



Tropentag, October 9-11, 2007, Witzenhausen

“Utilisation of diversity in land use systems:
Sustainable and organic approaches to meet human needs”

Improvement of Food Security and Income through Utilisation of Marshlands in the Province of Gitarama (Rwanda)

GODIHALD MUSHINZIMANA

University of Bonn, Department for Economic Sociology, Germany

Abstract

Land scarcity due to intense population growth, high population density as well as to the consequences of a subsistence economy with extensive production levels has forced the Rwandan government to cultivate its remaining land resources, the marshlands that comprise ca. 12% of the utilised agricultural area (UAA). In addition to goals of assuring food security the exploitation of marginal, erosion-threatened hillsides should be prevented. While Kenya, Tanzania and others want to follow the Rwandan example the social situation of small scaled farmers in the Rwandan wetlands after implementation of the governmental programme is unclear. No social-economic studies have been carried out on the improvement of the situation of life and the frame conditions of farm management neither for the local, nor for the resettled farmers.

The goal of this study is to analyse the political, administrative and social implementation of the marshland use programme in regard to the improvement of food security, social services and income development of small scaled farmers in the research areas. The research concept builds on the model of implementation theory with the programme characteristics (programme goals and measures, target group selection), actors and agencies involved in implementing the programme (quantity and quality of staff and funds, own targets and action constraints) and programme addressees (acceptance of the program, socio-economic status quo) as the central factors of influence.

Structured interviews, group discussions and guided expert interviews in the marsh districts Rugeramigozi and Base were conducted. The period of food security, the possibilities to sell to markets and the monthly household income have increased as a result of the cultivation of marshlands. A high motivation with regard to those actors and agencies involved in implementing the programme and an improvement of the social situation of the addressees is noticed. However, the lack of follow-up financing, inadequate legal regulations, inadequate information for the farmers regarding land use as well as the nearly unchanged, deficient social infrastructure threaten the sustainable development of the achieved results. Concrete measures to improve rural networks and social infrastructure are recommended for the future governmental action.

Keywords: Implementation, income improvement, food security, marshlands, wetlands