

Off-Farm Livelihood Diversification as a Strategy for Adaptation to Resilience Against Climate Change in Rural Uganda

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The threat of climate change on agriculture is continuing to pose significantly adverse effects on income and food security in Uganda. With 81.6% of the population living in rural areas, the dependency upon agriculture as a source of income is high. These effects include shocks and stresses such as droughts, failed harvests and flooding and are only likely to increase in both frequency and intensity. Thus, as recognised by scientists and development practitioners alike, [Ugandan] livelihoods are at risk (ibid) due to threatened agricultural productivity and the repercussions on financial stability.

This research will examine off-farm livelihood diversification as both an effective and imperative strategy for adaptation to resilience against climate change in rural Uganda. With the goal to reduce dependency upon agriculture as a sole source of income, I will be using a mixed methods approach to understand the current implementation of off-farm livelihood diversification and its success to increase human capital (experience, skills and willingness to innovate), generate earnings (additional cash resources), decrease vulnerability to effects of seasonality, increase assets and reduce poverty.

An in-depth literature review, supplemented with current policy documents, will help identify the previous socio-economic barriers for both Ugandan local communities and policy makers. This will be complimented by my primary data, collected through semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Current and past literature has indeed demonstrated the effects of climate change on agricultural productivity, yet there is more to be discovered on how this can be better implemented in Uganda. In other words, preliminary research indicates that income diversification is an adaptive strategy toward resilient development, yet further empirical research is required to identify this as a resilient strategy to the effects of climate change in Uganda. The research study will include an examination of a number of stakeholders, in particular the government and their role in supporting policies to enable this particular labour transition (capacity to provide necessary education to develop skills off-farm, provision of resources and distribution of capital). Furthermore, qualitative interviews with farmers will allow an in-depth analysis of the experience of beneficiaries: their willingness to engage with off-farm livelihood diversification and their lived experience to allow them to do so. During a 10-week study (beginning 28 May 2017) I will specifically research the current adaptive and transformative capacities for livelihood diversification (location in Uganda TBD). NGO's and local community leaders will also be approached for interviews.