

BASIS CRSP Poverty Traps Project

Summary of Discussions with Stakeholders

in Kenya

26 November – 4 December 2001

Summary by Frank Place, ICRAF

National Stakeholder Meeting

November 28, 2001

University of Nairobi, Kabete Campus

Frank Place presented an overview of BASIS and the Dynamic Poverty Trap project, drawing upon the presentation by Chris Barrett in Kerugoya in June 2001. This was followed by a presentation on the bioeconomic modeling component by Ben Okumu. The comments made are noted below and this is followed by the participant list.

Questions/comments following presentation by Frank Place:

How were the sites selected? It seems that they are the same sites that are studied over and over and can this give us a good picture of the country to recommend policies?

What are the data needs for the modeling? Do the data already exist in some cases, since quite a lot of research has taken place in Kenya and in these sites?

A similar research thrust was the Tiffen et al study of Machakos. More recently, the same group looked at how policy influenced farming system changes in Makueni District. These two studies might be very useful for your research design.

How are population effects catered for – because aside from market forces, population forces can be very important in driving changes in investment and other variables?

What types of rural markets are being emphasized, input markets, output markets, or both? It may be that markets for complementary goods are most important in decisions over the use of inputs or the growing of certain crops.

One major problem is the lack of grassroot capacity and rural institutions. How are these accounted for in the hypotheses/analysis?

How will you identify the poor or vulnerable groups?

How are risk management and coping strategies dealt with at a policy level – how can policy scenarios in these areas be analyzed?

It seems that an increasing share of the poor and perhaps the poorest of the poor reside in urban areas. Will the study address this group at all?

There are several different ways of defining poverty traps: intra-village where poverty traps are conditioned by household factors, inter-village where poverty traps may be conditioned by larger scale factors, and inter-generation where both

household and larger scale factors may be important. Which ones will the study deal with?

Does the stratification control for environmental/ecological differences across sites?

What is the role of social capital in the analysis/model?

Will urban-rural links such as remittances be incorporated into the analysis? How about strategies such as upward mobility from say farmers to traders?

Are there success stories from which one can make positive policy recommendations?

Some households who “escaped” poverty may have been fortunate to benefit from an exogenous influence.

For training activities it would be appropriate to open the slots to competition.

Questions/comments for Ben:

How is livestock measured? Is it considered a capital or consumer good?

How is risk defined and treated in the model?

Who are the users/clients of the model?

With respect to risk, will the model focus on evaluating coping strategies only or will it be able to suggest policy changes that target the underlying causes of the risks?

It will be useful to identify the important types of risk and determine how to bring them into the model.

Is there a protocol for selecting variables for the model?

There have been lots of efforts in bio-economic modeling – how can these be made more effective in policy?

The model seems based at a household level, yet the results presented were at district level. How do you scale up?

The NUTMON data may be very useful for your model.

How do rural markets really fit into the model? It seems like they would come in from outside the village.

How can the analyses be synthesized across sites?

How are time lags incorporated, if at all?

CORNELL-KARI-ICRAF RESEARCH PROJECT PRESENTATION
RURAL MARKETS, NATURAL CAPITAL AND DYNAMIC POVERTY TRAPS IN EAST AFRICA

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Policy Working Group Meeting

Friday, November 30, 2001

KEFRI-Maseno Regional Research Centre

In attendance:

Ben Okumu

Frank Place

Qureish Noordin – ICRAF

Pamella Opiyo -- sociologist with IFPRI poverty study

Wesley Ongadi -- sociologist with IFPRI poverty study

Joshua Eboyi – Luhya farmer

Jerim Otieno – Luo farmer

Dorah Ingolo – Maendeleo Ya Wanawake (Women's Association)

Ayub Muchele – Councillor, Siaya

Elija Owino – Senior Chief, Siaya

Frank Place made two presentations, the first on the progress of a project in development with local research, development, and policy institutions. The project aims to enhance local policy making capacity in the area of agricultural and natural resource management. Frank presented 4 objectives for the project, two on research, one on capacity building, and one on supporting policy reform. Some of the comments related to this presentation are included here because the focal themes identified by stakeholders for this project were markets and marketing, credit and finance, information flows, and social symptoms of poverty. Three of the four feature prominently in the BASIS project hypotheses on poverty traps.

There was an initial discussion related to extension, about recent policy discussions on privatization or at least co-financing of extension in Kenya. There was agreement that many new ideas could work if the local population were properly informed or consulted. In past, there has been much suspicion of motives, jealousies, and rejection of new technologies, practices, approaches because of top-down styles. Thus, implementation processes (emphasizing bottom-up) are critical regardless of how beneficial new policies or technologies may appear to be. Building capacity of local leaders to engage in policy debates and decisions was also seen as a vital need for the future, all the more if and when decentralization intensifies in Kenya.

On the Cornell project itself, after a brief introduction, the floor was opened for people to discuss poverty traps, what kinds are there, why are people stuck in the traps, and how have some people managed to escape.

There were several mentions of the importance of markets. Often, farmers try to grow higher value products like vegetables, only to find that markets are poor and there were stories of sukuma wiki being used as manure. Most of the discussion of markets was about output markets.

The role of the family was noted in a couple of instances. In the first place, large family sizes were mentioned as perpetuating poverty by reducing schooling levels and aptitude for learning. A second issue concerned the extended family whereby it is difficult for one member of a poor family to get ahead because of high expectations on he or she to support the remaining members. A third issue is that there could be more agricultural training of children in schools and they could be more active in teaching parents.

Lack of civic education was also featured as holding people back as they did not know their rights or opportunities to demand services/information from different government bodies.

Small land sizes were mentioned as de-motivating farmers from treating the farm as a profit making enterprise and in some cases giving up on it altogether.

The majority of households continue to grow low value local maize. It was noted that crop production seems to be "regionalized" in Kenya with maize and sugar dominating in W. Kenya. Meanwhile, higher value crops are absent perhaps because of government policy not to establish cooperatives in W. Kenya.

It was noted that there are people who fail to get ahead because of poor attitudes or laziness. There is a belief that if you educate a child, he/she will get a white collar job. But this relationship is becoming less likely with each successive year because of lack of urban growth. Hence, many people return to the rural areas and consume, but are not interested in farming. Another attitude is that more successful farmers get there because of initial wealth and so publicly state that they could not try to imitate.

On the other hand, education has helped get people good jobs and move out of poverty. Even agricultural production increases have been found to work for some households.

There is a lot of idleness in the community especially among men and the youth. In the past, the youth were treated as children of the community and were disciplined by all. Nowadays, things have become very individualized and social goals are much more difficult to implement.

It is still difficult for women to have say in household finances where men are present and men often spend money on unwise things.

Discussions/outcomes with other stakeholders

Willis Oluoch-Kosura

We were introduced to three students. One is a Phd candidate and will join the team in the re-survey of the World Bank study in Madzu Vihiga. He is highly recommended from the department and will be able to undertake quite a bit of analysis. A second student who has completed an MSc in Embu will carry out a short consultancy to synthesize existing datasets available for Central Kenya. A third student has some interest in working with the project for a Phd but this is not yet firm. We are also discussing the possibility of engaging other MSc students or graduates to assist in the field data collection.

We received a copy of the World Bank questionnaire from 1988 and the dataset was also give to Ben. Willis is in the process of recovering all the raw data from the original survey. We also discussed the possibility of raising additional funds that would be managed by the University of Nairobi. One need is already known – to support additional trainees for the Cornell bioeconomic modeling course. The second one is to add a sociological/qualitative dimension to the work (see below).

As for moving forward, we agreed that we need to begin with a reconnaissance survey (a census of sorts) in Madzu to find out what happened to the households and their composition since 1988. This needs to be done quickly in January so that we may decide whether or not the resulting sample is adequate for our purposes. Some concerns might be: do we wish to follow up former children who now have their own farms? do we wish to add some younger households to the original sample which will undoubtedly be older than the general population? Willis, Frank, Paswel Phiri, and Martin Odendo will try to coordinate a visit in January.

Martin Odendo

We met Martin for about 3 hours. Part of the time was spent discussing logistics on a separate ICRAF project for which we are collaborating (more on this is mentioned below under “Other.” He is very happy to assist on the technical and logistical side for the fieldwork. They will not be able to provide much support in terms of vehicles, but office space is possible. In any case, as noted above, the main student is already well-versed with the study area.

Martin will also (and has already) assisted in the logistics for the June meeting at the Golf Hotel.

Collins Obonyo

We met Collins only briefly since he was away at another KEFRI research sub-station. He is very happy to help in developing questionnaires and in assisting students/enumerators in logistics and technical matters.

Pamella Opiyo and Wesly Ongadi

I introduced Ben to two sociologists, working on an ICRAF-IFPRI-University of Nairobi study of the impact of agroforestry on the poor (Pamella Opiyo and Wesley Ongadi, respectively a Luo and Luhya). They spent 7 months in the field conducting case studies of 40 households in all. This qualitative data will complement other quantitative data being collected. Ben and I thought that engaging one or both of them in our sites would add significant value to the understanding of strategies households use to escape poverty and the constraints that they face. However, our budget cannot accommodate this added element and thus we would need to draft a concept note to try and raise additional funds. Of priority would be to employ Wesley in Madzu where there is a long lag from baseline to follow up. A time period of 3 months in the field and say 2 months for analysis would be sufficient. This would cost about \$6,000. We might try to approach USAID as counterpart funding. Or we might try DFID as they have funded our other poverty project and have a keen interest in qualitative aspects of poverty (I don't know if this holds for the Kenya office of DFID). Rockefeller could also be approached, but ICRAF has submitted lots to John Lynam and this small one would not seem to be an institutional priority unless subsumed in a larger project. Other ideas are welcome.

Ade Freeman

We had a very interesting hour long discussion with Ade (of ICRISAT). He is leading a rural livelihoods project in Kenya (in Suba and Bomet districts). He is linking his work with a 3 country study by Frank Ellis (Malawi, Uganda, Tanzania) that is also looking at livelihood strategies. Within this, they are also trying look at poverty and food security through quantitative and qualitative techniques. We has an interesting conversation on technical aspects: how to account for the exceedingly complex rural economy where agriculture is but one component; trying to measure and model direct and indirect impacts of new technology or policy; how to do quality research on meso-scale factors such as institutions. We also discussed the importance of keeping each other informed of progress and to discuss ways of linking together to see if policy recommendations can be strengthened.

USAID

Ben was stuck in Kisumu due to vehicle problems so Frank went USAID. There, he found that only Dan Evans was available since Meg Brown was busy. The two exchanged a conversation that focused first on potential links to other projects. On this, Dan urged us to contact the FEWS project initially as he was aware that they were also pursuing similar objectives in part of their work. A second area of discussion was that of project impact. He reiterated what was stated at the stakeholder workshop, that we need to think of a clear plan for linking to policy makers. He had doubts as to whether a model could really work at local levels given all the constraints (infrastructure and human capacity) that exist. I had a very quick hello/goodbye with Meg Brown in the hallway. It was very impersonal and it did not seem that she has much interest in the project. She asked Dan to let me know that she has no money (I am not sure why she thought we wanted to ask for funds). Dan suggested that I write to her and ask her with whom we should correspond with at USAID-Kenya.

Golf Hotel

We visited the Golf Hotel, including the meeting rooms, guest rooms, and restaurant. We met the manager and negotiated a rate of 2,500 KSH for half board. We agreed to book half board for two reasons. First, some people may wish to try other restaurants in Kakamega (which are nearby the hotel). Second, even if we opt to eat dinner at the hotel, the menu prices are much less than the full board price, which assumes a buffet dinner (and note we are already having a buffet for lunch).

We thought that one key reasons for holding the meeting in Kakamega was to be able to see a study site. Thus, we will plan for a half day field trip. Ideally this would take place on Sunday afternoon (during which accessibility to vehicles is much easier). Then we would hold the meeting on Monday and Tuesday. The training course could either be held on Thursday-Friday before the meeting or Wednesday-Thursday after the meeting. We can surely hold it at ICRAF.