rural areas include the Noun, Mounjo and Bamboutos regions in Cameroon; the Ahanta West and Kwaebibirem regions in Ghana; and the Njombe area, the Lindi area and the Northern Corridor in Tanzania (Figure 1). These regions have been selected for their high degrees of rural dynamism and their potential for transforming rural development in relation to mobility and urbanisation. All research sites are dynamic rural regions in

BOX 1. SOCIOECONOMIC DISPARITIES IN MOUNT BAMBOUTOS

In the upper mountain reaches of Bamboutos, people grow produce for the national market as well as the export market. Bamboutos' produce reaches urban areas over the entire Central African region. In comparison with the households living lower on the mountain, the people living uphill are better-off farmers. Lower down, in formerly coffee territory, land prices are decreasing and significant soil degradation is taking place. People have become poor due to a lack of agricultural possibilities. But uphill it looks like wealth is everywhere; the mountain has become a veritable *El Dorado* where agricultural activities are expanding upon the high slopes, transforming the area into a very dynamic market-gardening territory. As such, urban dwellers invest in uphill areas by installing water and electrical facilities. As a result, uphill areas are no longer dominated by subsistence agriculture.

In contrast, downhill areas have transformed in the negative sense. Population density rates are very high, there is a problem of overpopulation, there are no concrete alternatives to coffee farming and there is a huge problem with land access. These reasons, as well as to access production possibilities for the global market, explain why young people move to higher altitudes. Young people travel up the plateau looking for other opportunities. Some move to work as day labourers; after one or two weeks, they return downhill to sow. Other young people, those who cannot find similar work, look for opportunities across the world and so move to towns inside and outside of Cameroon.

Figure 1: Location of the study sites



Source: UU-GEO-C&M

which transformation processes guide everyday life for rural households.

3.1.1 Cameroon

The three neighbouring study zones in Cameroon are agricultural areas par excellence due to very fertile land and volcanic soils. Agriculture in these areas is mainly rain fed, seasonal and practiced on small peasant farms that rarely exceed two hectares. The main rural transformations that have taken place in the three research sites in Cameroon are due to the disappearance of coffee. The worldwide coffee crisis at the end of the 1980s has impacted on the study areas as a result of coffee-processing factories and export facilities closing and the transition of monoculture coffee plantations to mixed plantations where coffee plays only a secondary role. Although coffee is still fundamental for the agricultural income of several families, there is a growing tendency towards polycultural systems where intercropping practices of cassava, beans, cocoyam, yams, oil palms and coffee are combined. In addition, substitution crops are highly promoted. One of the major substitution crops for Bamboutos is Irish potatoes, while in Moungo, an intensified cultivation of maize is promoted; in Noun, rice plantations have been introduced and are now the principal crop.

The biggest problem in the research regions is access to land (Box 2). In this context, where land issues are predominant and where the population of land seekers increases, turning away from farm work to derive supplementary income from non-farm activities has become common for the rural population. In the Bamboutos and Noun regions, there is the growing importance of the construction sector. In fact, the building

industry has become the main source of non-farm employment (albeit it is often still performed in combination with agricultural activities). Construction work includes quarrying and selling stone for foundations, manufacturing bricks, lumbering and felling large trees for woodwork and carpentry, masonry (building walls, floors and plastering) and electrical, plumbing and sheet-metal work, among others. While construction work in combination with trade and transportation activities generates extra income opportunities in the region, they are generally combined with agricultural activities.

BOX 2. LAND USE IN BAMBOUTOS

In terms of land use, the Bamboutos region is characterised by overexploitation. In the mountain area, the population densities are often close to city densities. Any space that could be developed has been transformed into farmland. In this context, each household tries to produce everything it needs for survival on its tiny plots. The household survey indicates that 97.5 per cent of land is under cultivation, 1.9 per cent is fallow and the remaining is pasture, forest plots or raffia palms. In this sense, the mode of access to land is becoming more and more complex. For those who own land, it has become an important trading tool. For young household members reaching maturity, access to land is traditionally channelled through inheritance. Today, some heads of household even go as far as to sell the land behind the back of those who were, until recently, entitled by birth.

Table 1. Contextual characteristics of the study sites

	CAMEROON			GHANA		TANZANIA		
	BAMBOUTOS	MOUNGO	NOUN	AHANTA WEST DISTRICT	KWAEB-IBIREM DISTRICT	NJOMBE	LINDI	NORTHERN CORRIDOR/ KILIMANJARO
Geographic setting	Well-connected volcanic plateau	Roadside development and trade corridor	Roadside development	Very well connected to urban centres and coastal towns	Relatively isolated but strong relations with hinterland	Strong town – hinterland relations within districts	Relatively isolated coastal area but well connected by road to Dar es Salaam	Mountainous area with volcanic soils in a very high-density rural area
Regional production structure	Medium-scale farming	Transport and commerce	Fishery and farming	Plantations, gold and offshore oil exploitation	Plantation and artisanal mining activities	Small-scale farming	New sesame boom and fishery	Agropastoral system
Primary crop	Irish potato	Maize	Rice	Rubber	Oil palm	Irish potato	Sesame	Tomatoes
Secondary crops	Tomatoes, bananas, maize, beans, carrots	Beans, plantain, coffee, cocoyam, cassava, potatoes	Maize, beans, potatoes, cassava, plantain	Cassava, maize, pepper, plantain, tomatoes, oil palm, coconut	Cocoa, cassava, plantain, oranges, maize, cocoyam	Maize, beans	Millet, maize, pigeon peas, cassava, rice	Cattle, jatropha, bananas, coffee
Land tenure	As much is owned as leased or borrowed	Owned	Owned	Owned by household or clan	Owned by household or clan, sharecropping	Owned and leased land	Owned	Owned and increasingly leased
Markets	Periodic markets and export	Local markets and export	Company	Ghana Rubber Estates Limited (GREL)	National, West African and global markets (GOPDC)*	Local traders and periodic markets	International market (predominantly China)	Local traders and periodic markets
Labour	Combination of family labour and hired labour	Combination of family labour and hired labour	Hired labour most important	Combination of family labour and hired labour	Combination of family labour and hired labour	Family labour in peak season; combination of hired and family labour	Mainly family labour but also a combination of hired and family labour	Family labour

*GOPDC (Ghana Oil Palm Development Company)

In Noun and Moungo, settlements are basically located along the main roads; they are divergent from local small towns as opposed to nuclear settlements in the littoral zone. These are important economic corridors and education, health, communication, water, sanitation and electricity infrastructure, which were previously exclusive to the cities, have significantly improved across these regions. National, regional, divisional and rural roads (often in poor

condition) crisscross the study sites; they connect markets to each other and markets to cities and other centres of consumption.

The main activities of these areas are agriculture followed by trade as most villages have evolved to be important trading centres due to their involvement in horticulture and the cultivation of onions, tomatoes, Irish potatoes and other crops. The individuals living in these areas have a need for

basic manufactured products which are bought from the proceeds of agricultural production. The 'Westernisation' of housing styles and advances in communication and information technology have pushed business people to open up and develop most villages into trading centres. These villages also relay agricultural products to the cities and serve the hinterland with manufactured goods.

3.1.2 Ghana

The research in Ghana covered two study sites: the Kwaebibirem district in the Eastern Region and the Ahanta West district in the Western Region. The basic economic activity in the settlements of the research areas is agrarian in which subsistence and commercial production of food and cash crops are combined. The emphasis in the Kwaebibirem district today lies on the production of oil palm and cocoa, which has created numerous opportunities and economic prosperity. In the Kwaebibirem district, the Ghana Oil Palm Development Company (GOPDC) is the largest oil-producing company and it has motivated ever more farmers to grow oil palm. In addition to agricultural production, local artisanal gold mining or *galamsay* is a key livelihood activity practiced in the region.

In the Ahanta West district in the Western Region of Ghana, rubber is the main cash crop, as it has been for almost a century. Until recently, rubber was primarily produced by a large-scale plantation company controlled by a foreign company (Ghana Rubber Estates Limited or GREL). In about 1995, the company started a programme for smallholders organised in a programme for outgrowers. Those selected for participation in the scheme were able to borrow money and buy extension services and seedlings of high-yielding varieties from the company. After about four to five years, the rubber trees are mature and the outgrowers may start to tap the latex and transport it to the company's processing facility. Due to a comparatively high purchasing price it has become quite popular to start smallholder production.

In both sites, there are many land issues. While most land is owned by farmers, it is being increasingly commercialised as urban and other external investors are eager to buy land and start independent production. Especially in the Ahanta West district, considerable numbers of city dwellers invest in rubber. They come from various towns and cities in the coastal districts of Ghana and particularly from the city of Takoradi, from where they commute to the rubber plantations. This is due to the city's proximity and good road infrastructure which allow households to easily connect to major and secondary cities and towns both far and near. It is also a result of a cash crops economy with both national and international links. Indeed, these conditions have contributed toward attracting urban-based farmers, many of whom are involved in the outgrower scheme as

self-financing farmers. In comparison, the infrastructure in the Kwaebibirem district is not that well-equipped. This second research area is far away from larger towns. That is why there is less investment from urban residents. So, in terms of mobility, the flows and urbanisation processes are quite a bit more intensive in the Ahanta West district. In Kwaebibirem, many rural people migrate to the mining region.¹

3.1.3 Tanzania

In Tanzania, research took place in Njombe, Lindi and the Northern Corridor. Traditionally, a large part of the country's maize production has come from the Njombe region and at the moment it is also one of Tanzania's largest producers of Irish potatoes (Mpogole *et al.*, 2012). The connection between rural and urban areas has influenced the transformation of Irish potato production and the improvement in household livelihoods in rural villages. Irish potatoes have been grown in the study area as one of the traditional food crops. Regional traders buy nearly all of the Irish potatoes produced in Njombe. Farmers do not have direct contact with these buyers originating from outside Njombe town. However, over time the role of mobility and migration in the livelihoods of rural households has increased due to changes of destination, frequency and types of people who have migrated. Evidence from the study shows that while commuting to Njombe town has increased, which is an immediate urban destination, permanent migration to Njombe and migration to other urban areas (Dar es Salaam city, for example) is on the decline in recent years. The potato producers commute for financial services, social services and agricultural inputs.

In the Lindi region, the rapid and increasing significance of sesame as a cash crop – the so-called 'sesame boom' – has taken place since 2013. A favourable unit price and easy access to markets through higher prevalence of (agents of) private traders have been the main drivers for the increased production of sesame. In addition, there is a high demand from the Chinese market where good prices for sesame are offered. The typical new sesame producers are smallholder farmers who are adopting sesame as a new cash crop in their portfolio of crops. Subsistence production brings security and stability and is complemented with the production of cash crops and other income-generating activities.

In the Northern Corridor of Tanzania, the area between Monduli and Kilimanjaro, land fragmentation is a major barrier for agricultural development and the Kilimanjaro farming system and the model of development to which it refers have been in transition for more than 20 years. The farming system is no longer based on colonial commodities (coffee) but it is completely reorganised to face the boom of the commercial food sector, in particular

1. Mobility to mining activities in the region is considerable, but the importance of that is not captured in the survey. As most of mining is illegal, in general people are afraid to talk about it.

that of tomato production. However, the diseconomies of scale related to the small landholdings prevent the accumulation of sufficient volume and quality to gain access to lucrative markets. An increasing number of young people do not inherit any land and rural livelihoods have become increasingly pluri-occupational and multi-local on the basis of rural-urban mobility. Alternatively, they may seek opportunities to gain access to land elsewhere, for example through leasehold arrangements.

3.2 Changes in local production systems

In spite of the contextual differences between the various rural research regions, they all share a relatively high degree of economic and societal dynamism which has a great impact on rural livelihoods and local development in general. The most significant change in the local economy relates to the general rise in the prices of cash crops such as Irish potatoes, maize and oil palm. The increased demand for Irish potatoes in several African countries is a relatively new phenomenon. The Irish potato has become an indisputable cash crop in which farmers in different research areas are eager to get involved. In Tanzania, the development of irrigation technologies has had a major impact on production systems and has resulted in a boom in the production of Irish potatoes. Following this, there is a general perception of increased income generation from potato cultivation and a notable increase in the number of investors coming to the villages. In Cameroon, all types of farmers, even the younger ones, are attracted to the Irish potato boom. Exports are increasing, but overall buying and selling of smallholder-produced Irish potatoes are dominated by traders operating at local and regional markets. This commercialisation of the Irish potato has resulted in considerable local value-adding activities such as packaging, peeling and small-scale processing into chips. Moreover, the Irish potato boom has offered opportunities for both male and female villagers to earn a supplementary income as harvesters, packers or transporter operators etc.

In Cameroon, maize is also prioritised in national policies on food security and demand has increased rapidly because of growing consumption in urban areas (as a staple food), in the food industry (notably by breweries) and by the livestock sector; the latter increasingly relies on manufactured feed as part of the intensification process. Traditionally, a substantial part of maize production was for subsistence but smallholders consider it more and more as a cash crop that is intensively produced with fertilisers, having two to three annual harvests. Maize trade is controlled by major buyers located in big cities; they employ salaried agents who operate on local markets and buy directly from farmers. Moreover, traders from neighbouring countries (eg Gabon, Chad and Equatorial Guinea) are also actively buying maize in the site.

In Ghana, rubber and oil palm production has increased tremendously. This is particularly true for oil palm expansion. Respondents in Kwaebibirem mentioned that 10 years ago, oil palm was not a widespread commodity as it is now. Because of this, farmers cultivating oil palm in Kwaebibirem often had to travel farther out of the district and into urban centres to sell their produce at the local market. This, however, has changed. Many traders now come from urban centres to purchase produce. According to one farmer and tailor:

I used to send oil palm to Accra to sell. But for some time, I have stopped doing that. These buyers now come here to buy [...] And now, there is oil palm in abundance here in this community. So they prefer coming here and buying it in large quantities (interview, 9 November 2015).

A consequence of this change is that farmers are not required to transport their produce to regional towns. These days, farmers sell much of their produce at the farm gate and at trade centres within the district. This has resulted in growth of the agricultural industry and due to more steady flows of income, the trade sector has seen new opportunities. People have more money to spend and therefore the demand for finished products has increased.

3.3 The impact of changing rural dynamics

Rural transformations have turned the sites under study into very dynamic rural areas that have changed tremendously in terms of local economic profile. These dynamics have triggered a variety of mobility flows and rural-city connections. The introduction of cash crops has turned the sites into attractive locations for investment. Several sites attract traders, businessmen and women who want to invest in land and create additional labour opportunities for local people. In turn, these rural people have a better income through which they can afford to look for additional livelihood opportunities in towns, cities or other rural areas. Others start a variety of productive businesses in the community; they open small shops and phone booths or buy a Chinese or Indian motorbike and become a taxi driver. This is why increasing local business opportunities can be observed in the different regions under study. The next section explores these rural dynamics by focusing on the inflow and outflow of resources, capital, labour and knowledge.

4

Livelihood diversification

The transformation processes in agriculture described in the previous section have greatly contributed to changes in the livelihood strategies of rural households. This section elaborates on those livelihood strategies and the way pluri-activity and multi-locality have become important assets for livelihood diversification. It then looks at how these strategies have changed over the last 10 years through an overview of the different efforts of rural households to diversify their livelihoods.

4.1 Livelihood strategies

4.1.1 Households' main livelihood activities

In the rural areas under study, agriculture is the predominant income-generating activity. While farmers produce food crops for subsistence purposes in order to enhance food security, the sale of cash crops and other income-generating activities are important. This becomes clear in Table 2, which summarises the households' main sources of income in the different research areas.

Comparing the different research areas, just a small minority of households do not depend on agricultural production as their main source of income. They depend instead on self-employed work (which may also include agricultural activities) or salaried work such as casual wage labour. In the case of Cameroon, and especially in the Mounjo region, an increasing number of people work in the construction sector and in so called 'buyam sellam' activities.² Also in the Njombe case, the number of craftsmen, especially masons but also carpenters and the like, has increased due to increased housing investments (Borby Ørtenblad, 2015). Apart from these activities

there are also households whose main income depends on remittances. Yet most households, for whom agriculture is not the main income-generating activity, are still involved in agricultural production for their food security and as a fall-back mechanism. This is why the actual numbers of people involved in agriculture are higher than the percentages presented in Table 2. In Bamboutos for instance, 88 per cent of the economically active population works in the primary sector. In Njombe, more than 90 per cent of the economically active population is involved in agriculture. And in Lindi, 82 per cent of the population is involved in farming and 6 per cent in fishing.

4.1.2 Agricultural diversification

All of the research areas are characterised by the primacy of a specific crop that is produced for the market. Yet in view of risk prevention, as well as to safeguard food security, the majority of farmers cultivate various crops together. On the fertile volcanic soils of the Bamboutos plateau, one of the largest granaries of Cameroon, farmers cultivate a choice of more than 40 food crops. Especially over the last few decades, there have been many successful efforts toward diversification within the market-gardening production system in the region. These have resulted in the introduction of sunflower cultivation, some varieties of vegetables, new varieties of beans and at least 12 different species of Irish potato. On each plot, at least three to five crops are cultivated.

Also in the other regions, there is an explicit tendency of agricultural diversification. The Noun case is the exception to the rule because rice is a monoculture. Irrespective of the production system used – irrigation or rain fed – rice is cultivated as a single crop. However, during the off-

2. 'Buyam sellam' refers to traders who buy crops in bulk and then retail in the region.

Table 2. Households' main sources of income³

INCOME SOURCE	CAMEROON (%)			GHANA (%)		TANZANIA (%)	
	BAMBOUTOS	MOUNGO	NOUN	AHANTA WEST	KWAEBIBIREM	NJOMBE	LINDI
Agricultural production	69.3	46.7	67.9	48.0	72.0	70.0	55.3
Livestock	9.6	11.4	9.7	0.5	1.0	0	6.7
Self-employed	9.6	3.0	12.1	28.0	17.0	9.1	21.2
Wage labour	7.2	13.2	0.7	18.5	6.5	11.1	2.8
Pension	0.3	6.3	1.8	0.5	1.0	0	0
Remittances	3.3	19.4	7.8	4.5	2.5	7.6	1.7
Other	0.7	0	0	0	0	2.2	12.3

season, some farmers rotate rice with other crops such as maize, Irish potatoes and beans. In addition, some farmers grow cocoyam and plantain at the fringes of the water regulators and footpaths from and to the farms. However, most fields used for rice production are permanently

flooded during the rainy season and this limits the practice of other agricultural activities. In such cases, producers cultivate food crops on other farmland away from the marshes.

The dependency of households on subsistence crops for their food security is an important incentive for agricultural diversification. In the Njombe region for instance, several farmers prefer to cultivate a larger area with maize than with Irish potatoes, which is the dominant cash crop in the region. This can be explained by the fact that maize is a stable food crop and farmers grow maize both for food security and for income, as opposed to Irish potatoes. Due to the perishability of potatoes, these are grown mainly for the market (Borby Ørtenblad, 2015).

Diversification also occurs in the form of combining farming with livestock and fishing activities (see Box 3 for the example of the Maasai). While most rural households keep some livestock, what type varies from region to region. In the Lindi area, farmers keep cattle, goats and chickens. In Bamboutos, most livestock holdings are with pigs and poultry. In the other regions under study, poultry farming is also most common.



Irish potato promotion at an agricultural show in Dschang, Bamboutos, Cameroon. Diversification means that at least 12 different species of Irish potato are now grown in the region © Martin Kuete

3. As most agricultural activities are done under a self-employed modality, the categories may overlap in practice.

BOX 3. AGROPASTORALISM TRANSFORMATION AMONG THE MAASAI

Traditionally, the Maasai have depended entirely on their cattle for food and other livelihood needs. Whenever they needed something that could not be provided by their livestock, they sold or exchanged cattle for the item, product or service they wanted. For the past few decades, however, many Maasai have practiced farming when their herd size was too small to satisfy food and other household needs. Nonetheless, current farming activities differ considerably from previous ones. For many Maasai households, farming has become the main, and in some cases the only, food source, especially for those who exited pastoralism completely. In addition to growing food crops (whether for subsistence or the selling of surplus), the cultivation of purely cash crops has entered into Maasai lands. The introduction and promotion of jatropha farming for biofuel production in Selela and Engaruka villages is just one example. In these areas, many families, households and individuals quickly agreed to cultivate the plant after they were promised good prices and given the necessary inputs in advance (after which costs would be deducted against harvest profits). Another example of the influence of cash-crop production derives from the dominance of the Maasai in rural markets. As Maasai farm products have started to serve beyond household needs and as excess food crops are harvested and sold for cash, the Maasai have become the main suppliers of food crops in many rural markets.

is ceded to richer outsiders. In most regions, therefore, flexibility in tenure relations has become the operative word for farmers' strategies to gain access to land. In the Northern Corridor of Tanzania, renting land permanently or for one or two growing seasons (to grow vegetables, for example) has become more and more common. The price is fixed according to the geographical location and whether there is access to water. Renting is possible because some owners have land available which they do not use for farming. Possible reasons for that include old age, inability to invest and also the fact that household members are no longer available for farm work because of non-agricultural employment. Such landholders rent their plots preferably to relatives. National and international investors are also looking for land in order to start farming or to expand the production of one or two specific crops. As land is difficult to obtain and additional labour is hard to find, investors can realise their goal through contract farming. Due to land pressures, some farmers have had to move away to rent a piece of land elsewhere.

In the Ghanaian district of Kwaebibirem, the gradual conversion of roughly 21,000 hectares of land to oil palm plantations by the Ghana Oil Palm Development Company (GOPDC) and the presence of several thousands of small farmers participating in the outgrower oil palm schemes have resulted in an intense competition for land. This situation is further compounded by the demand for land to produce other cash and food crops as well as for mining. This has resulted in a situation whereby communal or freehold tenure arrangements begin to give way to the commodification of land and other tenure arrangements that require either cash or in-kind payments. The implications of the changing land tenure regime from freehold and communal holdings to leaseholds lead to a situation whereby small-scale farmers and the poor are increasingly displaced as they are less able to afford the rising price of land.

4.1.3 Use of external resources

Rural livelihoods depend highly on external resources. This section elaborates on the role of land, labour and capital in rural household livelihoods.

Access to land is the key asset in rural livelihoods and a real issue in the different areas under study. In particular, the subdivision of land into individual plots due to successive inheritance procedures makes it virtually impossible for many farmers to live on a farm income. Leasehold agreements can to some extent counteract the problem by giving access to farmland that was formerly inaccessible to young people and other small-scale investors. On the other hand, the increased interest in land acquisitions from external investors has increased the price of land. In the case of Kwaebibirem, Bamboutos and Northern Tanzania land prices have reached a level where it inhibits access to farmland for the younger generations residing in the study areas. Consequently, it has become more difficult for younger family members and other farmers who lack financial resources to access land which increasingly

The composition of labour inputs is a second important issue in rural livelihoods. Overall, most households in the study areas utilise a combination of hired and family labour. In general, family labour is used the whole year round whereas hired labour is employed on a seasonal basis. An exception is to be found among the rice producers in the Noun region of Cameroon. The proportion of rice producers using hired labour as a principal source of labour is relatively high, especially in comparison with the non-rice producing households in this area. This is due to the fact that rice production is very demanding in terms of labour requirements.

A third important element in rural livelihoods is the use of both formal and informal loans. Especially in Ghana and Cameroon, the use of loans is an important supplement to the available household budget. In Ghana, more than half of the loans are obtained through rural banks whereas in the Cameroonian cases, the tontine and other informal savings and credit associations are most popular among households. Here, between half to two-thirds of those who

make use of loans participate in such informal lending schemes. Independently of how the loan is obtained, the main use in Ghana as well as in Cameroon is for agriculture. In the Tanzanian study regions, the use of loans is less common.

4.2 Livelihood transformations

4.2.1 Changes in economic activities

In general terms, during the 10 years preceding the surveys in 2015, large proportions of households have realised a change in their main household economic activity (see Table 3). Although precise data for Ghana are missing in this respect, the study shows change rates for the Tanzanian and Cameroonian research areas varying from 60 to 78 per cent of all households. In the Noun region, however, 'only' 39 per cent changed their main economic activity over the last 10 years. Here, most households continue to make a living by producing rice.

The high change rates in the Cameroonian regions of Mounjo and Bamboutos can be attributed to agricultural diversification in tandem with agricultural commercialisation; both processes were speeded up by the progressive abandonment of coffee cultivation. In particular, in the Bamboutos area a notable transition from subsistence farming to cash-crop production has taken place. Independently of crop type, surplus harvests are currently between 50 and 65 per cent. Such a change from subsistence agriculture to increased commercialisation is a tendency that also can be observed in the other regions.

In the Njombe region, extensive rural transformations have been taking place, involving the commercialisation of agricultural production, increasing investments, a general business environment and socioeconomic mobility. The inhabitants were facing considerable challenges in maintaining their agricultural activities due to expensive inputs, unreliable rainfall, unstable market conditions and land shortages. However, the dynamics created by the intensification of Irish potato production have also opened up a range of opportunities for livelihood diversification and alternative income generation via small shops or vending stalls and the like. In contrast, in Lindi such a trend towards employment outside of agriculture appears to be absent. The high change rate can be ascribed to the regional boom in sesame production, as more and more farmers adopt sesame cultivation. In the Northern Corridor of Tanzania (see for example Box 4), this rural transformation process is shaped by shifting activities from cattle breeding towards tomato production.

4.2.2 Changes in income and purchasing power

Although a considerable number of households in the different regions have changed their main income-

BOX 4. THE TOMATO VALUE CHAIN IN NORTHERN TANZANIA

Due to the worldwide coffee crisis in the 1980s, a rural transformation from a coffee-banana system to a complex and new food-crop system has taken place in the Northern Corridor of Tanzania. As a result, Tanzania has become a net exporter of fresh tomatoes. Although tomato production in the Northern Corridor remains small compared to its production in the Iringa region, it is significant at local or regional level, accounting for 62 per cent of vegetable and fruit production in the region (NBS, 2012). This regional development of market gardening increased to supply the growing demand for food in towns and cities. This box focuses on the tomato value chain to illustrate the dynamics of this transformation.

Over the past 10 years, tomatoes have become a new cash-earning commodity in the region, which attracts young farmers especially who have not received any form of inheritance (for example land or coffee trees). Some tomato farmers explained that they first had to find a way to accumulate primary capital; many did this by selling their labour or by opening a small business. These farmers can get a fast, seasonal return on investment from tomato production which allows them to invest again and to grow their business. In addition, more and more women have become involved in the tomato value chain by selling tomatoes in different local markets and especially in Kwa Sadala market, which is the main market to export tomatoes out of the region. As such, women have become producers and retailers at the same time. These women first sell to middlemen or transporters for wholesale; any leftovers subsequently are sold directly to local consumers. When their own production is finished, these farmers also buy tomatoes from other producers for retail sale. These cash-earning opportunities are related to the high demand for tomatoes in city markets and for export. The success of tomato cultivation has also led some farmers in the Northern region to grow tomatoes in the Iringa region; this is a result of different seasons and the search for extra income opportunities.

generating activities, this has not necessarily resulted in better incomes or more purchasing power (Table 3). In general, most households perceived income deterioration or no change at all. In the Cameroonian research areas, correspondence between perceived trends in income and purchasing power was highest. In Tanzania and Ghana, however, even for those households who had experienced increases in income, no positive effect on purchasing power was felt. Purchasing power of most households had remained the same or even deteriorated. One possible

Table 3. Changes in main economic activity, income and purchasing power over 10 years

	CHANGE IN ACTIVITY (%)		CHANGE IN INCOME (%)			CHANGE IN PURCHASING POWER (%)		
	YES (%)	NO (%)	DETERIORATED (%)	NO CHANGE (%)	IMPROVED (%)	FEWER GOODS (%)	NO CHANGE (%)	MORE GOODS (%)
Cameroon								
Bamboutos	78	22	33	39	28	30	40	30
Moungo	75	25	33	36	31	31	36	33
Noun	39	61	27	36	37	29	35	36
Ghana								
Ahanta West	*	*	48	10	42	70	5	25
Kwaebibirem	*	*	55	7	38	64	5	31
Tanzania								
Lindi	76	24	53	23	24	58	26	16
Njombe	60	40	45	28	27	39	36	25

*No information available

explanation is that inflation has curtailed purchasing power. High inflation often is an issue in economically booming places. In the Ahanta West district of Ghana for instance, prices are increasing because of oil palm production; this may be the reason why households have experienced an increase in income but not an increase in purchasing power.

Nearly everywhere there is a clear relation between land ownership and change in income. For households whose land size remained the same or did not increase over the last 10 years, income levels deteriorated or stayed the same. Alternatively, in cases where the household acquired more land in the past 10 years, income generally improved. In this sense, more land equated to a significant improvement in income for most of the households. Only in the Lindi case there is no clear correlation in this respect. The households whose income has deteriorated had indeed either lost land or had the same amount of land as 10 years ago. However, there was no clear indication that the households who owned more land also experienced an improvement in income. The study could not yet show any real impact from the sesame cultivation, as it was only one or two years earlier that households had switched to commercial sesame production.

4.3 Summary of key rural livelihood strategies

This section elaborated on the main livelihood transformations in the rural regions under study. On the one hand, there is a growing tendency of de-agrarianisation, pluri-activity and livelihood diversification. On the other hand, there are clear indications of agricultural intensification and extensification. However, for many households, subsistence production is still more important than the production of cash crops; not every household succeeds in connecting to the booming crops phenomenon in the research areas. Rural people just make an effort to diversify their livelihoods as much as possible in order to reduce vulnerability to shocks and insecurities. Agricultural diversification, non-farm economic activities, multi-locality and resettlement are just a few key examples of rural livelihood strategies. The next section further elaborates on the multiple resource flows that occur with rural livelihood transformation.

5

Inflow and outflow of resources

As households spread their economic activities across rural and urban spheres, the transformation processes in agriculture and regional production structures described in the previous sections have in turn greatly influenced the livelihood strategies of rural households. This section explains how these dynamics are related to the inflow and outflow of resources. The focus is respectively on the flows of goods and services, capital, remittances and people.

5.1 Goods and services

The main flows of goods and services to and from the villages in the research areas include banking facilities (as a result of the increased role of mobile money services), health services, inputs for farming and business activities and the sale of household goods such as pots and pans, second-hand clothing, shoes, cooking staples, soap and other toiletries. Building materials also flow into the researched settlements from other urban areas. In Northern Tanzania, a growing number of Maasai invest in buildings as the younger generations perceive these investments as signs of modernity, whereas more traditional investments in cattle are ever more considered as high-risk investments. In the rapidly urbanising villages of Ghana and Cameroon much construction activity is taking place. In the rural areas of Kwaebibirem district, building materials are mostly brought in from Accra or Kumasi. In these larger cities, building materials are more widely available and there is a bigger choice of quality and prices. In the rural settlements, there are small shops that sell cement at a set price as well as small tools and ironware. Obviously, prices in these emerging urban centres and district towns are higher than in Accra, since the seller of the materials will add transportation costs. In addition, larger and more durable goods such

as refrigerators, audio sets, cars, motorbikes, bikes and even tractors flow into the settlements, the presence of which also brings along a vibrant market for mechanics and spare parts.

It is evident that the goods that flow out from rural settlements predominantly consist of agricultural products. The principal cash crops of each region are transported to regional towns or directly to the larger cities such as Dar es Salaam, Douala, Yaoundé, Accra and in some cases also to international markets. In the Kwaebibirem district, for instance, foodstuffs such as maize, rice and cassava are transported to the regional town Kade and to the larger cities such as Kumasi and Accra. The dominant agrarian activity in the district is oil palm and cocoa production, and most of these products are bought by the Ghana Oil Palm Development Company (GOPDC) and the Produce Buying Company (PBC) for cocoa, who sell it on the global market. Smaller traders from Accra or Kade also come to the rural settlements to buy oil palm and other agrarian produce in order to resell it in Accra. Apart from the marketing of agricultural products, the next most important outflow or service is transport. In most of the rural settlements of Kwaebibirem for instance, taxis and *tro-tros* (minibuses) are available for travel to Kade. From there, one can travel onwards to the bigger urban areas. Other than providing transport to Kade, the emergence of motorbike transportation (or *boda-boda*) in Tanzania has transformed the centres into parking sites for the *boda-boda* which wait to transport customers from the public buses to various destinations surrounding the centres. Likewise, the *boda-boda* are on standby mode in the rural villages as well, waiting to be called upon by customers wanting to travel to the centre for various purposes including catching the public buses.



Chinese motorbikes for sale in the town of Dschang, Bamboutos, Cameroon. In rapidly urbanising settlements, imports of goods such as motorbikes also create a vibrant market for mechanics and spare parts © Paul van Lindert

5.2 Capital

In all research areas, the main flow of capital originates from the agricultural sector. In the Tanzanian cases, the most important inflows of capital into the villages occur through the selling of Irish potatoes, tomatoes, timber and maize to brokers or buyers. The main buyers are brokers or middlemen who originate locally or from urban areas across the country, such as Njombe town, Arusha, Lindi or Dar es Salaam – or even internationally (Kenya). The highly entrepreneurial Bamileke migrants in Cameroon who have settled in Yaoundé, Douala and in the capital cities of neighbouring countries are exemplary in this respect. While becoming cosmopolitan business people, they have always cherished their bonds with their homelands and many of them own the trucks that collect the harvested crops directly from the farms in the Bamboutos, Noun and Moungo areas. The Bamileke diaspora in Brazzaville, Kinshasa and Bangui also plays an active role in contract farming in their homelands, commissioning the production of specific food crops for the urban markets in neighbouring countries.

Across all areas, inflows of capital occur through a range of spin-off activities. At the same time, the main source of capital inflow relates to the corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects of large companies and local investors (Box 5). In Ghana and Cameroon, there is a growing importance of microfinance organisations. Similarly in Tanzania, savings and credit cooperatives and village community banks provide loans for business operations.

The outflow of capital is also very much related to agriculture. In Tanzania and Cameroon, the main outflow of capital from the villages to areas and settlements higher up the urban hierarchy derives from purchases including farm supplies such as fertilisers, chemicals, seedlings as well as boots and harvesting tools. Although some farmers buy such supplies from village retailers, it is more common for them to travel to the regional towns themselves or to join together in groups to order farm supplies at a reduced cost from the cheaper wholesalers. Sometimes the joint purchase is sufficiently large to fill a pick-up truck. In the research areas of Ghana, the farmers are more dependent on the large rubber and oil palm companies. They sell their produce to these companies

BOX 5. EXTERNAL INVESTMENTS IN LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

In the Kwaebibirem district, Ghana Oil Palm Development Company (GOPDC) has invested in various projects including a new clinic, schools, and an electricity supply for the settlement. They also provide scholarships to students who perform well during secondary school. Because of their ties with the national government it is no surprise that they also work in close affiliation with the district assembly of Kwaebibirem. The second-largest oil palm production company, Serendipalm, works in close relation with NGOs to initiate joint development projects such as financing a computer lab, the construction of a clinic in Abaam village, and a new police station in Asuom. They also provide organic farming knowledge to oil palm farmers. The development planning officer of the district assembly argues that the presence of these companies is the reason for stable income levels that allow local children to obtain tertiary-level education. According to the district assembly office, because of the oil palm business, extreme poverty and famine are no longer present in Kwaebibirem (interview, 19 November 2015).

Next to the involvement of these oil palm production companies, small investors and return migrants also act as vehicles for resources and capital in Kwaebibirem. They include a Turkish gold miner in Takyiman village, an investor from Accra who has a large plantation in the village of Tweapease, and a retired police officer from New Jersey, who is currently running a private school in Asuom. Each has invested and mobilised resources and capital to develop the settlements. Other notable improvements include a clinic, a new palace for the chief, several water towers, and road upgrading.

and they also often get free seedlings and buy tools and fertilisers from them. Apart from such farm supplies, construction materials, household commodities and the costs of education rank high in the discussions on main capital outflows. In fact, the expenses related to education are reported to be a major household expenditure among most rural households in Ghana, Cameroon and Tanzania.

5.3 Remittances

Remittances form a significant portion of household budget in the study areas. One Ghanaian informant of Asuom clearly indicated that sending and receiving remittances is integral:

Remittances? That's part of our life. Even if you don't have it, they will still ask it from you [...] Sending remittances is our culture. You cannot run away from that (interview with a return migrant, 17 November 2015)

The share of households receiving remittances in Cameroon and Ghana is much higher than in Tanzania. This is related to the fact that in comparison, the Tanzanian households were more sedentary than the households in the other two countries. In addition, the households in Tanzania hardly receive international remittances while a considerable number of households in Cameroon and Ghana do. Most rural households that receive remittances use those to buy farming inputs as well as household commodities (Box 6). Materials for housing construction, maintenance and improvement are also an important household expenditure from remittances. In Cameroon, elite people in particular build genuine villas in the rural villages, using the money gained or received from elsewhere. These so-called family houses are large, because they must accommodate all members of the family

BOX 6. USE OF REMITTANCES IN TANZANIA

The three cases presented in this box are taken from in-depth interviews with farmers in the rural areas of Njombe.

A middle-aged female farmer in Iwungilo village receives remittances from her children who work in Njombe town. She uses these remittances to buy farming inputs such as fertiliser to grow crops on her plots in the wetlands. The children also buy household necessities in town such as couches for the living room, or salt for cooking. Through these means, the children ensure their parents have a stable access to resources (interview, 5 August 2015).

An elderly farmer in the village of Igagala reported that his son, who is working in Makambako town, regularly sends money for farming inputs. This is particularly important for the household as it is not possible to obtain a good harvest, or 'to get any crops', without applying fertilisers. Moreover, the family needs money for home improvement and maintenance (interview, 4 August 2015).

Finally, a farmer from Iwungilo village stated that he has a few donkeys that were bought by his sons and sent to him as remittances in kind. The animals are used to transport potatoes from remote plots; the family also earns income from renting them out. As the sons migrated and thus can no longer work on the farm, the money they send is used to hire farm labour. The family has also used remittances to buy construction materials for the home as well as a solar panel to run lights at night and to charge their mobile phones (interview, 5 August 2015).



Family house under construction in a rural village, Bamboutos, Cameroon. Housing materials are an important household expenditure from remittances © Paul van Lindert

who come to the village for family meetings and burial ceremonies. Construction materials are often bought in local stores and also the use of local labour gives a boost to the rural economy. In Ghana, young migrants have brought new ideas regarding the institution of 'the family', for example in the design of new houses; designs have changed from compound style to a more modern citylike style. This change is reflected in the building of new houses along the periphery of the settlements' centre. New houses are often one or two stories high and have straight metal sheeting as opposed to corrugated sheet roofing. It is important to note that most of these new houses are built by the wealthier families, often backed up with remittances sent by international migrants.

As also will become clear in Box 6, remittances are in many cases used to employ farm labour. Throughout the study areas in Cameroon, Ghana and Tanzania, remittances had to compensate for the lack of family labour due to the increasing number of people migrating. At least several respondents reported that mobility and migration can result in household labour shortages. As a result, households must scale back farming activities or hire outside labour, which in most cases is only an option if sufficient remittances are received.

International remittances, or remittances sent by migrants living abroad, are – like their national variant – used for multiple purposes ranging from daily consumption to home maintenance and the payment of school fees and medical treatment. However, in Ghana international

remittances are primarily used for productive purposes, such as for investments in farms, trade and businesses, as well as for larger investments in small businesses or land. One farmer in Ghana, who receives international remittances from his brother in Italy, for example, used the money to buy a bus:

The whole thing is that my brother, who used to live abroad, bought me a van from Italy. A 207 bus to work with. But at a point, the government introduced certain buses and it wasn't helping my business. So, it made me sell the 207 bus to get a tractor [...] Now, the tractor even brings in more money than my farm (interview, 30 November 2015)

Another important feature is the reverse flow of remittances from the countryside to the family members who (temporarily or permanently) live elsewhere. In most areas, there is a steady flow of capital from the rural home into the urban zones or other rural areas. The two spaces have gradually become more integrated and complementary. This complementarity is illustrated by the way reverse flows are not dominated by cash transfers, but instead by goods and more particularly food transfers. In all areas under study a considerable number of rural households send a part of their agricultural production to people living outside of the community, in particular to those who have settled in the cities. In this way, the rural-city flows of agricultural products increasingly contribute to the food security of urban residents.

5.4 People

Being mobile is of vital importance for household livelihoods. In particular, the younger members of households migrate or commute on a regular basis. There is an overall tendency of youth moving outside their rural areas to establish new networks and search for alternative ways of generating an income. This tendency, however, depends also on the opportunities for future farming in the region of origin. This is clearly seen in two different areas around Njombe. In the rain-fed areas, land is scarcer; some of the older respondents reported that, as a result, many youth have moved towards Njombe town and other destinations. This did not occur to the same extent in the region where irrigation was available. Here it is more feasible to make investments in land and to make good money from that. Therefore, most youth stay as they prefer to be involved in farming.

Yet, even as in the other research areas, some young people move out of the village in search of alternative income sources. As an older farmer in Iwungilo explained,

I think it is very normal that the young people want to go to town to try to make some money and to pursue opportunities in other places and to meet new people and ways of doing things. These young people often get inspired by seeing others moving and making money from other activities than farming (interview, 5 August 2015)

Some young farmers use the capital earned from agricultural production to invest in businesses outside the village, mainly in urban areas. They are generally linked to specific destinations and activities through family and friends who earn money through alternative means and thus they become inspired by them. Young people with alternative income-earning opportunities do have an incentive to stay in the villages as they can combine farming income with other business activities, thus not moving the focus entirely away from farming and their home village so that connections between farming and other economic activities can be retained.

Although youth indeed migrate to find employment opportunities outside of the community, in general household members commute on a regular basis for a variety of reasons. First of all, many farmers commute to their plots because these are often dispersed over different locations. In Ghana, most households grow food crops away from their homes and sometimes they have to travel long distances to their plots. It is only occasionally that a farmer lives on the same plot where the farm is located. Because of land scarcity, many people from a more urbanised settlement like Asuom have farmland in other areas. Those who do not own farms commute on a daily basis to work on other people's farms or at GOPDC, the major employer in the Kwaebibirem district. For their workers living in the surrounding communities, GOPDC provides transportation to their plantations. In Tanzania and

Cameroon, the farmers also have access to plots that are dispersed within the regions. The plots can be close to home or even kilometres away, meaning that the farmers travel a great deal on a daily basis within the community for farming activities, especially during the peak seasons. Farmers in Noun and Bamboutos make use of gardens and orchards at different altitude levels, both as a risk-avoiding and a food-securing strategy.

Secondly, non-farming activities also imply a lot of travelling. Being a trader, mason or a driver often makes moving around a necessity. In Tanzania, it is very common to commute between the villages and Njombe town on a daily or weekly basis. While these household members live in the villages with the family and participate in farming activities, they also run businesses in Njombe town. Occupations vary and include, among others, driving a taxi, running a brokerage business, or having a market stall, where it is possible to sell crops for higher prices. In Ghana, people move within the region for casual farm labour, trading and mining while others travel to larger urban centres like Accra and Kumasi for skilled labour such as construction or carpentry work, or to work as a driver.

A third reason for mobility is the utilisation of services that are offered in town, such as education, healthcare, banking services and (periodic) markets. Many children attend secondary school in town because of a lack of alternatives in the rural villages. People also travel to larger district capitals for health and banking services. In Ghana for instance, people visit the district capital city Kade for banking services. Although a Kwaebibirem Rural Bank is present in Asuom, its services are not considered to be very reliable. According to a local investor:

Most go [to Kade] to take care of commercial duties. For example, banking, because in this town, Kwaebibirem Bank is the only bank here and sometimes if you go there, they tell you their machines are not working or something. So most of us who have some little money, we save in other banks, not Kwaebibirem Bank, like Ghana Commercial Bank (interview, 22 November 2015)

In all study regions, market places act as magnets attracting rural people, both for selling produce and for buying food and other goods. Many rural settlements are trade centres that accommodate a periodic market once or twice a week. Daily markets are also to be found in the regional towns; those markets become really vibrant on specific days of the week when the periodic market joins the daily market in town. These market activities in the various places generate much mobility among the rural residents. They often combine their visits to the markets with other travel purposes, such as a visit to the bank, hospital or dentist.

Finally, mobility is important for maintaining a social network, through the visiting of friends and family and the attendance of church gatherings. Everybody travels occasionally to visit relatives, especially when there is a



Many successful migrants reinvest in their wealth in their communities of origin, such as this newly built conference centre in Bamboutos, Cameroon © Paul van Lindert

special event such as a marriage or a burial ceremony, and in times of illness or family problems. As such, social networks are of major importance for a household to rely on in times of need. There is no uniform mobility pattern in relation to the destinations; households travel to visit relatives and friends who can be anywhere in the country, in both rural and urban locales. In addition, in Ghana, people move around a great deal for religious purposes. Apart from regular church visits within the community (which varies from every Sunday to every day), irregular church gatherings in communities both within and outside the district are very common, in which the whole family comes along.

In general, and especially in the Njombe cases, people mostly commute temporally and return home to farm. However, there is also a tendency of longer-term migrants heading to urban areas located throughout the country. From the rural areas in the Njombe region, the majority tends to migrate to towns that are relatively 'close'; for example, Njombe and Mbeya. Nonetheless, people also migrate to destinations further away, such as Dar es Salaam. Migrants in Dar es Salaam hold jobs at the airport, in banks and hotels, and as taxi drivers. In addition, there are also a few people who migrate more permanently for casual labour on farms outside of the research areas. Some village inhabitants also migrate to access secondary or higher education, such as the nursing college in Dar es Salaam or the teaching colleges in various other cities.

Migrants also aim to access various vocational training opportunities, such as masonry, mechanical or engineering courses in Njombe.

In Ghana, people migrate in order to work, study or to complete apprenticeships. The most popular destinations are Takoradi for the rural residents in Ahanta West, and Accra for those in Kwaebibirem. Other destinations include cities like Kumasi and Cape Coast. Many people also migrate to cities to work in government jobs as teachers, police or nurses that have been assigned and transferred by their departments to other districts. Recent graduates also migrate to cities in order to find jobs. This was described by an older opinion leader in Takyiman who stated:

They are predominantly the youth that migrate from this community to Accra basically in search of jobs. They are mostly those who have completed their education and seem not to be able to find a job here. So, they go to Accra and Kumasi to look for jobs. There are others too who have learnt a trade, such as artisans, hairdressers, carpenters who cannot get a job here. So, they go to Accra, Kumasi or Koforidua to find a job (interview, 8 December 2015)

Apart from the youth migrating within Ghana, some take their chances by migrating to destinations such as the USA, Canada, the UK or Italy. Some migrants try to migrate internationally by travelling through 'transit zones', or those zones or countries through which migrants travel to their

final destinations. In a few cases, Togo and Nigeria were reported to be easy transit countries for reaching Europe or the USA. For example, the following farmer respondent attempted to reach Europe through Lomé, the capital city of neighbouring Togo. He stated:

I wanted to travel outside to Europe. And I got to know that going through Lomé was a lot easier. So, I wanted to go and work there for a while and then continue to Europe. But because of the language barrier there and also not finding jobs to do, I spent only three weeks there and then returned to Ghana (interview, 9 November 2015)

Migration histories are thus not always success stories; some migrants return home without the expected livelihood outcomes. Others, however, never reach their aspired destinations abroad and 'get stuck' in bigger cities of their country and find work as mechanics, cleaners or shop attendants. Over time, some decide to stay in these cities and start their own businesses while remaining connected to their home communities and their families. A village elder of Abaam in Ghana summarised this connection with home as follows:

We have a saying that no matter how bitter your gum is, you would always lick it. So, if you were born in this town and both parents come from here and you travel, no matter what, you will come back to visit your parents and your siblings you left behind. Because your home is always your home (interview, 03 November 2015)

But it also works the other way around: the booming agricultural sector in the areas under study attracts many external investors (see also Brønd and Fold, 2016). Whether these investors settle down in the areas under study depends on the accessibility of the region and the proximity to towns. In Tanzania for instance, outsiders who invest in the areas with rain-fed agriculture that are also close and well connected to the town of Njombe, mainly rent a piece of land to cultivate crops while maintaining a residence in their home town. In contrast, in the more remote areas where irrigation has been implemented, external investors are attracted who sometimes also settle in the villages. They invest in land, mainly to cultivate Irish potatoes and trees, while some also open shops in the villages. Investors originate from a variety of places, including Njombe town. In Ghana, most large rubber and oil palm plantation investors come from urban areas. They have earned money in a different sector and want to reap the benefits of rubber or oil palm. Smaller investors are often return migrants who aim to make a good living in Ghana again and leave a legacy for their village of origin or for their children. In Cameroon, it is also very common for migrants (especially those from Bamileke families) to invest in agricultural, commercial and other economic sectors in their villages of origin (Box 7). Some own various trucks with a 20-tonne capacity that carry fresh harvests directly to the urban markets of Cameroon and neighbouring countries.

BOX 7. BAMILEKE MIGRANTS' HOMELAND INVESTMENTS

For many years, the Bamileke people from Western Cameroon have been successful both in economic and political terms. Apart from being active in farming, many of them have also migrated to the cities of Cameroon where they have been highly effective in running businesses of all kinds. They are especially known as influential traders and transport operators, and much of the urban food supply chain is in their hands. The Bamileke are also active traders operating in other countries of the Central African region. Many Bamileke live in Yaoundé and Douala and they participate in a variety of ethnic associations and networks that span urban and rural spaces. Some have attained influential political positions from which they are able to contribute to the development of their communities of origin. Others are small business owners or wealthy entrepreneurs owning, for example, a supermarket, hotel, restaurant, laundry or a transport company. Some are large landowners and they run profitable businesses in plantation agriculture, cattle breeding, fish farming and food processing. It is not surprising that those with sufficient means invest in their region of origin, including the construction of opulent family houses, community infrastructure and farming. One particular case in point is the construction of a colossal conference centre by a successful entrepreneur/politician who lives most of the time in Douala.

5.5 Mobility in social and economic networks

This section has elaborated on the different resource inflows and outflows in the areas under study. The main source of income for most rural households consists of farming activities. Most of these farming activities are complemented by non-farming activities, such as construction, trade, transport or other service activities. Income is often complemented with remittances from national and international migrants. Domestic remittances are usually sent more frequently and mostly used for household consumption. International remittances are sent less frequently, but these consist of larger amounts and are used for investments in farming and other economic activities. As rural livelihoods depend highly on external resources, these different resource inflows and outflows induce various mobility dynamics. Many household members crisscross between urban as well as rural areas in order to gain access to resources and to extend their social and economic networks. How these complex and multi-faceted flows of people, goods, services and capital may open up new opportunities for local development in the rural regions will be addressed in the concluding section.

6

Conclusions: livelihood transformation and local development

This final section summarises some key findings from the research in rural areas of Cameroon, Ghana and Tanzania and focuses in particular on the interrelationships between livelihood transformation of households in dynamic rural areas and rural development. Linked to each of these key findings, some specific recommendations are presented for local governments that seek to foster local development in rural regions.

6.1 Mobility and livelihood diversification

It is clear from the findings of this study that migration cannot be considered as a unidirectional movement from rural areas to cities; it has instead been shaped by a chain of connections in which rural and urban livelihoods interact on a movement continuum. Temporary movement – whether daily, weekly or seasonally – characterises the main mobility pattern of rural households crisscrossing the region in search of employment, services, commercial goods and education as well as for social reasons. More and more people living in rural areas go to small towns and service centres in search of consumption goods, services and labour opportunities. These temporary flows of people are complemented and linked with more permanent flows of mobility which makes the areas under study highly

dynamic in terms of mobility inflows and outflows. Some of these flows are year-round, but there are also large fluxes during certain periods of the year such as during land preparation, harvesting and other key periods on the agricultural calendar. Increased mobility flows also are related to important social events such as public holidays, burial ceremonies and local festivities that attract migrants to their home settlements.

At the same time, non-agricultural employment is becoming important in all the study sites although to a varying extent. There seems to be a general tendency towards higher dependency on agriculture among those farmers who produce the principal cash crops of the regions when compared to the farmers cultivating other crops. This might indicate a tendency where the more commercial farmers increasingly specialise in a principal cash crop, while many of the peasants choose to base their livelihood on a combination of agricultural and non-agricultural activities. In some cases, this may reflect a trend of progressive dispossession of some segments of the rural population.

Whereas the opportunities for finding non-agricultural employment within the study sites used to be poor, today some of the study sites are experiencing new opportunities for earning non-agricultural incomes. The increased mobility and hereto related urbanisation of the rural

landscape has generated opportunities for livelihood diversification and non-farming economic activities. These economic dynamics provide several households with an economic buffer to invest in improved housing. In all the research areas, the construction sector is booming. Massive investments in improved housing and real estate bring along a vibrant market for building materials and generate business opportunities for local craftsmen. Masonry is a major income-generating activity in the villages nowadays. Apart from the increase in business opportunities related to masonry, firing bricks from clay for building houses has emerged as an opportunity to gain an income and ever more local shops sell building materials. Other small-scale industries and private services also absorb rural non-agricultural labour. Many households start businesses in the communities, such as opening up small grocery stalls, repair and tailor shops, or buying a Chinese or Indian motorbike to become a taxi driver in the area.

Apart from these developments, extra investments in the agricultural sector create opportunities for spin-off activities that stimulate the local economy. In the oil palm-dominated areas in Ghana, for instance, oil palm nuts are increasingly being processed into raw palm oil by small family-run production units and then traded locally. This informal economy is possible because of common practices of side-selling by the outgrowers of oil palm who do not deliver all of their harvested produce to the formal oil-processing companies. Similar examples can be drawn from other study sites. The rural areas of Bamboutos and Njombe are both experiencing an increasing commercialisation of Irish potato production driven by a rising national and international demand for the crop. The commercialisation of potato farming has resulted in a variety of related activities such as cleaning, packaging and transporting the product. In the local villages, many women have developed a new activity and a product which is in high demand: home-based peeling and processing of potato chips (Box 8).

Positive government-led measures to foster local and regional development in sub-Saharan Africa may start from the recognition that current processes of livelihood transformation and mobility dynamics are essential not only for individual households' livelihoods, but also for societal development at large. Such acknowledgement offers splendid opportunities for national, regional and local governments to devise and implement development policies that take into account – and even target – the rural people for whom mobility is a vital asset of their livelihoods that span the rural and urban and include farm- and non-farm economic activities. In this respect, central and regional authorities may take the lead in improving social, economic and spatial infrastructure (eg schools, clinics, markets, financial services, electricity supply and roads). Such measures will – at least in part – prevent the outflow of human capital, in particular of the young and enterprising parts of the rural population. Improved infrastructure within the rural areas also facilitates the connections with small

BOX 8. SPIN-OFF ACTIVITIES FOR LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Different crops have very different scopes for diversification, offering possibilities for new actors and spin-off activities. While the international demand for both rubber and oil palm is very strong, an important difference between the two crops is that rubber is a non-food product while oil palm is suitable for food consumption. This is why oil palm, in comparison with rubber, has a more diverse range of international and national actors and why rubber and oil palm differ with respect to spin-off activities. In comparison to rubber, oil palm offers many more possibilities in the direct region, opening up opportunities for improving regional development dynamics and more small-scale activities.

This compares to the sesame and Irish potato cases in Tanzania. Sesame is very strong on the international market and sesame production is mostly exported. For the Irish potato, local market dynamics are more diverse due to several possibilities to add value to the product. In this sense, the production of potatoes creates whole chains of actors and local spin-off activities while sesame largely is directly channelled to the international market.



In Ghana, oil palm nuts are increasingly being processed by small family-run businesses and traded locally © Romy Santpoort



Oil palm processing in Kwaebibirem. Oil palm offers scope for diversification, opening up opportunities for improving regional development dynamics and more small-scale activities © Romy Santpoort

towns, enhances the physical access to social and financial services and increases opportunities for livelihood diversification within the region.

Local governments are, in principle, best equipped to improve the situation and living conditions of the young and landless agricultural labour force that temporarily resides in the small towns. One instrument would be to facilitate construction of temporary housing facilities where migrant labourers can reside in periods between engagements. These areas can moreover serve as pick-up spots where employers and employees can meet and negotiate conditions of employment. In addition, local governments

may create off-season labour opportunities by employing people in works such as road maintenance, construction or service provision. Such institutionalised, off-season employment opportunities keep labour and economic activities in the region and as such foster economic vitality the whole year round.

6.2 Remittances

The remittances received in the three countries are used in the first place to satisfy household needs and to increase agricultural output, but sometimes also for collective purposes such as the construction and renovation of

roads, schools, health clinics and markets. Especially when migrants are organised in hometown associations or other migrant associations, remittances can be invested collectively in infrastructure and services.

In Ghana and Cameroon, such migrant associations play a significant role in development processes in the areas under study. In both countries, migrant associations have positively contributed by diminishing distinct deficiencies in public infrastructure such as roads and bridges, and services such as schools and health centres. In the case of Cameroon, the projects of these migrant associations were lobbied for with national government representatives and have received some concrete development outcomes through the construction of roads, schools and health centres (Box 9).

Yet the case of Cameroon has also shown that migrant associations, while being quite efficient in mobilising huge amounts of money for the construction of schools and hospitals, are rather weak in the practical implementation and operation of these projects if they are not supported by the local authorities monitoring the projects. Similarly, it was demonstrated for the Ghanaian cases that the investments of migrant associations in street lights and road infrastructure were not followed up with maintenance by the responsible local institutions. In Tanzania, Maasai migrants, although they may be physically absent from the villages, also contribute to community investments including the construction of roads, dams and social services centres (eg schools and dispensaries). Donations for these projects are collected from eligible individuals within the community; in turn, migrants learn about the call for donations through relatives and friends and consequently donate. Such participation and donation reassures migrants of their belonging to the community and that they remain important in political, identity and rights-claiming issues.

The ever-growing flows of remittances also offer real opportunities for local governments to facilitate and stimulate the use of remittances for the public good. Once they realise the huge development potential of remittances, local governments will be fully prepared to encourage local development projects initiated by civil society organisations, in particular by creating supportive institutional environments and by allocating funds for operational costs and salaries of teaching and health workers. Thus, local governments establish the proper conditions for co-development with migrant associations, local (farm and non-farm) entrepreneurs and other stakeholders in the local development process. Governments can do so by facilitating local multistakeholder platforms, thus guaranteeing participatory decision-making about collaborative investments in local and regional infrastructure and services and coordinating the implementation of the projects. Government-led community-contracting arrangements for such public works may be a strong tool in providing off-season employment as well.

BOX 9. VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES

In the rural research areas of Cameroon, village development committees are semi-formal institutions that came into existence at the hands of migrants. These committees have implemented viable economic entities in the region and so have had a positive effect on employment creation in rural areas. The case of Bangang in the Bamboutos region is an example. Elites have decided to return to their homelands to create agricultural and livestock enterprises. These elites have also established migrant associations that have important linkages to the regional and national governments. These associations established several capacity-building projects in which they instructed farmers in useful farming techniques as well as service provision in the form of health and financial services and the construction of schools in the area. Through lobbying efforts at the national government level, the associations have devised a concrete plan to construct a road that will open up the whole Bamboutos area to external markets.

Nonetheless, the role of elites in local development processes has also resulted in several disagreements with the local population, which wants the elites to invest in infrastructure and development projects without interrupting their direct means of production. In general, these elites compete with the local population for resources. Moreover, their projects are often accused of being disguised as philanthropy in order to be used as a political instrument to acquire more power in the region.

6.3 Transport infrastructure

In the respective research areas, transport infrastructure development is primarily a much-needed condition for rural economic development. It is also a basic requirement for further incorporation of remote rural regions into the national space economy. A well-developed transport network physically connects the rural food-producing areas with the urban consumer markets. It also is a basic condition for people to move and engage in non-agricultural economic activities.

The processes of agricultural commercialisation across the study regions have already led to considerable flows of agricultural products to urban areas (and further beyond) and to reverse flows of agricultural inputs, such as fertilisers, seeds and pesticides. At the same time, the rural areas also attract new actors with specific roles in the trade networks, such as local tradesmen, wholesalers and truck drivers. Improvements in transport infrastructure are an important factor for on-going agricultural commercialisation and the resulting socioeconomic changes in rural areas.



Transport of Irish potatoes out of the Bamboutos region, Cameroon. For many rural communities, the poor quality and lack of rural roads are a substantial constraint to the marketing of cash crops © Paul van Lindert

The changes in transportation systems include the improvements of roads and bridges, and the increased presence of motorised transportation vehicles such as motorbikes and trucks. As a result, transportation costs will decline and the spatial flows of labour, goods and services will become easier.

Thus, improved transport networks facilitate intraregional mobility flows and contribute to increased regional connectivity. More often than not, transport infrastructure is still too narrowly focused on the connections of district towns with the capital cities. While the cities around the Cameroonian Bamboutos mountains are, for instance, well-connected with high-quality asphalt roads between one another and with the big cities of Yaoundé and Douala, roads and transport facilities have been poorly developed for most of the rural communities that live in the interior pockets of the Bamboutos plateau. In the rainy season, most roads are virtually only passable by motorbikes. Trucks with perishable products from market-gardening communities may have prolonged delays in getting the crops out of the area. For the people, these poor connections to markets, education and health services are a severe hurdle for their livelihoods to overcome, including their opportunities for livelihood diversification within the region. For many rural communities, the poor quality and lack of rural roads are a

substantial constraint to the marketing of cash crops and the distribution of inputs among the smallholders. There is no doubt that further improvement in transportation systems is a key area for policy that aims to strengthen rural-urban connections, rural development in general and the spatial inclusion of dynamic agricultural regions.

With respect to this much-needed improvement of transport infrastructure, the role of the government is vital. The development of rural roads in strategically selected areas needs priority in terms of planning, budget allocation and actual implementation. If regional and local governments would also develop networks of strategically placed collection points that are well connected to the arterial roads of the region, accessibility to dynamic rural areas would be improved. A limited number of rural roads connecting collection points could decrease transportation costs significantly. At these collection points – most likely located in existing villages – agricultural commodities could be collected easily and transported to bigger and more important markets while inputs could be more easily distributed. Manual labour could undertake the transport of agricultural products and inputs between farms and collection points. This might also generate non-farm income opportunities for people transporting commodities by wagons, bikes or motorbikes.

6.4 Information and communication technologies

The rapidly developing infrastructure for information and communication technologies (ICTs) has significantly altered livelihood patterns and rural-city connections. Overall there has been a jump in the number of people that have access to mobile phones. The increased availability of mobile phones started from around the year 2000, when few villagers had access. During the past 10 years, however, accessibility has escalated and nowadays it is common for almost everyone to have a mobile phone. As a result, access to communication and information has improved substantially; increased access aids in developing and keeping networks (for economic and social interests) and allows people to save and transfer money through the use of mobile money.

During the last couple of years, mobile money agents have emerged in Tanzanian villages; the rising importance of mobile money was also observed in Ghana and Cameroon. While only a few agents provide mobile money services like M-Pesa in the villages and people use it to a varying degree, the service seems to be well known in the different study areas. Some use it for personal matters, such as for remittance transfers. Others use it to purchase farming inputs, for paying rent or to purchase craft services from tailors and masons. Mobile money is also widely used by businesses, such as commodity shops and agricultural businesses. Shops mainly use mobile money (and mobile phones) to transfer money for orders placed in urban areas whereas agricultural businesses use it to transfer money from the brokers to the farmers after produce sales, for example at urban markets.

Mobile phones are also used to disseminate market information including issues related to supply and demand and crop prices. Mobile phones also facilitate product stocking as well as money transfers between business associates. Previously, closing a deal, checking product availability or collecting money required travel; in many cases, all of that is now only a phone call or a money transfer away. Thus, mobile phones and mobile money ease the processes related to doing business, through the reduced transaction costs of sellers, buyers and transporters. Mobile money has become the most important banking service in the study areas both for saving and transferring money, especially in regard to marketing of agricultural produce. In fact, Tanzania is currently leading globally in mobile money transactions. Trading centres are increasingly becoming money dispensing points whereby the locals receive the remittances sent by their relatives residing in different places.

Despite these opportunities, there are still huge disparities between those who have access to mobile phones and money and those who have not. The fact that most people own a mobile phone does not necessarily mean that they are actually able to use it on a regular basis. There are various explanations to the differing uptake of mobile phones and mobile money between the study sites. Firstly, there are still many areas where mobile phone coverage is inadequate. There is a particular divide in coverage between urban and rural areas (Pasini, 2016). Secondly, some of the study sites suffer a lack of electricity and consequently people need to travel to places where they can charge their phones. Finally, to enable mobile money transfers there needs to be a local shop where mobile money can be cashed, topped up and deposited. If local shops only open in certain periods of the year, such as during harvest seasons, the mobile money system is not optimal.

From the above account, it is obvious that the facilitation and provision of telecommunication infrastructure should be part of the development policy agendas at all levels of government. The central government may play an important – although indirect – role by stimulating user cost reductions which would lead to an expansion of internet use, eg through encouragement of market competition among the mobile phone and internet companies operating in the country. Creation of appropriate regulatory frameworks to reduce the costs of handsets and airtime will also lead to user expansion. Also, incentives for the use of solar-powered phones might be considered, as many rural households do not have access to electricity and cannot recharge the batteries of their phones at home. In addition, local governments may improve generalised access to the internet by establishing municipal computer centres where people can consult the internet for free. Local governments can also use the computer facilities in such 'telecentres' for offering basic ICT courses to the residents.

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Related Reading

Urbanisation, rural-urban transformations and food systems

This working paper is part of the IFAD-funded project Rural-Urban Transformations and Food Systems: Re-Framing Food Security Narratives and Identifying Policy Options That Foster Sustainable Transitions. Global food security and rural development are often framed in terms of inadequate agricultural production. But urbanisation is driving profound transformations in food systems in rural, peri-urban and urban areas – from food consumption to food processing, transport, markets and all related activities. Local, national, regional and global policies are critical to shaping rural-urban linkages and the political economy of food systems. Policies must support food security and livelihoods of low-income groups in all locations – while fostering sustainable rural-urban transitions.

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This working paper explores the importance of livelihood diversification and mobility in livelihood transformation processes in dynamic rural areas of sub-Saharan Africa. It focuses on poverty dynamics, food security and local development. Based on empirical research conducted in Cameroon, Ghana and Tanzania, the study shows that improved connectivity is a major driver of rural livelihood transformations and local development in these countries. The transformations in agricultural production systems also create a range of additional rural non-farm labour opportunities for local people, which in turn stimulate positive socioeconomic dynamics in the region.

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