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The role of land consolidation programme in household food security in Rwanda : a case study of household farmers of Gisenyi Village of Bugesera District.

Ntirenganya, Jules

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to investigate the outcomes of the Land Consolidation Programme (LCP) in household food productivity. The implementation of the 2004 Rwandan National Land Policy (which incorporates LCP) has been one of the Rwandan government strategic attempts to improve the livelihood of the Rwandans. In this study we look at some of the social-economic factorsbenefited by household farmers through the LCP since its implementation in 2007.

In Sub-Saharan Africa many people depend on land for their livelihood and consequently, one of the obvious negative impacts has been the fragmentation of land. Historically the customary land management, in which inheritance is the major mode of land acquisition, has been the main way of allocating land in African societies. This communal tenure is viewed as unstable and leads to detrimental implications, in the form of mismanagement and overexploitation of the available land. The demographic pressure has also aggravated the issue of land scarcity and land fragmentation. The latter has consequences on agricultural productivity since it makes harder the efficient use of land.

In this study the researcher explores the outcomes of the LCP in Rwanda as a type of land reform that aims at preventing fragmentation of land and enhancing the livelihood of household farmers. For achieving this objective, the study used a case study of household farmers from Gisenyi village of Bugesera district (in Rwanda) who are involved in the LCP since its implementation. Empirical data was obtained through in-depth interviews with 20 household farmers and 8 key informants. The emphasis in the study was put on investigating the state of household food productivity in Gisenyi. The study was guided by the property right theory and its basic conceptual assumption of enhancing the income through credit access.

The findings of the study demonstrate that household farmers in Gisenyi village have benefited from the LCP. Household farmers confirmed that agricultural productivity has increased due to the new farming techniques brought by the programme. The study concludes that once the programme is properly and fully implemented, the LCP will highly enhance food self-sufficiency situation in Rwanda, improving also the livelihood of rural areas through other benefits such as infrastructure development.