



Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Resource Management Collaborative Research Support Program

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Trip Report: Kenya and Uganda

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Purpose of Trip: Conduct master's field work, including five focus groups and a household survey on food security and social networks. Complete technology networks survey of agricultural service providers in four locations across Kenya and Uganda

Sites Visited: Bungoma and Kitale, Kenya;
Tororo and Kapchorwa, and USAID/Uganda, Kampala Uganda

Executive Summary:

From January to May, the Technology Networks CCRA funded field work for data collection toward the completion of an agricultural service sector/community survey and a food security survey to examine the relationship between the strength of social networks and household food security. This included both qualitative and quantitative research with five focus groups and two surveys spread across four study regions. Of 400 households originally surveyed regarding their agricultural production networks in the LTRA 10 baseline survey, 364 female household heads were interviewed regarding food security, food acquisition networks, and friendship networks. Contacts of both men and women in these households were used to generate the sample for a second survey of agricultural service sector providers (n = 74). Upon satisfactory completion of the data collection for the two surveys, I was invited to share preliminary insights and findings through a seminar at Makerere University and a presentation at USAID/Uganda.

Description of Activities:

Work this spring involved a significant amount of travel between sites to establish a basic understanding of the communities with which the LTRA 10 project was working. First, I traveled with the agronomic team between the sites demarcating plots and getting to know the farmers involved. Plot demarcation began in Bungoma, then moved up to Kitale, Kenya, down and

across to Tororo, Uganda and finished up in Kapchorwa, Uganda. While I had limited knowledge to contribute to plot demarcation, this was an excellent opportunity to get to know both the research team, farmers, and local advisors involved in the different project sites. These initial visits were also used to establish contacts in each of the sites for when I returned to finish the focus group and survey work. Moreover, these visits were also used to meet some of the important agricultural service sector providers in each of the sites for later follow up in the technology networks interviews.

The initial focus group was held in Kapchorwa, Uganda in Kapeschombe parish. The focus group activities were used to develop a local consumption basket, explore network interactions involving food, and to describe local histories of consumption and current conceptions of food insecurity. The findings of the focus group were then directly applied to the development of a localized survey instrument. While I had initially planned to stay in Kapchorwa to do the data collection, threats of violence surrounding the upcoming presidential election suggested that I should travel back to Kenya to begin the research and move back toward Uganda after the election excitement had died down. As a result, I left the survey with a local extension agent and a secondary school teacher who had assisted me in the focus group work and organization for them to begin the survey prior to my return.

Back in Bungoma, it took about one week to organize the focus group and household list for the follow up survey on food security and social networks. I also took this opportunity to review some of the findings of the previously administered farm level technology networks survey to 1) generate the sample for the food security household survey and 2) identify the actors to ask households for the specific contact information in order to do the technology networks survey and data collection. Also during this process, it was discovered that there was some repetition in households surveyed and that there seemed to be some inconsistencies with the Access data entry template and excel data. This initiated a discussion with the LTRA-10 team regarding the baseline survey analysis.

With the assistance individuals recommended by SACRED Africa, the next step was to hold a focus group in Bungoma. The focus group was extremely successful, with over 60 women in attendance sharing their knowledge. I also had the opportunity to work with an outstanding local extension agent and establish a contact with Sena Women's Group president.

After finishing the focus group, the survey instrument was adapted and I trained four enumerators, three women and one man, who had assisted with the previous baseline survey in the application of this instrument. Together, we blocked out a grid of where to travel to each day and set goals for the numbers of surveys to be completed. In examining the grid, it became very apparent that the surveyed locations in Bungoma were considerably distant from one another. The survey itself took four days, two spent in Bungoma South and two in Bungoma West. I sat in on 3-5 surveys with each of the enumerators. As the surveys were returned, there seemed to be a discernable pattern of responses between the male and female enumerators. The female enumerators had much higher reports of network contact for food acquisition. This puzzling finding led me to send back one of the female enumerators to the households the male enumerator had interviewed to collect more complete information about these interactions, and from that point I resolved to hire exclusively female enumerators. Despite the wide geographic

distribution of the sample, of the 95 unique households to interview identified in the review of the baseline survey, 86 households were located for an interview.

Sample dispersion also shaped the initial effort for the data collection in the technology networks survey in Bungoma. As the surveyed areas were so distant from one another, the agricultural service sector provider contacts are different with limited overlap between the locations. Subsequently, the village with the most interviewed persons was selected to generate the technology networks sample. Basically, an addendum was added to the technology networks survey to gather the names and contact information for the agricultural contacts of village residents. This generated a sample of various local or village level actors such as: youth leaders, pastors, veterinarians, and town based actors such as extension agents and vendors. The technology networks sample also grew considerably in interviews with the service sector providers and was therefore completed in multiple visits.

Upon completing the Bungoma surveys, I traveled to Kampala to meet with members of the AT Uganda staff and principal investigator Dr. Bernard Bashaasha, professor at Makerere University. This visit allowed us to discuss potential avenues for collaborative publications and Dr. Bashaasha invited me to present my research upon completing my Ugandan fieldwork. I also worked with key AT Uganda staff members at this time, predominantly Julian Nyachwo, in order to finalize the household lists for conducting the Tororo and Kapchorwa household surveys.

In Tororo, I met up with Moses Aisu Okorut, a local consultant who works with rural communities in the Tororo District on a cross section of issues involving agriculture, nutrition, and the environment. Moses assisted in the process of organizing a focus group and in the recruitment of three female enumerators to conduct the surveys. The rains were late in coming to Tororo; as a result, the communities were experiencing substantial food shortages during the interview period.

Beginning in Tororo, the sampling methodology for the technology networks fieldwork was generalized to begin surveying the entire household population of households about their direct agricultural service sector provider contacts in order to generate the technology networks sample. When an individual or organization was mentioned five or more times, they were followed up with for an interview. Key interviews included a meeting with a pastor involved in agricultural projects, a newly elected counselor, the sub-county chief, and a number of local farmer group and NGO leaders.

This said, Tororo had the least developed agricultural service sector network, and was characterized by high levels of mistrust between key agents. Notably, an agricultural lending sector was largely absent. While community members relied heavily on Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCOs), community based savings organizations, these small loans did little to assist in financing purchases of agricultural inputs. As opposed to commercial and/or governmental agents, the longstanding presence of several NGOs, religious groups, and farmer/women groups were the key points for the transmission and sharing of agricultural information and knowledge.

After completing the work in Tororo, I traveled to Kapchorwa. This was by far the most challenging site, for the delay in initiating the interviews meant that we were working in the prime of planting season and the beginning of the rains. One of the most difficult aspects of the work was the level of mistrust in outsiders, and a fractious relationship with the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA). The entire household population resides in Kween district, a newly created district which originated from the goal of containing and limiting future encroachment on the Mt. Elgon National Park forest. As a result, the communities in the area can build no permanent structures on the land such as hospitals or schools of a permanent material, and have very limited access to forest resources. The sites were also extremely remote, about a 45 minute motorcycle ride from the town. This made for long hours in the field in the villages of Kwosir and Kere. Issues with gender bias in the reporting of social networks here also seemed to emerge, but it was both impractical and financially infeasible to send my only female enumerator back to all of the households in the sample. Despite the challenges of working in Kwosir, 99 of 100 households identified from the previous survey were interviewed.

Conducting the technology networks survey simultaneously with the household survey made for a rich data collection experience in Kapchorwa. While Kapchorwa has a relatively lower population compared to the Kenyan sites, the agricultural network is very extensive. One farmer organization that has played a particularly critical role is that of the Kapchorwa Commercial Farmers Association (KACOFA), a farmer founded organization that has deliberately created a network of seed and fertilizer suppliers for crops such as maize, barley, and sorghum as well as a savings and loan infrastructure through partnership with Centenary Bank. KACOFA has been granted the funds for a large scale operation for storing grain for the World Food Program. When I finished the data collection I traveled back to Kampala to scan electronic copies of the surveys and meet with NGO partner, AT Uganda. During this visit, arrangements were also finalized for a presentation to USAID at the end of April.

This left the final site, Kitale Kenya. Here, I had the rewarding opportunity of working with students on the survey method and data collection. However, of all the sites, the team met the most resistance to households being surveyed and the greatest “mismatch” between studying food security and the survey sample. The area of Tranzoia District surveyed has high inequality of land distribution, meaning that both very wealthy and poor persons were included in the sample, with larger households occasionally refusing to be interviewed and a demonstrable lack of food insecurity. The range of households represented also seemed to produce a broad range of network involvement, which should make for interesting analysis in examining the relationships between mindset, technology adoption and patterns of social learning, and adaptive management for conservation agriculture. Household resistance toward being interviewed resulted in the smallest sample size of 84 respondents.

On the technology networks side, Kitale certainly had the most well developed agricultural service sector provider network. Within the town of Kitale, there are more than 100 agrovet suppliers and three distinct seed companies. Trying to narrow down the sample to an adequate selection of suppliers – and to actually interview the farmer’s main suppliers – was a distinct challenge. Moreover, I found that extension served a different role in Kitale than in other locations as a paid service for the larger farmers, rather than working with the poorer smallholders located within the region. Nevertheless, the organization of the agricultural network

did assist me in being able to survey a large cross section. First, many of the seed companies, the Cereals and Produce Board, farm associations, and stockists, are clustered in the same area of town, which was helpful in obtaining useful contacts and introductions to important actors. Secondly, I was able to attend a KARI organized field day, which brought together a number of important organizations and company representatives.

Over the Easter holiday weekend, I traveled to Kampala to scan the final surveys and give presentations at both Makerere University and USAID. These presentations were a good networking opportunity, and USAID/Uganda was very interested in the discussion of networks and nutrition. They were also interested in many of the cultural beliefs about nutrition I found reported in the focus groups, such as limited livestock production in Tororo and cross-cutting issues with low legume consumption relative to carbohydrates.

Suggestions and Recommendations:

Research which connects agricultural technology development and food security is in high demand, and aligns well with the USAID Feed the Future initiative. Continuing to strengthen our partnerships with the USAID missions who have expressed an interest in this research as well as agencies like the World Food Program who have a vested interest in food security is crucial to raising awareness of the SANREM work and leveraging our research to the further benefit of project communities.

This trip made significant strides in applying the data collection methodology in the Technology Networks Cross Cutting Research Activity and it is recommended that adaptations continue to be made to the research instrument and process to capture a meaningful representation of agricultural sector service providers. The rule of interviewing a service sector provider if their name is mentioned by five or more interviewees is a good starting place for balancing the need to place some boundaries upon the sampled population and to ensure that valuable actors are not missed in this process.

The field work also demonstrates the importance of incorporating gender considerations fully into the research process. It is recommended for future surveys involving women's networks and food security to hire solely female enumerators in order to collect the highest quality data possible while allowing women to feel as comfortable as possible in the interview setting.

Training Activities Conducted:

Program type (workshop, seminar, field day, short course, etc.)	Date	Audience	Number of Participants		Training Provider (US university, host country institution, etc.)	Training Objective
			Men	Women		
Seminar	27 Apr 2011	USAID/Kampala staff	4	3	Virginia Tech	Food security and social networks
Seminar	28 Apr 2011	Students at Makerere University	15	5	Virginia Tech	Food security and social networks

List of Contacts Made:

Name	Title/Organization	Contact Info (email)
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