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Rural-Urban Interactions and Livelihood Strategies

WORKING PAPER 2

The case of Lindi and its region, southern Tanzania

by
Fred Lerise, Anthony Kibadu, Esther Mbutolwe and Nimrod Mushi

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1. Introduction

Rural-urban interactions include 'spatial' linkages - flows of people, of goods, of money and other social transactions between towns and countryside - and 'sectoral' interactions – rural non-farm employment and urban agriculture. Households increasingly rely on both rural and urban-based resources for their livelihoods. For low-income groups, this is often a survival strategy to make ends meet by engaging in a variety of activities. For higher income groups, investment across sectors of activity and between rural and urban areas, for example by acquiring farmland with income from trade or urban-based employment, is an accumulation strategy to increase assets and income. In Tanzania, economic reform since the mid-1980s has accelerated the demise of state intervention in agicultural production and marketing, and at the same time has opened up new sectors of activity, especially trade. With the decentralisation reform introduced in the mid-1990s, local government's responsibilities have extended to local economic development and poverty reduction. A better understanding of the constraints and limitations of rural-urban interactions, and of the policies affecting them, is increasingly important, especially in the context of small and intermediate urban centres and their surrounding regions.

This report explores how different groups rely on rural-urban interactions and linkages in and around the town of Lindi in southern Tanzania. A similar study was conducted in and around the town of Himo, in the Kilimanjaro region (Working Paper no 1 in this series). Both projects were undertaken by researchers at the University College for Land and Architectural Studies and the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme of Dar es Salaam.

Research was carried out between September 1998 and April 1999 in two villages and one low-income urban neighbourhood. The first phase of the fieldwork was based on the use of qualitative and participatory tools; this was followed by a questionnaire survey administered to 120 respondents, semi-structured interviews with key informants and in-depth analysis of the commodity chains of coconuts and fish, two important cash products in the area. Stratification according to wealth, gender and generation considerations was applied in both the qualitative and quantitative stages of the research. A more detailed and critical discussion of the methodology used is presented in the Working Paper No 3 in this series.

2. Background to Lindi region

Lindi is one of the oldest towns in Tanzania. It was established as a trade link between Zanzibar and the mainland in the 11th century by Arab traders whose culture and religion still dominate the town and, to a smaller extent, the surrounding rural areas. Later on, the

town flourished from trading activities and also as an administrative centre for the Southern Province under British colonial rule. The decline of Lindi town started in 1952, when the main harbor and administrative centre was shifted to Mtwara town 108 kilometers towards the border with Mozambique. In 1971 Lindi town became the regional administrative centre for Lindi region. In economic terms, the region is one of the poorest in Tanzania and its population has low educational levels. In ecological terms Lindi town and its surrounding settlements fall into a relatively dry upland area suitable mainly for cassava and cashew nuts.

Since independence in 1961 until the 1980s, central government played an active role in the country's social and economic development. National policies were geared towards spatial deconcentration as well as centralisation of decision-making. The declared aim of these policies was to address regional imbalances and accelerate national growth. Among the national policies with direct implications for the development of Lindi town was the 1969 decision to abolish head tax and crop cess collection by local councils. District councils had then to depend on central government funding for their activities. In addition, the 1972 deconcentration policy established the regions as the local administrative and planning authorities, replacing town authorities. Investment was directed by central government staff within the regional authorities. Given its isolation from Dar es Salaam, worsened by an extremely poor transport infrastructure, Lindi was not able to attract significant amounts of investment from national budgets. The government's Growth Centres Strategy favoured investment in industries and other large-scale ventures in Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, Arusha and Mbeya. The only industrial investment in Lindi town was a cashew nuts processing factory, now closed since the mid-1980s.

Centralisation of administration and decision-making did not end at the regional level. The policy was extended further down to the village level through the villagisation programme under the 1975 Village Act. Because of its highly dispersed population, Lindi region was among the first regions in which the programme – which sought to make service provision to scattered settlements more effective by grouping them together – was implemented. With the exception of Nachingwea urban neighborhood, Narunyu and Mitwero (the two rural study settlements) were established under the villagisation programme. Tensions and potential conflicts around land tenure issues resulting from the implementation of the villagisation programme are increasingly pronounced as land acquires more value due to shortage, to economic liberalisation and also to the provisions made by the 1999 Land Law and the Village Land Act. Villagisation created village councils directly linked to the centralised system, and the village officers are still more aligned to the central government than to the local population.

In 1978 the government realised that planning and directing development through the regional authorities did not work. The system failed to provide adequate services and infrastructure in both rural and urban areas. Lindi as a town and a region was not exceptional in the poor level of services provision. Local governments were re-introduced in 1984, making town councils and district councils once again the unit for planning. The newly introduced local authorities, with two-thirds of the members elected, regained powers to tax and collect crop cess from farmers, but within a financial structure

controlled by the central government. To a large extent, Lindi town, like other local councils, still depends on central government funds for its development. This local government structure is currently under review, guided by the Local Government reform programme (1996-2000), to facilitate the implementation of decentralisation and economic liberalisation policies. Among the reform measures is the 1997 Regional Administration Act, which replaced the 1972 deconcentration policy and its administrative structure at regional level. These policy changes shift substantial functions from regional authorities to district councils in needs identification, planning, budgeting and implementing in their respective local areas. Local councils are also required to implement poverty reduction programmes under the National Poverty Eradication Strategy. However this redistribution of functions may not mean much to the local communities in Lindi, unless the local government financing structure is improved to provide a more balanced sharing of resources between central and local governments.

Both urban and rural local councils in Lindi are taking up the new functions in an unfavourable position compared with many local councils in Tanzania. Within Lindi region, the town is comparatively better off in terms of availability of services. However, formal employment opportunities are limited. The cashew nuts processing factory, the only industry in Lindi, was closed down more than ten years ago. The lack of reliable employment opportunities has made Lindi a source of youth migration, contributing a significant number of migrants to Dar es Salaam and other areas.

The main occupations are smallholder agriculture and small-scale trading, with a substantial number of urban residents depending on agriculture. Farms are located outside the urban boundaries about 20 km away where patches of fertile lands can be acquired. In 1985 the town council expanded its urban boundaries incorporating Mitwero and another three villages. Among the reasons was the need to acquire adequate land for urban-based farmers. During the fieldwork for this research, Mitwero village council was allocating land, once under sisal estate, to villagers and other applicants. However, land held under customary tenure is not easy to allocate without adequate compensation, therefore limiting the scope of land allocation.

Cash crops supporting the economy of Lindi include coconuts and cashew nuts. Coconuts are sold and consumed within the region, whereas cashew nuts are collected and shipped to India for further processing and marketing. Cashew nuts were the major cash crop providing increasing income to smallholders until 1975, when production suddenly collapsed. It only started to recover in the 1990s. Business in cashew nuts, investment in private transport services and petty trade in manufactured goods are among the main emerging activities following trade liberalisation. For the cashew nuts trade, Lindi town provides godown facilities where the product is collected, sorted and stored before shipping. Through the cashew nuts trade, Lindi is linked to international markets and networks. However, this is only apparent during the harvesting period. Without processing facilities in town, middlemen and large private companies enjoy most of the benefits from cashew nut production and trade. The Cashewnuts Marketing Board does not have a significant role in negotiating market prices on behalf of farmers, nor in supplying inputs to producers. While abandoned farms are being re-opened, production has not increased as rapidly as expected. Other non-traditional cash crops such as *sim*

sim, vegetables and tomatoes are being introduced but might be constrained by the lack of markets and poor transport services.

Given its low performance in economic development, the population of the town has been increasing at a rather slow rate compared to other urban centres in Tanzania. In the 1978 census it was recorded at 27,308 and increased to 41,587 in 1988. In terms of population, Lindi is the smallest of the regional headquarters towns in Tanzania. In addition, most roads linking the town with sources of agricultural products and manufactured goods are seasonal, and impassable once the rains start. Sea transport is available, but passengers have to travel 108 km to Mtwara harbour where there are more frequent ships to Dar es Salaam. Air transport is also available, but beyond the means of most residents and traders. This severely limits the extent to which the town residents can interact with the surrounding settlements or with other important centres such as Dar es Salaam.

The study settlements

Mitwero, in Lindi Town Council
Mitwero is one of the villages within the administrative boundaries of urban Lindi. It is along the Lindi-Dar es Salaam road at a distance of about 15 km from Lindi main market. The main productive activities of its 340 households include crop cultivation and fishing. Few people keep livestock, particularly the recently introduced dairy cattle. Trading activities with Lindi Town and some of the nearby villages are also increasing.

Narunyu in Lindi District
With around 600 households, the village is located 35 km from Lindi town - about an hour and a half by public transport. Narunyu villagers are crop cultivators producing rice, millet, coconuts and cashew nuts. Compared to Mitwero, Narunyu villagers interact more with rural trading centres than with Lindi town.

Nachingwea in Lindi Urban
Nachingwea is one of the urbanising parts of Lindi town, with migrants from rural parts of the district and neighbouring regions. Agriculture within and outside Lindi town is the main economic activity, supplemented by small-scale trade. Few of the predominantly low-income households depend on salaried employment in the public or private sector.

3. Income-generating activities in the study settlements

The majority of the inhabitants of both rural and urban areas depend on the combination of farming and other productive activities, primarily trade. Only 43 per cent of 120 respondents rely on a single productive activity. Of these, about 40 mentioned crop cultivation, four mentioned trading, while three Mitwero residents depend entirely on fishing and one young woman mentioned livestock-keeping as her only productive activity. The proportion of urban residents engaging in agriculture is high, and reflects the limited opportunities in other sectors. Over half the Nachingwea respondents gave farming as their primary occupation; this figure rises to three-quarters of all respondents

when those who farm as a second or third occupation are included. This is a relatively high figure for an urban centre, and while low-income households and individuals engage in subsistence farming, wealthier units are more likely to grow cash crops.

Given the nature of agricultural production in the region, waged agricultural labour is virtually non-existent. On the other hand, villagers also engage in non-farm activities, especially trading. For both Narunyu and Mitwero, 12.5 per cent of respondents give trade as their main occupation, but this figure increases to 47.5 per cent when taking into account second and third occupations. Income diversification is therefore an important strategy for both urban and rural residents.

Table 1. Combination of income-generating activities in the three settlements

Activity type	Activity 1	Activity 2	Activity 3	Total
Farming	65.8% (79)	17.5% (21)	3.3% (4)	104
Trading	14.2% (17)	24.2% (29)	5% (6)	52
Government. Employment	5.8% (7)			7
Self employment (not trade)	0.8% (1)	0.8% (1)	0.8% (1)	3
Fishing	5.8% (7)	2.5% (3)	0.8% (1)	11
None	6% (6)	47.5% (57)	85% (102)	87
Laborer	1.6% (2)	2.5% (3)	0.8% (1)	6
Livestock keeping	0.8% (1)	3.3% (4)	3.3% (4)	9
Professional Part time		1.6% (2)	0.8% (1)	3
total respondents	120	120	120	

Source: quantitative survey. Due to rounding up, the total percentage may not be equal to 100. Figures in brackets indicate actual number of respondents.

In addition to investing in more than one productive occupation, there are significant differences according to generation and gender. In general terms, older men appear to control activities with higher returns (high-value cash crop production in the villages and trade in urban areas), whereas younger men and women are more likely to engage in low-return activities such as agriculture in the urban neighbourhood and trade in the villages, as well as waged agricultural labour and lower-revenue crop production. Production of coconuts and cashew nuts, the most economically attractive crops, are monopolised by men above 40 years old and a few older women. Lack of access by youth to ownership of cashew nut or coconut trees is considered to be a major contributing factor to migration from the area.

Cultivation of maize, sorghum and sunflower, which are subsistence crops and seasonal in nature, are dominated by young people and by the poorest households. Trade is gaining importance, especially among the youth. A number of female respondents mentioned sale of food, while male youths are more active in the haulage of crops and casual labour in farming activities. Production of aggregate (broken stones for construction) is the second most important income-generating activity for older women in Nachingwea urban neighbourhood. The activity flourished a couple of years ago, linked to important construction activities by the local church in Lindi town. Since then, production has declined due to lack of demand. Charcoal-making and firewood-collection have acquired importance, particularly in meeting the demand created by the increasing number of

cooked food vendors. However, with overexploitation of nearby forests, distance to such natural resources is increasing and is pushing some inhabitants, especially old women, out of business.

Cash crop farming

Subsistence crops include maize, cassava, sorghum, rice and *sim sim*. There are attempts to cultivate groundnuts and beans, but not much has been achieved. In addition to supplying food to the family, producers, especially those with no access to cashew nuts or coconut farms, rely on food crops for cash income. Food crop production is also important for initiation ceremonies and for visiting relatives to take back home in exchange for money or manufactured goods.

Coconut production

Coconut production is a traditional activity in most parts of the region and within the three settlements, including the urban neighbourhood of Nachingwea. Because of the time needed for trees to mature (seven years), it is considered by villagers as a long-term investment. There are few women owning coconut farms, mostly inherited from their parents. A few women are engaged in the coconut business and to a small extent in coconut oil processing. Most people, however, wish to establish coconut farms because of its income prospects. On average, coconut trees produce 80 fruits in one harvest. The harvesting is done three times a year, which means one coconut tree can generate an income of around Tsh 12,000 annually[1]. It is worth noting that, despite the availability of markets and relatively high prices during the dry season, there is no significant investment in new coconut farms or trees, partly because few people can afford the capital investment required.

[1] During the period of the fieldwork, the value of the Tanzanian shilling fluctuated between 950 and 1,200 Tsh to one UK £.

Cashew nut production

Lindi region is internationally known for its high quality cashew nuts, produced almost exclusively by smallholders. Most of the households engaged in cash crop cultivation have a number of cashew nut trees as a source of income. Like coconuts, cashew nuts are perennial trees which require about five to seven years to mature. Most of the owners are older people who have either established their farms or inherited them. After the implementation of the villagisation programme in Lindi in the mid-1970s, some cashew nut farms were abandoned because of their distance from the new settlements, and most importantly, because of low prices and the lack of markets due to trade restrictions. Following trade liberalisation and the relaxation of *Ujamaa*, people were allowed to move back to their original lands or re-colonise their abandoned farms. Given the reintroduction of cashew nut markets in Lindi, farmers have redirected their resources into their cashew nut farms within or outside the villages. Due to the distances involved, some farmers have to migrate seasonally from their villages to attend to their farms.

The revitalisation of the cashew nut farms has raised the value of land in Narunyu and Mitwero villages, but has also created land shortages. Previously, landless households could clear cashew nut farms and cultivate seasonal crops such as maize, sorghum, *sim sim* and cassava without problems with the landowners, as long the cashew nut trees were not disturbed. Within the current situation, this practice is no longer possible. Farms, whether cleared or not, are closely guarded by owners, who often fail to clear the farms, primarily because of a shortage of family labour. Most of the owners are in their late 50s or 60s and thus lack physical strength and cannot afford to hire labour. While labour scarcity is an important reason for low agricultural production, this is exacerbated by constraints in access to land.

Access to agricultural land

According to traditional practices in Lindi, inheritance does not involve land, but rather productive trees. There are cases where one may have a number of coconut trees located in different plots of land depending on how they were acquired. Through allocation by village councils, it is possible to acquire rights on coconut trees on a plot of land owned by another person under customary tenure arrangements. In addition, it is possible to rent farms on the lowlands which are suitable for paddy and tomato cultivation as well as dry season maize production because of the possibility of irrigation. Land rent is either paid in crop harvests or in cash, but it does not exceed Tshs 5000 per acre, per season. Table 2 below shows the different modes of access on the basis of wealth. While outright purchase of land seems to become increasingly significant, this is especially so for the middle-income and wealthy households. In contrast, poorer households are more likely to rely on land allocation from village and urban councils, and borrowing is also important.

Table 2. Access to Land by Wealth Groups

Mode of access	Poor households	Middle/wealthy households	Total (%)
Inheritance	20% (11)	14.7% (9)	17.2

Purchase	14.6% (8)	42.6% (26)	29.3
Allocation by village/urban council	29% (16)	13% (8)	20.7
Borrowing	23.6% (13)	13% (8)	18
Bush clearance	10.9% (6)	14.7% (9)	13
Do not know	1.8% (1)	3.2% (2)	2.6
Total	(55)	(61)	100

Source: questionnaire survey. The total number of respondents is 116, since 4 declared to own no land. Due to rounding up, the total percentage may not be equal to 100. Figures in brackets indicate actual number of respondents.

The few better-off urban residents with land in Lindi villages may have more opportunities to establish coconut or cashew nut farms, as they are likely to have easier access to the necessary capital, but they are discouraged by the insecurity of the land tenure system. Except for those who have bought coconut farms, tenure for urban residents allocated land by the district or village council lasts for two years only. Seasonal crops such maize, *sim sim* and cassava is the alternative, but markets for such crops are limited and the prices low. Low agricultural production is often associated by respondents with villagisation resettlement in 1970s, when a number of farmers were shifted to new areas, far away from their farms. New lands were allocated in the resettlement villages, often overlapping with land held under customary tenure. Following the liberalisation in the 1980s in the country as a whole, a large number of court cases were initiated by former customary owners against occupiers who were allocated land during villagisation, highlighting the potential for extensive conflict. Despite the approval of the new Village Land Act in 1998, the problem does not seem to have been fully solved. Indeed, according to the Village Executive Officer for Narunyu, there is a lot of land which is not cultivated in the village, but the owners who were allocated such land by the village council in 1974 do not allow anyone to cultivate it.

Liberalisation and privatisation policies have contributed to making people more aware of the value of land. This is likely to be cemented by the 1999 Village Land Act, which emphasises private rights over village land. Unless strict and effective measures are taken to discourage holding land without using it, this crucial resource will remain under-used. Where it is possible for one to acquire land either through borrowing or allocation by the village council, that land is located in the periphery of the settlements, far away from the residential area. According to the young women,

> ‘Opening up a new farm in such location is a hard task. People spend a lot of energy and, in fact, they lose body weight. That is why we are not able to cultivate big farms. In addition to distance limitations, there is the problem of wild animals. Monkeys destroy or eat seeds just after planting. Wild pigs and other animals destroy plants once they germinate. Guarding

> crops against them is necessary and demands a lot of time to the extent that you cannot carry out any other activity during that season. All parents have to co-operate because if the farm is left unattended everything is gone'.

The negative impact of wild animals on production was mentioned by several respondents. The government used to provide nets and poison to combat them, but due to the general decline in input provision from agricultural extension services, this support is now felt to be insufficient. Production is generally affected by increases in the cost of inputs. Attempts by the Town Council and some members of parliament to encourage farmers to use tractors failed because, although tractors were made available in Mitwero, farmers could not afford to pay. They requested instead that the tractors work on their farm and they pay after harvest. Since that was not deemed by the authorities to be feasible, the tractors were withdrawn. In both Narunyu and Mitwero, young men complained that they are not able to afford the price of farm implements and inputs.

Livestock keeping

As an income-generating activity, livestock-keeping is new in the study area, and is partly the result of a loan project supported by the World Food Programme, the Rural Integrated Programme Support (RIPS) and the local authorities in Lindi. Only one respondent in the group of young women reported that she keeps livestock as her most important occupation, with trading as a second occupation. Four respondents, two males and two females, rank livestock-keeping as the second most important occupation. Four older respondents indicated livestock-keeping as their third occupation.

Before one can qualify for the livestock loan, he or she has to invest in the construction of a shed made up of cement blocks and floor and CI sheets as specified by the lending institution. Such a construction is rather expensive, which limits the number of people who can qualify for the loan. Although livestock production is not yet significant, those who are engaged in it seem to be fairly successful, as once the animals enter the lactation stage, the owners are assured of cash almost every day. Marketing prospects for milk are high and consumers are found in the village in the few kiosks and hotels and among cooked food vendors (*mama-ntilies*). Indeed, to most villagers, livestock-keeping is the ultimate occupation, and ownership of dairy cattle is an important indicator of wealth.

Fishing

Dynamite fishing in Lindi was banned in April 1998. Because it was practised for a considerable period in the past, the limited amount of fish close to the settlement has substantially decreased. Fishermen have to travel as far as Kilwa, Kela and Somanga Fungu, about 200 to 250 km away, where the coral reef is not yet destroyed. Another negative outcome of uncontrolled fishing is that the price of fish has gone up considerably making it unaffordable for poor households, who have to find cheaper sources of protein such as beans. One shopkeeper in Mitwero confirmed that demand for

beans has considerably increased and that it is now one of the fast moving items in the shop.

For the inhabitants of the coastal settlement of Mitwero, particularly young men, fishing remains an important occupation. Compared to crop cultivation, fishing employs far fewer people. But considering the linkages which are created by trading in fish, it becomes a significant occupation for the community. Fishing is usually carried out in groups of three to eight people. Members contribute money to purchase the fishing gear. Other groups hire the equipment. If hired, a manual boat can cost up to 300,000/= per annum, or about Tshs 25,000/= per month. In this case the expected contribution from each member is about 3,000/= to 8,000/= per month, depending on the size of the group. A group of fishermen using a boat normally gets 20,000-50,000/= a day. On lucky days the catch may be as high as Tshs. 100,000/=. Groups using other fishing methods get an average of 10,000/= a day. Prominent traders in Mitwero, who were categorised during the wealth ranking exercise as rich men, and traders from Lindi town buy the fish on the shore, and transport it to markets in Lindi town, Masasi and other places.

In addition to selling to longer-distance traders, fishermen trade with cooked food sellers, *mama ntilie*, from the village. Agreements *(kuwasomesha)* through which they can obtain fish and pay after selling are not uncommon between the food vendors and the fishermen. For young women, this social relationship *(mali kauli* in Swahili*)* guarantees availability of trading goods without capital. Women who have done well in fish-trading acquire capital and enter into trading of crops or buy dairy cattle and climb the ladder of wealth and social status. This relationship based on *kufahamiana* or trust also exists between fishermen and men. To a fisherman it is preferable to sell the fish to a friend who lives in his village than to a middleman living in another settlement. Although he may get a lower price, he ensures reciprocal support in the future, which cannot be expected from a stranger. In this *Mali-kauli* arrangement, conflicts based on violation of agreements are rare. *Mali-kauli* operates between people with good relations and trust. In the unlikely event of violation, courts of law are not considered , as they may be more costly than what is owed from the defendant. In Lindi and in other places in Tanzania, court cases take a long time to decide and involve travelling and other costs to the defendants, while the amounts transacted in the *mali kauli* system are rather small. In the case of violation, an attempt is made to use local means to solve the conflict between the two people. If it fails the relationship ends.

Trade

Trade is an important occupation for residents in the three settlements. In Mitwero trading is mainly in fish and in agricultural products. In Narunyu it is cashew nuts and coconuts. Most of the women in Nachingwea are engaged in the preparation and sale of cooked food. Instances of barter trade where manufactured commodities are exchanged with agricultural products were noted in Narunyu village. A few shops of various sizes are found in all the settlements. Before 1984 the government did not allow private shops in villages. And those found in urban centres were deprived access to commodities. Cooperative shops or shops run by the regional trading companies were heavily supported by the government. These days village shops or cooperatives have collapsed, giving way

to private shops. Most shops found in Mitwero and Narunyu at present were established after 1984 through individual initiatives, sometimes using capital earned from urban areas or earned through other productive activities in the villages.

Box 1. Establishing and Running a Shop in Mitwero Village: a Shopkeeper's Story

'I did not start with this shop straight away, as I had no enough money to do that. First I started as a fish trader. I used to buy fish from fishermen and sell to middlemen right at the small fish market at Mitwero shore. I decided to trade in fish and not to engage in crop production because it is so difficult to till the land with a hand hoe - *chingondola* - and expect to obtain a decent harvest. There are tractor services, but they are too expensive. Sometimes you may try to clear land and plant seeds, but if your neighbours do not clear their lands, you have to guard your crops from rats, wild pigs, monkeys, hyenas, and even ants.

'The right option was fish-trading. Through that business, I was able to accumulate Tsh.20,000. With this I bought 500 kilograms of groundnuts from farmers in Mitwero for Tsh.15, 000. That was in 1986 [two years after trade liberalisation]. I used the remaining money to pay for transport to Kilwa, about 200 km away towards Dar es Salaam. I sold the groundnuts and in return I bought dried fish - *ngonda*- which I brought back to Lindi town where I sold it for Tshs 50,000. That was enough to start a small kiosk in which I sold various cheap commodities, including matchboxes, kerosene and sugar. I did that for some years until I earned enough money to establish this shop. I buy most of the commodities from Lindi town, mainly from Indian wholesale traders. I buy rice, beans, wheat flour, sugar etc. The wholesale traders buy maize from traders from neighbouring regions of Mtwara and Ruvuma. Sometimes we buy rice brought all the way from Dar es Salaam. However during the harvesting season we do buy some foodstuff from farmers within the region, through middlemen who collect groundnuts, beans and peas from farmers. But that is in limited amounts.

'Business fluctuates with climatic seasons. During the off season, say from December to February, business is very low, sometimes as low as Tsh.5, 000 per day compared to Tsh 20, 000 during the harvesting season when consumers are rich. In addition to the low purchasing power during the rainy season, there is also a serious problem of transport. Roads are not passable and thus commodities can reach neither the market nor consumers. As a result commodities are scarce and expensive. As the Lindi-Dar es Salaam road is virtually closed during that period, we rely on sea transport through the harbour in Mtwara. We do not think of using air transport as that will exhaust the capital.

The story suggests that liberalisation was an important context for the activities of the shopkeeper. Before 1984, trade in a number of agricultural products was confined to parastatal companies, and traders in food crops were considered exploiters of farmers and consumers. It would have been difficult to travel with 500 kg of groundnuts without being arrested, and the groundnuts confiscated by the police. Without the initial trade in groundnuts, it would have taken several years for the shop owner to establish the shop, as there are no credit facilities, and if they were provided it might have proved difficult for him to qualify without collateral. However, he might have obtained some support either from his relatives or from the fishermen who might have given him fish on credit. This form of 'informal' credit, usually involving small amounts of money or goods, is what is available to most people in Lindi.

On the other hand, the question of seasonality in terms of fluctuation in accessibility, as well as purchasing power among villagers, limits business opportunities and constrains potential benefits from trade liberalisation. The importance of inter-regional trade in agricultural products should also be emphasised, as it was the sale of groundnuts in Kilwa, where the price was higher, that enabled the shop owner to take off.

Trade in cashew nuts

An important outcome of trade liberalisation was the deregulation of collection, transport and sale of agricultural products. Together with coffee, cotton, tea and groundnuts, cashew nuts were among the crops considered important for the national economy and thus controlled. The coconut trade was not restricted. Since trade liberalisation, the cashew nut trade has become very popular, putting Lindi onto the international trade map. After the collapse and closure of the cashew nuts processing factories in Lindi, the market for raw cashew nuts shifted to India, and a purchase, collection and transport system has developed which operates fairly efficiently. The main actors in the business are large private companies such as Mohammed Enterprises, a private company based in Dar es Salaam. Attempts to interview representatives in Dar es Salaam coincided with the crop-buying season, when senior officers were not available. Therefore we only discuss the details of the cashew nut trade before the crop leaves Lindi.

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While the large companies benefit from the liberalisation and the closure of the processing factories, some respondents saw the situation as disadvantageous to the producers in Lindi, especially since the closure of the processing plant. However, some manage to benefit directly by participating in the trade or through employment with private companies. The large companies dealing with the purchase of cashew nuts hire godowns in Lindi town and use Lindi people as agents to collect the harvest. Agents are civil servants, some retired, and others still in employment. During the peak season, agents may come from as far as Dar es Salaam. The main task of the agents is to move from one village to another, and to buy and transport crops to godowns in Lindi. There are also small independent traders, who use their own resources to buy crops and later sell to private companies. Competition between large and small traders is stiff. However, to the small traders it is a question of survival, while large traders are backed by sufficient capital and transport facilities. Some agents have Land Rovers which can reach remote producers, whereas individual traders rely on foot and public transport. Despite this, competition has not reached a level in which farmers can negotiate more favourable prices for their crops, which are generally determined by large trading enterprises.

From the official perspective, large-scale traders are more popular since tax is easier to collect from them. When they apply for a trade license they declare the amount of crops they have budgeted to buy. From that amount, tax is calculated and the traders pay in advance. For small traders, tax is collected via several crop checkpoints distributed throughout the district. The amount of money generated to the District Council through taxing large-scale traders is significant. For instance, the local authorities are able to pay most of their loans once the cashew nut buying season starts. The research team was keen to obtain data on the amount of money raised through the cashew nut tax, but as in other

local authorities in Tanzania, the responsible officers were not ready to provide such data.

According to the provisions under the trade liberalisation policy, private companies are not allowed to buy straight from producers, but should buy through farmer cooperative societies in designated locations – *gullios*. The enforcement rests with the District Cooperative Officer under the District Executive Director. However, the officers are unable to confine the private traders to the designated markets. Agents buy directly from farmers, an arrangement which puts buyers in a stronger bargaining position. In this system neither the cooperatives nor the local authorities are directly involved in the trade. It is thus difficult for these institutions to protect producers by negotiating a better price for the farmers.

Trade in food crops

Compared to cashew nuts, trade in other agricultural products is easier to initiate and operate. Most of the respondents trade in staple foods. Of the three settlements studied, youths from Narunyu are more active than others in hauling food crops, while in Mitwero they deal more with fish trading. There are three main types of trade in staple food:

- Selling directly for cash within the village where the crops are cultivated.
- Selling outside the village for cash. This requires availability of transport services.
- Exchange of food crops with urban-based manufactured commodities such as second-hand clothes and agricultural inputs.

Coconuts fall into the first and second categories. This trade is very popular in Mitwero and Narunyu villages. After coconuts have been collected on the farm, a porter *Mchukuzi wa Shamba* carries them to a storage place in the farm. He is paid Tshs.2/= for each coconut fruit carried. This activity does not require special skills other than strength. A basket made of coconut leaves, (locally known as *tenga)* is used, either belonging to the porter or hired at Tsh. 100/= per day. Competition is intense, so to get such a job, a potential porter has to be sharp. Once all harvested fruits are collected they are stored or sold depending on the price offered. Coconuts are either bought by a buyer or a middleman.

It is up to the middleman to negotiate a good buying price with farmers, as the difference will be his/her profit. In addition to that, some buyers do commission middlemen for good purchasing. Sometimes a rich middleman uses his or her capital to buy coconuts from farmers and later sell to a buyer. Middlemen rely on porters to move the produce around. In Narunyu village where coconut production is one of the main economic activities it is possible for a porter to earn between Tshs 200/= and 400/=, (about half a dollar) in a day. That is relatively high compared to what a woman food vendor can earn in a day in the same village. In most cases porters are strong, young men. Coconut traders use hired lorries from Ngongo, Mnazi Mmoja or Lindi town to transport the fruits to as far as Dar es Salaam, Masasi, Tunduru and other markets. Small traders with limited capital use bicycles to carry their load to nearby markets such as Mnazi Mmoja and Ngongo, which are within 30 km from Narunyu. These men can carry between 200 to 300 coconuts. Traders at Ngongo buy coconuts and transport them to markets in

Nachingwea, Masasi, Newala, Mtwara and as far away as Tunduru, Songea and Dar es Salaam.

Before leaving Narunyu village, traders have to pay Tshs. 3/= as tax to the local authorities, after which they are allowed to pass through the road barriers created by the council at Ngongo and Mnazi Mmoja. A receipt has to be shown at every road barrier to avoid having to pay again. The district council appears to collect a substantial amount of money from the road barriers. However, like the revenue from cashew nuts, the amount was not disclosed to the research team.

More traders join the business during the dry season when roads are passable. They come from as far as Masasi, 160 km away, Nachingwea, 210 km via Masasi, Tunduru, 325 km from Narunyu, and also from Dar es Salaam. With difficulties in accessibility during the rainy season only few traders reach Narunyu. Because of low demand, the price of coconuts goes down by more than 50 per cent to as low as Tsh. 15/=. Some rich villagers and traders buy coconuts during the rainy season and store them for selling during the dry season when they fetch a higher price. This is not usually possible for small traders, whose benefits from liberalisation appear to be limited.

Given the difficulties for women to engage in trading activities which involve travelling to distant places or which require large amounts of capital, many find it easier to trade in cooked food, *mama ntilie.* Compared to other activities, the capital needed is low and the business takes place within the home compound or within the village. In the three settlements, most women who mentioned trade as their occupation are involved in the preparation and sale of cooked food, an occupation which is more important in Nachingwea urban settlement because of the higher demand from urban residents. In order to mobilise sufficient resources, women usually organise into groups. The following is an extract from a discussion with one such group of women in Nachingwea.

This account from Mema Women's Group in Nachingwea urban neighborhood is not substantially different from stories of other food sellers in Mitwero or Narunyu. In Narunyu the sale of food takes place mainly around the village centre and at drinking places during the peak period of *tembo* – a local brew from coconut trees.

Box 2. Cooked Food Vendors in Nachingwea

'Our customers are mainly salaried people working in the private as well as in the public sector. We started business relations among us through UPATU – an informal association common among women. Members contribute money at agreed periods of time and that amount is allocated to one of us to make a purchase. In most cases members purchase clothes especially *khangas*. Women need to buy *khangas* frequently in order to participate in the exchange of words, which takes place through the text in *khangas*. [This system of communication is common in Lindi and other coastal communities to the extent that *khangas* are bought not for their functional use or because of the design but for the text they carry. Purchase of a *khanga* is therefore a frequent expenditure for women.] Through practising *upatu* we developed stronger social relations and trust. We decided to establish this business. We started very small, selling tea and buns. Later we included bananas in our menu and the business expanded to where we are today. We can serve breakfast, lunch and dinner to many customers. It is

common to have more customers than our supplies can cope with. When we need extra money to increase supplies, we mobilise resources from friends. We have arrangements with some shop owners who supply us with commodities and we pay later. Through these networks we can survive with satisfactory success. So far we have not received any loan from official institutions. It was only recently that the Secretary of the group attended a seminar organised by the District Community Development Officer on how to manage small businesses. Otherwise we receive moral support from different district officials. For instance the District Community Development Officer and the Ward Executive Officer visit and advise us on public health regulations. These days we are really careful about good sanitation conditions. We are very clean and, as a good indicator, even nurses come to eat at our place'.

In Mitwero, it takes place at the fish market, but due to limited demand, the women have to carry the food about nine km away to sell to Kikwetu sisal estate workers. The sale of cooked food provides a service to the settlements and at the same time an income to women, most of whom may not have access to other productive resources such as land or cashew nut and coconut trees.

The other type of trade in food crops involves exchanges of food crops with manufactured commodities, especially second-hand clothes. Once these get to Lindi market, the best quality are sold out leaving the rest which cannot be sold in town and are transported to villages in rural areas. Villagers who have just harvested their rice, maize and other food crops may have no cash, but they can exchange their crops for clothes. To the urban-based traders bringing second-hand clothes, almost reject material, this barter is very lucrative. Apart from the poor quality of the clothes, villagers cannot prioritise their household expenditure, and set aside cash to finance crop production for the next cultivation season.

Trade of staple food in Narunyu has become very popular and active, partly because it is very easy to find customers. However, it is also a potential cause of conflict between women and men. One man describes the situation as follows:

> 'From September to November it is the season where there is a lot of money in the village. Most people have something to sell. It is so tempting that some men steal crops from their families and sell them out. Although some of the money is used for buying local beer, normally men do come back with kerosene or some other commodity to appease their wives'.

One woman evaluates the habit of trading in staple food in very negative terms:

> 'From December to February life becomes very difficult. There is neither food nor money. It is so difficult that one is tempted to sell her children. You have to find a way of cheating them. You put an empty cooking pot on fire. You cook it until the children fall asleep one by one. There is nothing to cook'.

The options are either food-for-work employment, *kuhemea*, or borrowing money to buy food to survive to the next season. Both cases are possible but with similar consequences

to the household in the next cultivation season. Working for food withdraws family labour from the family farm, which often results in crops being insufficient in the next season. Borrowing is possible because some of the rich, especially salaried people in the village like teachers, or villagers owning coconut farms, make profits from lending money. Payment is usually made in kind, immediately after harvesting. That again puts the poor family back in a vulnerable position, and the cycle may start sooner or later. In our view food shortage within households is a serious drawback in Lindi as it works against improved crop production and acts as a limiting factor to poverty alleviation strategies in the region.

4. Services

Transport

Poor road conditions confine accessibility to and within most settlements including Lindi town to the dry season, which lasts for six months from June to November. Outside that period, movement of goods and people is difficult and unreliable. Because of the lack of maintenance, the only vehicles which are able to use the rural roads are lorries and four-wheel drives which can ply through the potholes in the sandy roads. Small trucks, such as one-ton pickups common in other rural areas of Tanzania, cannot cope with the road conditions in Lindi. Investment in private transport services in the rural areas is thus feasible only for investors with large capital, of which there are few. In the two villages, Narunyu and Mitwero, transport is more or less monopolised by a single operator. Services offered are poor and passengers are not in a position to request better services.

Villagers from Narunyu and residents from 15 villages along the Milola-Lindi road depend on the transport service offered by a transporter, known locally as Bahati Mbaya, literally meaning 'bad luck'. The transporter operates a lorry, which covers about 160 km a day from Milola trading centre to Lindi market. The lorry leaves Milola at around 4.00a.m., goes through Narunyu at around 6.30 a.m., and back at around 3.00 p.m.. During the dry season after harvesting there are several passengers including traders from Lindi town who visit the rural areas to trade manufactured goods and agricultural products. The lorry is fully occupied, and when it reaches Narunyu it is often difficult for passengers to board or put in their luggage. To avoid the risk of being left behind, villagers have to walk ten km to Milola where the lorry is parked and the journey starts. Since Milola is in the opposite direction, they are charged a higher fare than they would normally pay. They also have to leave a day before and spend the night at the lorry park to ensure they have a place. According to the villagers, the transporter sets the fare and can decide to deny services to some villagers. The passengers, including the old and the sick, are carried together with goods in the lorry for the four-hour trip.

Despite that, most focus group participants admit that the transporter provides them with a very important service without which life and business would be difficult. A number of explanations were given on how he manages to sustain his monopoly over the route. One of them is that he uses the power of witchcraft. Apparently residents in Lindi use witchcraft to explain a number of events. For example, it is believed that if one builds a

modern house roofed with CI sheets, he or she will be bewitched and a bad spell will fall on him or her. Several villagers associate this belief with the poor housing conditions in the settlements. In Narunyu village witch doctor services are considered more important than medical services, are more readily available and sometimes cheaper, and their importance equals that of water kiosks, village fishponds and traditional birth attendants.

Another means used by the transporter is to refuse to take those passengers who have been spotted using alternative transport. The feedback workshop provided an opportunity to discuss the issue of transport. The councillors who attended the workshop were aware of the problems, partly caused by the monopoly. The chairman of Lindi District Council informed the workshop that the District Council once denied the transporter a license to operate along that route, as a way of punishing him and providing room for other investors to take up the route. But the ban was only short-lived. Villagers sent their leaders to the council to request that the transporter be licensed to operate on that route and the council accordingly relaxed the ban. With little alternative available, passengers become desperate, which means the government is unable to do much to improve the quality of the service offered.

The residents of Mitwero face a similar situation, but not as severe as in Narunyu. Although the village is located along the Dar- Lindi road, there is hardly any bus service to and from the town, and transport is mainly provided by a single operator. The transporter locally known as *Mabang*i (literally meaning 'recklessness') runs a poorly maintained old lorry which carries everything – charcoal, coconuts, fish, goats and passengers. The transporter sometimes provides better services to attract customers from other operators. He picks up the villagers' luggage from their homes and offers a door-to-door delivery service when back from Lindi or Mbanja. The small operators occasionally offering transport services are not able to operate on a door-to-door basis, as it is too expensive for them. There is therefore no outright monopoly but limited competition. There are a number of reasons why *Mabangi* is not able to achieve full monopoly. Firstly, the road conditions allow Land Rovers and one-ton pickups to operate throughout the year. Secondly, the fact that the Dar-Lindi road is a national road makes it difficult for one to restrict other road users. The Milola-Lindi road, which serves Narunyu, is rather remote and can be blocked, and occasionally new investors are threatened. It is also noteworthy that, because of more favourable conditions and the shorter distance to Lindi, there are more options open to Mitwero passengers to reach Lindi town than to their counterparts in Narunyu. If the lorry is not available, passengers from Mitwero can use a short cut but only on foot as the route is not suitable for cyclists. Cycling to Lindi town is better via the Dar es Salaam-Lindi road, which is, however, a much longer route – about 15 kms – and less safe than the short cut.

Mobility issues in the two villages focus on local transport within Lindi district. Transport of goods and people to and from Lindi is equally problematic. Since the main markets and sources of commodities are in Dar es Salaam, accessibility is important. In general, the transportation link between Lindi and Dar es Salaam is very poor, with road transport, the affordable means of transport for many people, running for only six months, from June to November. When the rains start the road becomes impassable even for four-wheel vehicles. During the dry season when transport services are available it takes

passengers with no luggage 16 hours from Dar to Lindi at a fare of Tshs 8,500/=. In contrast, travelling to Himo, which is almost the same distance from Dar, takes about six hours at a fare of about Tshs 4,000/=, and throughout the year. Consequently, Lindi is one of the most remote towns in Tanzania, and even government employees hesitate when posted there.

Plans to improve the Dar-Lindi road have always been the subject of political debate especially during elections. The government recently inaugurated the construction of the bridge across the Rufiji river, but major construction work is necessary to make the road passable throughout the year. In addition, Lindi harbor is undergoing a large expansion programme. Unless boat transport is offered at a reasonable fare, few inhabitants are likely to benefit from it, given the prevailing low incomes in the district. International trade may benefit, although demand for cash crops, especially cashew nuts, should be linked to more effective strategies to increase production.

In the case of transportation in Lindi, especially in Narunyu, liberalisation has not been effective in encouraging competition among investors to provide the service and improve efficiency and quality. Whereas in the pre-liberalisation period, there was a government monopoly through a parastatal company, the monopoly is now held by a private company. This suggests that in areas where population density is low, incomes are also low and physical infrastructure is poor, free market mechanisms are not the most efficient in the provision of essential services, as capital costs are high, and returns cannot be expected to be significant, at least not in the immediate future.

Water

There is a notable difference between settlements in domestic water supply. In Mitwero village, inhabitants pay Tshs10/= for twenty litres of water as a contribution towards operation and maintenance of the water-pumping machine. The machine pumps water from 6.00 a.m. to 9.00 a.m. and again from 4.00 p.m. to 6.00 p.m., which residents describe as satisfactory. In Narunyu around 20 water kiosks were donated by a FINNIDA project, and these are run and maintained by the village council with users contributing whenever needed. This is also considered satisfactory by the inhabitants. In contrast, domestic water supply is a problem in the urban ward of Nachingwea. According to the residents, no water has ever come out of the system of water taps laid out in the settlement. Fetching water from other neighbourhoods takes at least one hour. Lindi district has been the intervention area of an on-going, internationally-funded, integrated rural development programme, which plays a major role in the provision of basic services. While this is clearly beneficial for the rural populations, low-income urban neigbourhoods seem to have been somewhat marginalised.

Education

For the three settlements, three levels of education were examined: primary, secondary and vocational training. None of the respondents were educated beyond these three levels. Of the 120 respondents, only a government employee in Nachingwea urban neighborhood had attained vocational training. Primary education was mentioned as an important service available in all three settlements. About 63 per cent of respondents have attained

primary school education. However, the number of respondents without any formal education is also significant at 28 per cent, albeit slightly lower in the urban neighbourhood. In the urban settlement, 80 per cent have attained primary education and above. Narunyu follows at 72 per cent. Mitwero, though closer to Lindi town, is the lowest, with only 62.5 per cent. The strong Islamic influence is not sufficient to explain this because Narunyu is also a Moslem community. It is possible that out-migration is reducing the number of those with primary education. In the following section we try to relate education with wealth and different forms of rural-urban interactions.

There is a marked contrast in education between income groups. Among low-income respondents, 38 per cent have no formal education, whereas the corresponding figure for middle/higher income respondents is 19 per cent. Gender also appears to be a significant variable, with 34 per cent of women with no formal education, compared to 21 per cent of male respondents. As should be expected, this is reflected in the type of income-generating activities, with over 82 per cent of those with no formal education engaged in farming. In contrast, of the 17 respondents who mentioned trade as their first occupation, fourteen have attained primary or secondary school level education. Nineteen respondents out of 29, who listed trade as their second most important occupation, also have primary or secondary education. Despite the clear importance of education, the amount of government subsidy has been reduced under the structural adjustment programme. Parents are expected to fill the gap by contributing towards the education of their children. This, however, can be very difficult for low-income households whose incomes and time are usually stretched to the limit.

Deterioration in education facilities was noted in the settlements. In the urban neighbourhood, residents evaluated their school as providing poor services. Few pupils are selected for secondary education in government schools, which are cheaper than private schools. Although the school is located within Lindi town, there is a shortage of qualified teachers, who, like other government employees, hesitate to work in Lindi mainly because of transport problems. Attempts to attract teachers to the school through improved staff housing conditions are constrained by the lack of roofing materials. Facilities are also a problem in Mitwero, whereas in Narunyu school attendance is poor, especially during the peak season for agricultural activities. Many households move to those places outside the village where thy have farms, which makes it difficult for school-children.

Health

Residents from Nachingwea and Mitwero settlements are closer to the Lindi regional hospital, which offers cheaper services than the few private dispensaries. There is therefore a considerable flow of people from Mitwero and other villages to Lindi town for health services. Patients from Mitwero, especially expectant mothers, are served by the dispensary run by the police force in their village. Although the government has allowed private health centres, and many have been established in various areas in the country, there are very few in Lindi town and none in the three settlements studied. Patients in Narunyu who cannot cope with the transport situation, and therefore cannot reach Lindi hospital, obtain health services from Ngapa, Mtua and Rutamba rural service centres,

located 20, 45 and 60 km away respectively. Traditional birth attendants (TBAs) have acquired importance in providing health services. They are available in the three settlements and, according to the residents, they are performing an important role. They are readily available and the cost is low compared to private dispensaries. In Nachingwea urban settlement the TBAs were evaluated as important as road transport. In Narunyu they were considered even more important, and were equated to shops and water supply. In Mitwero the TBAs are as important as the services offered by the market, while the dispensary is felt as much more external to village life. Lack of, or insufficient levels of health services are among the reasons for the movement of people to other areas where such services are available. Such a flow of people is again constrained by the unreliable transport services.

Extension services

Important extension services still supported by the government include advice in crop production, veterinary services, advice on community development, cooperatives and public health services. Although the government still pays salaries to extension staff, inhabitants from Mitwero and Narunyu complained that such officers are not assisting them, as they are not seen in the villages. According to most respondents, extension services in Mitwero are very poor. Previously, veterinary officers used to visit livestock keepers, but nowadays they have to follow them into town and pay for transport to the village and the service offered. Aside from funding difficulties, which often mean that agents have no transport to reach rural settlements, there also appears to be a wider problem relating to changes in the organisation of the services. At the time of the fieldwork, extension officers were answerable neither to the district council nor to the town council in Lindi, making it difficult for local government to establish priorities and develop a strategy. When the local government reform programme is fully operational, most staff in the district or in the urban councils will be transferred from the central government's payroll to that of local authorities, and extension staff will be directly responsible to the local authorities in which they work.

Another change which has already been introduced, though rather informally, is the practice of inhabitants' paying for extension services. Owners of dairy cattle pay for veterinary services offered by extension staff from the government. Probably because this has not been announced formally to the inhabitants, they feel they are being cheated by the officers and complained about this to the research team. However if all extension services were paid for by the inhabitants, it would be expensive and difficult for most villagers. Unless the rates being charged take into account affordability levels among inhabitants, it would be more difficult for people to access extension services and improve production.

5. Social relations, household structure and migration

Social relations and cultural ceremonies

Movement for cultural practices is significant in Lindi. Among the activities involving notable flows of people are initiation ceremonies for children, which constitute the most

important event for many families and a priority investment area for most parents in both rural and urban settlements. *Manyago*, the local name for the ceremonies, is a process through which boys and girls of between seven and 14 years of age are initiated to local cultural norms. A well financed and well performed *manyago*, with plenty of food and drink, and well attended by relatives and other villagers, raises the social status of the parents.

As *manyago* is a clan activity, it has to be attended by all relatives living in or outside the village. To facilitate this, ceremonies are held during the dry season when transport services are good. Relatives staying in distant places like Dar es Salaam can reach Lindi and join the ceremonies. People in the three settlements studied believe that a clan member who does not participate in clan ceremonies may lose credibility and respect within the clan and in the whole community. Not participating in *manyago* is as serious as not attending the burial ceremony of a relative, which is the greatest cultural crime in most tribes in Tanzania. Because of this, flows of people to Lindi during the dry season include government officials, members of parliament and others who would not wish to lower their credibility in the community. For visiting relatives, coming home during the dry season after harvest is also beneficial because villagers have money earned from the sale of crops and will not be demanding financial help from the visitors. There is also food, which can meet the needs of the ceremony and be given as presents to visitors to take back. A visiting relative normally stays a week or longer, and has to participate in the pre-ceremony preparations as well as the actual event.

Mechanisms used by the community to ensure participation of clan members and relatives in celebrations include marginalisation, public humiliation and lack of support when it is the offender's turn to host the ceremony. Through such sanctions relatives and friends are mobilised to join others in the village and sustain a formalised network of social relations which are also used in different occasions, for instance supporting clan members during difficult periods such as food shortages or when there is a sick person in the family.

Ceremonies also provide traders with business opportunities. Different types of goods, particularly local brew, cooked food, second-hand clothes and other commodities are sold. It is therefore a market as well as a social gathering, which provides people with opportunities to exchange information on marketing of agricultural products, for example, and locations where prices are better than those offered in the village. With the exception of few public meetings, *manyago* seems to be an event which pulls a big crowd together and where social networks and friendships are established, which can lead to business partnerships or marriages. The children being initiated acquire additional knowledge to formal education, and establish friendships among the group who were initiated at the same ceremony. In Lindi such relationships are a life bond. These groupings also exist in other tribes in Tanzania, like the *Maasai* and are refereed to as *rika*. Parents and relatives benefit from increased social status and the establishment of social networks. According to respondents from Nachingwea, parents who perform ceremonies together become close friends and an essential part of social networks which provide crucial support in times of difficulty. Thus *manyago* benefit different people in the community in a variety of ways.

From another perspective, the advantages created from investing in the ceremony may not match the potential disadvantages. Parents may have to set aside a lot of food and money for the occasion and provide gifts for visiting relatives. It was mentioned by some farmers that these days *manyago* are considered a disadvantage not only by leaders, but also by some parents. If a parent is not careful, the celebrations may exhaust all the food in the family. In the old days, the celebrations were sometimes meant to clear food stocks from the previous harvest. But nowadays very few families produce large amounts of food. However low food supplies in Lindi have not changed the practice of initiation ceremonies substantially. The practice is still considered relevant and, according to most respondents, it has to be carried out. However, over the last few years changes have been introduced to reflect changing circumstances. One is that some parents take their boys to hospital where they are circumcised and then keep them at home instead of staying in the bush. Normally in the bush each child is attended by two to three people for whom food must be provided. When the children are kept at home they are attended by family members and eat the same food as other members of the family. In this new practice there is no separate budget, except for the celebrations.

Another change worth noting is the reduced duration of celebrations, from seven to a minimum of two days. Some parents have become more careful in budgeting for the event, partly because, while a significant number of relatives still contribute, it is difficult to expect much from equally poor relatives. Thus, unless agricultural production and other productive activities are improved, the scale of celebrations will continue to get smaller and smaller. It is difficult to speculate on the implications of these changes to the individuals, but one can argue that, once the celebrations die out, there may be more food and money available for income-generating investments. It is, however, debatable whether the potential economic returns outweigh the social benefits from the ceremonies.

Household structure

Data from the three settlements show that 57 per cent of the respondents live in households of between four and seven people. Sixteen per cent of respondents come from households with more than seven. The median size of low-income households is four members. The highest concentration of rich people is found in the household with five and six members. While there are only two households with more than seven members in the poor group, there are 17 such households in the middle- and higher-income group. Despite the common practice of children helping their parents with farm work even after leaving the parental home, this is made more difficult by the fact that young people are often allocated farming land at some distance from the village, therefore increasing the time they spend on their own farms. The relatively small size of low-income households is likely to increase their labour problems and consequently the low productivity of their farms. Labour scarcity is further exacerbated by the rate of out-migration, discussed in the next section.

Although a quarter of the respondents come from households with less than four members, nine respondents live in single-person households, most of them in Narunyu. Some of them, especially the youths who were not yet married, left their home mainly

because of bad relationships with their parents. However, they continue to support their parents during the peak season of agricultural production and in the case of food shortages. There are also cases where parents, especially mothers, assist their children. Living alone gives young people more freedom and time to make their own decisions and pursue their own livelihood strategies. Combining the data from the qualitative and quantitative survey, we cannot say that the number of people in a household is proportional to the level of income diversification. Indeed, most people living alone carry out crop cultivation, trading and sometimes work as laborers. While such a split in the traditional family structure could be interpreted as making some children more independent and self-reliant, it makes survival more difficult for some parents, especially low-income farmers, who traditionally rely on support from their children.

With respect to marital relations, although it is not unusual for men in Tanzania to marry more than one wife, in Lindi this practice is probably enhanced by the Islamic religion. Furthermore, while marriages in other tribes are more or less permanent, most marriages in Lindi are temporary. For instance in Sukumaland around Lake Victoria, a compound of one polygamous man accommodates houses for all the wives. Each wife lives in her own house and runs her own household. In Mitwero and Narunyu, and less so in Nachingwea, marriages do not seem to last long. It is common to find a man or a wife living with the second or third spouse. The first husband or wife will have been divorced and re-married or staying alone, or with parents or relatives. Of the 120 respondents, about ten per cent are divorcees, a relatively high proportion in Tanzania. There are, however, a few exceptional cases. In Narunyu, for example, the research noted one man married to three wives who were all staying in the same compound. Each wife is responsible for an independent income-generating activity. The wives are supervised by the husband, who happens to be one of the few rich men in the village.

The marriage flexibility practice has been interpreted differently by different people during the research. Some women from Mitwero told the researchers that:

> ‘If a woman works hard and produces more for her household, she will make her husband feel rich and thus increase the potential of marrying another wife’.

Women used that argument to justify their low commitment to investing in the household. Instead they concentrate on trading activities which are within their control, and in the case of divorce they are able to move with the equipment needed to continue with the business. In general terms, women are independent from men and seem to be more concerned with the survival of their children, whether divorced or not.

Marriage flexibility could also be associated with the relationship between parents and children. Within flexible marriages some children stay with either a stepfather or a stepmother. Sometimes such children do not regard themselves as belonging to the household. This contributes to the increasing number of single-person households created by very young men and women. There are also cases of poor commitment among parents towards educating their children. Instead the little income available is used to finance other marital relationship.

Migration

All three settlements included in the study experience high levels of out-migration, as shown in Table 3. The highest number of migrants is in the urban neighbourhood of Nachingwea, followed by Mitwero and Narunyu. Reasons for migration differ between generations and, to a lesser extent, gender, although in all cases economic factors are the most important. Some young men move within the region, particularly during the cultivation season, in search of casual jobs. Those who fall into this group either experience land shortage (this is particularly the case in Nachingwea where, although the majority of low-income inhabitants depend on agriculture, available land is often far away from the settlement), or wish to utilise the variation in cultivation season to earn extra income and then go back to work on their farms. There are also cases of youth who migrate seasonally because of the social stigma attached to the status of waged labourer. While young men are the most mobile group, older men also move, although usually for shorter periods of time. Women do not migrate once they start a family, although young women may go to larger towns looking for employment.

Table 3. Migration by Household Wealth Groups

	Poor households	**Middle/wealthy households**	**Total**
With migrant members	63.8% (37)	59.7% (37)	61.7% (64)
With no migrant members	36.2% (21)	40.3% (25)	38.3% (56)
Total	100% (58)	100% (62)	100% (120)

Source: questionnaire survey. Figures in brackets indicate actual number of respondents

Migration is also considered by some as a way to earn quick money, rather than relying on farming, and to take up opportunities which do not exist in Lindi. It is worth noting here that, although there does not seem to be shortage of agricultural land in Lindi, what makes a desirable farm is the number of mature cash crop trees (cashew nut or coconut) and the farm's proximity to the settlement; this seems especially important given the very poor level of transport infrastructure. These farms, which have been tended for some time, are far more profitable than new ones, and usually less labour is necessary. In both Lindi and Himo most intergenerational conflict revolves around control over 'good farms'. This in turn is likely to be an important reason for the lack of significant variation in the migration rates of members of households in different wealth groups (see Table 3). In a focus group made up of young men, one man said;

> 'Parents do not wish to give some of their farms to children unless they die. How can we survive? It is better to flee to town rather than staying at home with nothing to survive on. Staying here is like waiting for death. It is better to go to Dar es Salaam. You simply turn yourself into a walking shop (street vendor) and life goes on'.

What migrants do once they reach their destinations is an important issue because it determines whether one is successful or not. Migrants go to rural settlements to work as casual labourers or to towns to work in the informal sector. While rural destinations are usually within Lindi region and the surrounding regions, the main urban destination is Dar es Salaam, followed by other larger towns in the country. Lindi town is distinctly absent from the list of urban destinations, highlighting the limited opportunities it offers. Most migrants follow in the steps of relatives or friends. In addition to accommodation, they are incorporated into the income-generating activities of the hosts, such as garages, food-vending, and other formal or informal activities. Very few migrants come to the destinations with capital. Most of them rely on their social networks and their physical strength. In Dar es Salaam, young migrants are employed as house-helps or watchmen. Others are used by large traders to find markets for slow moving goods, for instance carrying mattresses for sale from the city centre to the outskirts, about 20 km away. In all cases the activities are short-term and the pay low.

A considerable number of migrants visit their relatives to participate in cultural ceremonies. They bring gifts such as second-hand clothes, *khangas*, sugar, or money. However not all migrants who visit their relatives are sufficiently rich to afford the fare for the return trip. Respondents receiving some form of remittance from migrant relatives pointed out that the amount received was decreasing with time. In Nachingwea, where there are more migrants than in the other two settlements, there is not a single house which was built by a migrant, supporting the view that remittances are low and are mainly for buying food and clothes. However in Mitwero and Narunyu we were shown a few modern houses constructed by migrants. This is supported by the relative absence of returnee migrants (see table 4. below).

Table 4. Migration status of respondents, by household wealth group

	Poor households	**Middle- and higher-income households**	**Total**
Not migrant	51.7% (30)	56.5% (35)	54.2% (65)
Returnee migrant	3.4% (2)	1.6% (1)	2.5% (3)
Permanent migrant	44.9% (26)	41.9% (26)	43.3% (52)
Total	100% (58)	100% (62)	100% (120)

Source: questionnaire survey. Figures in brackets indicate actual number of respondents.

While out-migration is significant in all three study settlements, there are also important flows of permanent in-migration. In this case too, the urban neighbourhood registers more movement than the two villages, suggesting that population in Nachingwea is highly mobile, although it is not necessarily the same individuals who move in and out of town. Migrants to both the urban and the rural settlements come from other rural areas within the region and are often related to the other residents by marriage ties. What seems to be missing is any form of return movement of long-term migrants, aside from the three respondents, all of who reside in the villages. As in Table 3., there is little variation between wealth groups, suggesting that migration is often motivated by intergenerational conflict over control of household resources rather than by household income levels. The

fact that permanent migrants do not seem to be either better- or worse-off than non migrants suggests that access to non-household resources (e.g. the acquisition of land through different means) is relatively open, rather than being under the control of long-established families.

6. Summary of findings and recommendations

1. In the two villages, agriculture remains the primary activity and social status is determined to a large extent by success in farming. Household wealth is ranked by people in the villages on the basis of ownership of cash crop farms and quality of housing. However, income is, in most cases, complemented by non-farm occupations, mainly petty trade, and there is a relatively high level of income diversification in the three study settlements. Rather than population pressure being the main reason, this appears to be due to low incomes derived from farming and to the erratic weather cycle and its implications for food security. Access to valuable cash crops is also an important factor in determining which groups are more likely to engage in non-farm activities. Since older men tend to keep control of the slow-maturing cashew nut and coconut farms, it is mainly young men and women who enter non-agricultural employment.

2. While trade liberalisation has been important in increasing opportunities in the non-farm sector, the same cannot be said for agricultural cash crop production. Despite the re-opening of international markets for cashew nuts, production has not increased as expected and there is little investment in new farms, which require 5-7 years to mature. Smallholders tend to sell directly to trading agents despite regulations stating that produce should be sold at assembly points; these are difficult to reach for producers who can hardly afford transport costs. The poor state of roads remains a major problem for marketing of agricultural produce. Moreover, since the closure of the processing factory in the 1980s, Lindi is only used as a shipping port by exporters, therefore losing any potential forward linkages.

3. A high proportion of residents in the urban neighbourhood engage in agriculture, either for subsistence (especially low-income households), for cash production, or as seasonal wage labourers. However access to land is difficult because of the distances involved. Production of aggregates and charcoal is the main activity for low-income, older women. Rather than Lindi providing urban markets for goods and labour to the surrounding areas, it is low-income urban residents who tend to rely on employment and resources from the rural areas.

4. Land is available in all three settlements through allocation by village and urban councils, but it is often situated at great distance from residential areas. Better-off households tend to purchase plots in better locations. Renting and borrowing are also available. While multiple use of cashew nut and coconut farms used to be the norm, and food was grown on the same plot, this is becoming increasingly difficult, and is depriving low-income farmers of accessible borrowed land. In

addition, according to Section 15(i) of the 1998 Village Land Act, rights claimed on the basis of allocation during villagisation in the 1970s will override customary rights. In both villages this is expected to be a cause of conflict, which may further constrain full utilisation of land.

5. Fishing in one of the villages is the one activity which relies on extensive trade and social networks, with buyers coming from as far as Dar es Salaam and a number of cooked food vendors relying on trust relationships with fishermen. However, once again Lindi seems to be a limited market and is bypassed by most traders.

6. Trade liberalisation has contributed to the growth of non agricultural activities, as licensing procedures are less strict and state controls have been much reduced. Young men and women are those primarily involved in non-farm occupations, partly because the main cash crops, cashew nuts and coconuts, are controlled by older men. Non-farm activities take place essentially within the villages and the urban neighbourhood since access to larger urban markets for food crops such as *sim sim*, cassava and tomatoes is limited by poor transport facilities. Most activities are also low-revenue because of low purchasing power in the villages. The employment opportunities provided by Lindi, on the other hand, are limited.

7. The poor transport system is probably the most serious drawback to regional development, as it constrains exchanges between rural producers and urban markets. With trade liberalisation some private transport providers offer a limited service. However, given the low population density and the poor physical infrastructure which seriously restrict profits, it is unlikely that free market mechanisms can satisfy needs.

8. Although Lindi has a hospital and secondary schools, most villagers rely on health and education services in other rural services centres, often supported by an internationally-funded, long-term, rural integrated development programme. Therefore, Lindi does not attract the population of the surrounding areas as a service provision centre. Urban residents in the low-income neighbourhood have equal if not worse access to basic services than the village residents.

9. Social ceremonies play an important role, and despite frequent food shortages, people are prepared to make significant investments in these occasions. This is when kin and friends, including those who have migrated, get together and exchange gifts and information on markets and employment, and where social bonds are created or strengthened. Given the virtual absence of access to more formal information channels and credit opportunities, these social networks play an extremely important role in people's livelihood strategies in a context where food shortage remains a constant threat.

10. Average household sizes are relatively small, especially among low-income units, and may contribute to labour shortages. Migration is high, both out-migration to other rural areas in the neighbouring regions and larger urban centres, and in-

migration from rural settlements. However there is limited return migration, and remittances from migrants are said to have declined over time. Given the low educational level in the area, most migrants only find employment in the urban informal sector and cannot afford to support relatives.

Recommendations

With the exception of services such as secondary schools and hospitals, Lindi town does not offer much to the inhabitants in the surrounding areas. Unlike other fast growing urban centres in Tanzania, Lindi has no manufacturing and commercial sectors which can support positive socio-economic interactions with the rest of the district. Basic services offered by rural service centres are much more accessible than those in Lindi town. The volume of Lindi market is not sufficient to attract traders from other regions. In most cases, traders follow crop harvests into the rural areas, where they buy and transport out of the region without going through Lindi town.

Among the factors which limit the role of Lindi town in rural-urban interactions are low purchasing power and lack of entrepreneurial capacity. Important areas where the local authorities in Lindi could encourage and support the positive elements of rural-urban interactions include:

- Crop and livestock extension.
- Road maintenance to ensure permanent accessibility.
- Mobilising inhabitants, specifically youth and women, to form associations which could help their members to identify and pursue sustainable livelihood strategies.

The research team noted a considerable effort by the local authorities in these areas. But capacity of the district and the urban council is limited in terms of human resources, revenue and planning. The 1997 Regional Administration Act provides a mandate for district councils to carry out needs identification, planning, budgeting and implementation jointly with other local institutions. Substantial efforts are required to develop the capacities of the district and the town councils for their new functions. Without immediate attempts to improve the capacity of the local councils, the redistribution of functions, as proposed in the local government reforms, may not mean much to the inhabitants of Lindi. In our view, integrated district planning and more comprehensive prioritisation in planning, and particularly in expenditure is more relevant in Lindi than in other districts, which command more resources and revenue.

Mobilising people into associations is one of the areas where the district and the town council can make a direct contribution to people's livelihoods. For instance, a consumers' association might be useful in supporting the government in its attempts to coordinate development efforts at the local level, and to ensure that services provided are of a good quality, as in transport in Narunyu and Mitwero and extension services in Mitwero. Since the capacity of inhabitants to pay is rather low, it is important that they also participate in agreeing on the amount to be paid, and that procedures for payment are made known to the public.

For cashew nut producers an association might be relevant in assisting the government to negotiate a better price. While such associations may support the local authorities, they might take up some of the functions which are supposed to be carried out by the local authorities at community level. There are cases where such associations assist district councils in revenue collection, and which are reported to have been rather successful. It is likely that private sector investments in services such as health and education will not come to Lindi in the near future. Therefore, inhabitants are likely to continue relying on services provided by the public, no matter how limited they are. Civil associations may develop into CBOs and offer such services at a cost, but before the community in Lindi reaches such a stage, the local government may have to continue supporting community services. Otherwise, for a remote area like Narunyu and a substantial part of rural Lindi, the cost of sharing and privatisation of community services has to be considered differently, i.e. the withdrawal of the local authorities has to be done gradually.