



CODESRIA

On the dynamics of rural – urban interactions, Commuting patterns and resource flows in mountainous regions of east africa: studies of mt. Elgon uganda and mt. Kilimanjaro Tanzania

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Urban centers are increasingly affecting rural mountain areas. They act as strong destinations and sinks for agricultural and forest products, water, energy, nutrients, minerals and people. Unmanaged extraction and use of these resources is depleting the resource base necessary for future livelihoods for rural and urban people and function of mountain ecosystems, including agriculture. Urban areas are affected by a deterioration of rural mountain resources through reduced water quality and availability, lack of fuel and energy, overpopulation, availability of agricultural products and reduced scenic quality for recreation. On the other hand, urban centers offer much potential as engines for rural development and transformation of agriculture. Better Rural Urban Linkages, planning and policy integration offer benefits to both rural and urban livelihoods and sustainable mountain development [globalmountainprogram, online]. This project requests the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA) to provide us\$ 25,000 to a team of investigators from three East African universities to study the dynamics of rural – urban interactions, commuting patterns and resource flows in mountainous regions of East Africa: studies of Mt. Elgon Uganda and Mt. Kilimanjaro Tanzania. The proposed project will take 18 months.

Most governments have clear-cut and ambitious mission statements and policy planning targets to promote local economic development and integration of communities, yet the real influence of these policies is often unclear and sometimes in doubt. A major policy omission in East Africa is the absence of policies deliberately targeted at fostering rural urban linkage with a view to improving the income earning potentials of the rural areas through increased output to satisfy the urban market [Oluwasola, 2008]. This is particularly important when considering the interactions that exist between urban and rural areas; and how these either hinder or promote sustainable development. There are few analyses and studies that have been conducted in the East African region to qualify and quantify the nature, magnitude, spatial and temporal scale of interaction between urban and rural areas. Evidence suggests that studies available are descriptive, inconclusive and isolated only reflecting the some of the sub processes influencing rural urban interactions; for example, poverty eradication (Kappel et.al, 2005), rural labour market participation (Mduma and Wobst, 2005), and trade openness (Mbabazi, et.al., 2008).

The project proposes to apply Qualitative and Quantitative techniques integrated with analytical methodologies to: 1) determine the causes, forms and dynamics of the population mobility/commuting patterns along the rural urban gradient, presently existing in the mountain regions; 2) determine the type, patterns (direction, destination, quantities) of flow/exchange of resources and products [agricultural/industrial produce/wastes and investments] between the selected urban areas and the countryside; 3) examine factors hindering sustainable rural-urban linkages and how the opportunities available for the poor disaggregated by gender can be maximized in the Mountain regions; and 4) engender policy

options for urban and rural management given the flow of resources to and from rural areas in the framework of regional planning. The analysis that will be employed in the project is potentially replicable, with appropriate testing and adaptation for understanding rural urban interactions in other developing countries.