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“Solidarity in a competing world —
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Irregular Migration and Agricultural Production among Smallholder Farmers in Kasulu District, Tanzania

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Abstract

Despite the fact that irregular migrants (IRMs) have often been facing a lot of challenges in sustaining their livelihood in Kasulu District, yet in recent years, there has been an increase of IRMs from within and outside Kasulu District in search of casual labour in the local community. The study therefore was undertaken in four villages in Kasulu, Kitanga, Kagera-Nkanda, Mvugwe and Nyachenda to determine the contribution of IRMs into the growth and prosperity of smallholder farmers. Specifically, the study aimed to determine the driving factors of irregular migration, to assess smallholder farmer's attitude towards IRMs, to compare agricultural related benefits among smallholder farmers, and finally, to identify factors affecting both IRMs and smallholder farmer interaction. A cross-sectional research design was adopted for the study in which a simple random sampling, purposive and snowball sampling techniques were employed to select 120 respondents. Data were collected using a variety of methods namely questionnaire survey, key informant interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), direct observation, reviewing of secondary sources and tape recording. In addition data were collected using various tools, these include, questionnaires, checklists, camera, tape recorders and secondary sources of data. Quantitative data were analysed using statistical package for social science (SPSS) by adopting, descriptive, gross margin analysis. While qualitative data were analysed using content, discourse and narrative analyses. The results showed that the profit margin for smallholder farmers employing IRMs was higher with 926 925 Tanzanian Shillings (Tsh) and 924 375 Tsh from maize and bean production respectively, as compared to smallholder farmers not using IRMs, whose margin was 289 200 Tsh and 223 170 Tsh, respectively. Social, cultural, economical and political factors have an influence in triggering irregular migration, which indirectly compel smallholder farmers to employ or not employ IRMs.

Keywords: Irregular migrants, Kasulu, smallholder agriculture