



Tropentag, October 9-11, 2007, Witzenhausen

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

Rural Employment Creation in Africa: A Review of the Main Strategies and Policies

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Abstract

Given that the rise of unemployment poses a serious threat to the poor people livelihoods and became a pressing problem in African countries, considerable attention has been focused on rural sector in Africa with regarding to its potential to employment creation. Rural sector in Africa, including farm and non-farm activities, is the source of inputs to processing, manufacturing and retail businesses that account for most employment in towns. Evidences from studies have confirmed that employment creation is the most efficient mean to fight against poverty and for this reason it must be included in the overall macro-economic policies in Africa. With this context in mind, this paper develops an overview of selected strategies, programmes and policies that have been applied to promote and consolidate rural employment in Africa, showing the features of the local socio-economic context. A comparative assessment is performed on the main elements and patterns present in the successful experiences, allowing for conclusions to be drawn on the level of future implementations in regions with similar conditions. Based on the literature survey along with case studies, the paper also provides an examination of current constraints and perspectives, and the role of governmental and non-governmental organisations to enhance the employment generation strategies for rural Africa. The paper ends by pointing out the principal findings from the literature survey on the rural employment generation and the linkages with other determinants such as international agricultural markets, credit and investment, labour earnings, land conflicts and appropriate technical training to perform rural activities.

Keywords: Africa, policy, rural employment, rural sector