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Le présent bulletin a pour but de fournir des renseignements et de faire connaître des opinions sur la réforme agraire et les questions connexes à l'Organisation des Nations Unies, aux Etats Membres de la FAO, ainsi qu'aux experts et institutions nationaux et internationaux. Les articles paraissent dans la langue originale (en français, anglais ou espagnol).

Les lecteurs désireux d'obtenir des renseignements complémentaires sur ce bulletin sont priés de s'adresser au rédacteur, *Réforme agraire, colonisation et coopératives agricoles*, Division du développement rural, FAO, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italie.

Les opinions exprimées dans le présent bulletin n'engagent que leurs auteurs et ne sont pas nécessairement celles de la FAO.

La presente publicación es editada por la FAO como medio difusor de información y opiniones sobre la reforma agraria y temas conexos entre las Naciones Unidas, los Estados Miembros y expertos e instituciones nacionales e internacionales. Se publican artículos originales en español, francés e inglés.

Los lectores que deseen obtener más detalles sobre este boletín o sobre los artículos que figuran en él deberán escribir a: Redactor en Jefe, *Reforma agraria, colonización y cooperativas*, Dirección de Desarrollo Rural, FAO, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Roma, Italia.

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Preface

Land Reform, Land Settlement and Cooperatives continues to play an important role in land tenure and rural development studies and more specifically as part of FAO's programmes since its first publication in 1963. In the last decade, the issues of good governance, new institutional structures and methodological approaches offering a wider perspective have become important elements of the debate. The articles in this volume of *Land Reform, Land Settlement and Cooperatives* reflect this in a variety of ways.

The first article, by Stephan Baas and Ayman Omer Ali, summarizes some of the key findings of a study carried out in Yemen that focused on the institutional aspects of several community-based organizations. The article highlights the increasing role that civil society organizations are playing in rural development. The second article, by a Brazilian team led by Beatriz Heredia, presents an analysis of the regional impacts of land reform in Brazil. The goal was to apprehend the transformations in the lives of the settlers both in the agrarian reform settlements and in the regions where these are located.

In the article by Luisa Guillén and Jan Van Wambeke, a methodological proposal based on the authors' experiences is illustrated as a way to improve the implementation of field projects dealing with the issues of territorial planning and food security.

The role of local-level institutions in reducing vulnerability to natural disasters is presented in the article by Stephan Baas and Federica Battista, which summarizes key findings and recommendations produced by a workshop on the comparative analysis of examples and experiences of local action before, during and after situations of natural hazards.

First applied in Europe, the development of practical tools for improved planning at the microregional level is then outlined by Einhard Schmidt-Kallert, with a modest but important contribution for field personnel in rural areas with different professional backgrounds and who are involved in microregional planning processes.

Eastern Europe is the geographical focus of the article by Laura Gerber and Renée Giovarelli, who discuss the status of land reform and land markets in the region, detailing how much systemic progress has been made over the past 15 years in paving the way for functional agricultural land markets, most notably in the privatization of land and the development of land administration systems.

Finally, Tomas Lindemann proposes some lessons learned in the field of decentralization and local government development. A reinvigorated municipal structure is emerging in Latin America, setting the scene for an important legislative transformation towards greater control over local institutional organization by local constituencies, management of natural resources that is increasingly sustainable, and the reduction of poverty.

Paul Munro-Faure

Chief, Land Tenure Service
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Préface

Depuis sa première édition en 1963, le *Bulletin sur les réformes agraires, implantations agricoles et coopératives* joue un rôle de premier plan parmi les études sur le régime foncier et le développement rural et plus spécialement dans le cadre des programmes de la FAO. Depuis une dizaine d'années, les questions relatives à la bonne gouvernance, aux nouvelles structures institutionnelles et aux approches méthodologiques offrant une perspective plus large ont pris une part croissante dans le débat. Les articles de la présente édition du Bulletin reflètent cette évolution de différentes manières.

Le premier article, de Stephan Baas et Ayman Omer Ali, résume quelques-unes des principales conclusions d'une étude entreprise au Yémen portant sur les aspects institutionnels de plusieurs organisations communautaires. L'article met en lumière le rôle croissant des organisations de la société civile dans le développement rural. Le second article, rédigé par une équipe brésilienne dirigée par Beatriz Heredia, présente une analyse des incidences régionales de la réforme agraire au Brésil. Son but était de comprendre les transformations intervenues dans la vie des colons tant dans les colonies des zones de réforme agraire que dans les régions où elles sont situées.

L'article de Luisa Elena Guillén et Jan Van Wambeke illustre une proposition méthodologique basée sur l'expérience des auteurs pour améliorer la mise en œuvre des projets de terrain axés sur la planification territoriale et la sécurité alimentaire.

Le rôle des institutions locales dans la réduction de la vulnérabilité aux catastrophes naturelles est présenté dans l'article de Stephan Baas et Federica Battista. Il résume les principaux résultats et les recommandations d'un atelier portant sur l'analyse comparative d'exemples et d'expériences de mesures d'intervention locales avant, pendant et après des situations de catastrophes naturelles.

L'élaboration d'outils pratiques pour améliorer la planification au niveau microrégional, appliquée pour la première fois en Europe, est présentée par Einhard Schmidt-Kallert, avec une contribution modeste mais importante pour le personnel de terrain en zone rurale présentant des compétences professionnelles différentes et participant à des processus de planification microrégionaux.

L'Europe de l'Est est la zone géographique sur laquelle porte l'article de Laura Gerber et Renée Giovarelli, qui ont examiné la situation de la réforme agraire et des marchés fonciers dans la région, en expliquant en détail les progrès réalisés systématiquement depuis une quinzaine d'années pour ouvrir la voie à des marchés fonciers agricoles fonctionnels, essentiellement par la privatisation des terres et le développement de systèmes d'administration foncière.

Pour finir, l'article de Tomas Lindemann tire quelques leçons de l'expérience de la décentralisation et du développement des gouvernements locaux. Une structure municipale plus dynamique voit le jour en Amérique latine, ouvrant la voie à une transformation législative importante pour un contrôle accru des collectivités locales sur l'organisation institutionnelle locale, une gestion des ressources naturelles de plus en plus durable et une réduction de la pauvreté.

Paul Munro-Faure

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Prefacio

Desde su primera edición en 1963, la publicación *Reforma agraria, colonización y cooperativas* sigue desempeñando una importante función en los estudios sobre tenencia agraria y desarrollo rural, y más específicamente como parte de los programas de la FAO. En el último decenio, las cuestiones relativas a la buena gobernanza, las nuevas estructuras institucionales y los enfoques metodológicos que ofrecen una perspectiva más amplia se han convertido en elementos importantes del debate. Ello se refleja de diversas maneras en los artículos de la presente edición de *Reforma agraria, colonización y cooperativas*.

En el primer artículo de Stephan Baas y Ayman Omer Ali se resumen algunas de las conclusiones principales de un estudio realizado en Yemen y centrado en los aspectos institucionales de varias organizaciones de base comunitaria. En el artículo se pone de manifiesto el papel creciente que las organizaciones de la sociedad civil desempeñan en materia de desarrollo rural. En el segundo artículo, elaborado por un equipo brasileño dirigido por Beatriz Heredia, se expone un análisis de las repercusiones regionales de la reforma agraria en el Brasil. El objetivo consistía en conocer las transformaciones experimentadas en las vidas de los colonos tanto en los asentamientos de reforma agraria como en las regiones en las que éstos radican.

En el artículo de Luisa Elena Guillén y Jan Van Wambeke, se expone una propuesta metodológica basada en la experiencia adquirida por los autores como medio para mejorar la ejecución de los proyectos de campo relativos a cuestiones de planificación territorial y seguridad alimentaria.

La función de las instituciones locales en la reducción de la vulnerabilidad ante las catástrofes naturales se presenta en el siguiente artículo de Stephan Baas y Federica Battista, quienes resumen las principales conclusiones y recomendaciones formuladas por un taller sobre el análisis comparativo de ejemplos y experiencias de actuaciones locales antes, durante y después de situaciones de peligro natural.

Einhard Schmidt-Kallert describe brevemente a continuación la elaboración de instrumentos prácticos, aplicados por vez primera en Europa, para mejorar la planificación a nivel microrregional; ello supone una contribución modesta, pero importante, para el personal de campo de las zonas rurales con diversa formación profesional que participe en los procesos de planificación en el plano microrregional.

Europa oriental es el centro geográfico del artículo de Laura Gerber y Renée Giovarelli, que analizan la situación de la reforma agraria y los mercados de tierras de la región, ofreciendo detalles sobre los progresos sistémicos realizados en los últimos 15 años hacia la consecución de mercados de tierras agrícolas funcionales, muy singularmente en la privatización de las tierras y en el desarrollo de sistemas de administración de las mismas.

Por último, Tomás Lindemann propone algunas enseñanzas extraídas en el ámbito de la descentralización y el desarrollo de las administraciones locales. En América Latina se está revitalizando la estructura municipal, lo que sienta las bases para una importante transformación legislativa encaminada a lograr un mayor control de la organización institucional local por parte de los entes locales, una ordenación de los recursos naturales cada vez más sostenible y la reducción de la pobreza.

Paul Munro-Faure

Jefe del Servicio de Tenencia de la Tierra
Dirección de Desarrollo Rural de la FAO



Les organisations communautaires en tant que partenaires de la lutte contre la pauvreté au Yémen: bonnes pratiques et enseignements de l'expérience

Depuis une dizaine d'années, les organisations de la société civile, et notamment les organisations communautaires, jouent un rôle de plus en plus important dans le développement rural. En 2003, l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture a mené une étude sur les questions de formation et les aspects institutionnels d'une cinquantaine d'organisations communautaires au Yémen, qui a été entreprise avec l'appui du Programme pour le développement régional communautaire. Les organisations communautaires reposent sur la participation volontaire des membres et ont pour objectif des changements positifs qui sont déterminés par leurs membres.

Le présent article résume et examine certains facteurs essentiels qui, d'après le rapport de l'étude intitulé Enseignements de l'expérience et bonnes pratiques: organisations communautaires au Yémen, influent sur la formation et les activités des organisations communautaires locales dans le développement rural décentralisé: i) l'influence des conditions locales sur la formation des organisations communautaires; ii) la participation communautaire aux activités des organisations communautaires; iii) la gouvernance et la gestion des organisations communautaires; et iv) les liens entre les organisations communautaires et les autres institutions.

Participación de las organizaciones de base comunitaria en la mitigación de la pobreza en el Yemen: buenas prácticas y enseñanzas extraídas

En el último decenio, las organizaciones de la sociedad civil, incluidas las de base comunitaria, han desempeñado una función cada vez más importante en el desarrollo rural. En el año 2003, la FAO realizó un estudio para analizar los aspectos institucionales y relativos a la formación de más de 50 organizaciones de base comunitaria en el Yemen, creadas con el apoyo del Programa de desarrollo regional basado en la comunidad. Las organizaciones de base comunitaria son organizaciones voluntarias de carácter asociativo, cuya misión, encaminada a lograr cambios positivos, es establecida por sus miembros.

En el presente artículo se resumen y analizan algunos de los factores fundamentales que, según el informe analítico titulado Lessons learned and good practice: community-based organizations in Yemen, influyen en la formación y actividades de las organizaciones locales de base comunitaria en materia de desarrollo rural descentralizado: i) la repercusión de las condiciones locales en la formación de organizaciones de base comunitaria; ii) la participación de la comunidad en las actividades de las organizaciones de base comunitaria; iii) el sistema de gobierno y la gestión de las organizaciones de base comunitaria; y iv) los vínculos de las organizaciones de base comunitaria con otras instituciones.

Community-based organizations in Yemen: good practices and lessons learned

S. Baas and A.O. Ali

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In the last decade, civil society organizations (CSOs), including community-based organizations (CBOs), have played an increasingly important role in rural development. In 2003, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations conducted a study to analyse the formation and institutional aspects of more than 50 CBOs in Yemen that had been initiated with the support of the Community-Based Regional Development Programme. The CBOs are voluntary, membership-based organizations guided by a mission for positive changes determined by their members.

This article summarizes and discusses some of the key factors that, according to the study report, influence the formation and activities of local CBOs in decentralized rural development: (i) the impact of the local setting on the formation of CBOs; (ii) community participation in CBO activities; (iii) governance and the management of CBOs; and (iv) CBO linkages with other institutions.

STUDY CONTEXTS, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The last decade has seen an increasing role of civil society organizations (CSOs), including community-based organizations (CBOs), in rural development. This is partly due to their structural characteristics, which match the distinct shift towards participatory development, but it is also a result of the weak response of governments in developing countries to increasing developmental needs. The evolving role of CSOs has, in turn, led to an escalating concern regarding the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of CBOs *vis-à-vis* their mission statements and functions as catalysts for sustainable development.

In view of this rationale, in 2003 FAO conducted a study to analyse the organizational and institutional aspects of more than 50 CBOs in Yemen that were initiated with the support of the Community-Based Regional Development

Programme (CBRDP). This United Nations Development Programme-funded programme, for which FAO provided technical assistance, has operated in ten districts, representing five ecological zones since 1999. Regional offices are located in: (i) Ghail Bin Yamein (GBY); (ii) Al-Makha; (iii) Khamis Bani Saa'd (KBS); (iv) As-Swadeya; and (v) Aden.

The principal objective of the programme is to strengthen CBOs as key actors and government partners in the contexts of decentralization and poverty alleviation. The programme intervenes in five closely interrelated technical components, namely institution building, human capacity building and training, community-based financial services, gender perspectives and institution-based coordination. The basic criteria used to establish and strengthen CBOs were that they: (i) had emerged from within the targeted communities; (ii) operated as development-oriented organizations; and (iii) were legally

registered with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour (MoSAL). The CBOs are voluntary, membership-based organizations guided by a mission for positive changes determined by their members.

The FAO study identified lessons learned from the formation and operation processes of CBOs, recorded examples of good practice and made policy recommendations, which could support the replication of these experiences in Yemen and other countries with similar contexts. The methodology combined the use of primary and secondary data with different participatory learning and action research methods and tools. Data were gathered from CBO Executive Boards (EBs), CBO members, traditional leaders and local councils.

This article summarizes and discusses some of the key factors that, according to the study report,¹ influence the formation and activities of local CBOs in decentralized rural development. These include: (i) the impact of the local setting on the formation of CBOs; (ii) community participation in CBO activities; (iii) governance and the management of CBOs; and (iv) CBO linkages with other institutions.

COUNTRY CONTEXT: CBOs IN YEMEN

The Republic of Yemen was formed in May 1990, following the unification of the Yemen Arab Republic and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. The country covers 527 970 km², with a total population of 18.4 million (2000 census data). Administratively, the country is composed of 20 governorates comprising 332 districts. The annual population growth rate is 3.4 percent, one of the highest in the world. About 73.5 percent of the population live in rural areas. Yemen is one of the least developed countries in the world and ranked 148 out of 175 countries assessed

in *Human Development Report 2003* (UNDP, 2003). The latest household budget survey (1998) revealed that 17.6 percent of Yemeni live below the food poverty line and 41.8 percent live below the absolute (upper) poverty line. Poverty in Yemen has a strong rural attribute, with 83 percent of the poor and 87 percent of the food-insecure living in rural areas.

Yemen has had a rich history of both community participation and grassroots-level community-based institutions. The tribe (*Qabilah*) is the most prominent informal institution in Yemen and is a crucial element of social, economic, cultural and political life. It provides individuals with their social identity and serves as a reference point for cultural values and social behaviours. The tribe is a hierarchy of segmentary structures that place individuals into large concentric circles. Everybody knows his or her role, as defined by well-articulated customary regulations (*Hukm* or *Urf*) which, together with religious laws (*Sharia*), dictate behaviours and attitudes. Tribes are divided into clans, which are composed of lineages. Each tribe has a tribal territory, within which each clan has its own portion of land. Borders between tribes and between clans are well demarcated, and ownership is documented in local contracts. In each tribe, authority is vested in a *Sheikh* and, under the *Sheikh*, in an *Aqil* (often also called *Sheikh*) as well as in tribal judges (*Hakim*, pl. *Hukam*), who have special knowledge of tribal customs. The *Sheikh* is a sort of *primus inter pares*, a mediator, in charge of solving disputes between tribe members and of representing the tribe *vis-à-vis* the other tribal entities, administrative authorities and other groups.

The history of semi-formal community institutions, however, is relatively new. They began in Aden under British rule as charitable societies; they later expanded to Taiz and, from there, spread to other areas in the north. The first law governing associations was approved in 1963 (Law No. 11/1963) and revised in 2001 (Law No. 1/2001). The revised cooperatives law was approved in 1998 (Law No. 39/1998).

¹ The full study report *Lessons learned and good practice: community-based organizations in Yemen*, is available at: http://www.fao.org/sd/dim_pe2/docs/pe2_040901d1_en.doc. An earlier version of this article was submitted to the Deutscher Tropentag Conference in Berlin, 2004. It is available at <http://www.tropentag.de/2004/abstracts/full/51.pdf>.

According to the *Yemen Human Development Report 2000/2001* (MoPIC and UNDP, 2001), the number of officially registered CSOs in Yemen in 2001 was 2 786, with an average of 1.5 CSOs per 10 000 people. According to an informal source from the MoSAL, the current number of registered CSOs is 4 142 (both figures should be read with caution). However, only 18 percent of these are considered active. This is attributed to: (i) a low level of institutionalization of structures; mechanisms and practices; (ii) inadequate technical capacities; (iii) fragile adherence to internal good governance mechanisms; (iv) ambiguity of visions, procedures and tools for the achievement of objectives; (v) high vulnerability to tribal and area-based affiliations; and (vi) inadequate financial resources.

The establishment of CBOs under the CBRDP as well as their capacity building and empowerment were intended to improve this situation by encouraging active, sustainable actors and partners in development at the local level.

IMPACT OF LOCAL SETTINGS ON CBO FORMATION

Several local conditions were major determining factors in the CBO formation process.²

General findings

Socioterritorial context

The MoSAL Law No. 1/2001, under which CBOs are registered, obliges each CBO to specify a well-defined geographical zone for its operations and membership. The local communities' response to this law varied according to their sociocultural context. In the strong tribal contexts of As-Swadeya and KBS, CBOs were formed on a purely tribal basis, which also corresponded to the geographical element of the law.³ In

other cases, this legal restriction led to the establishment of CBOs with geographical boundaries that were too large to be covered effectively. CBO territoriality had significant impacts on its capacity for inclusiveness and equitable representation. In Al-Makha and Aden, where the tribal system is relatively fragile, CBOs were formed on the basis of social homogeneity and geographical proximity.

Dominance of traditional power structures

The dominance of local elites, traditional leaders and powerful groups within the community is a big challenge faced by CBOs in Yemen. Owing to their comparative advantages, these groups often lead and dictate the formation of CBOs without paying adequate attention to the involvement of other community members. In situations where strong tribalism prevails, the exclusion of tribal leaders from CBOs can create deep conflicts and block CBO operations. Moreover, it can be difficult to isolate a CBO as a development-oriented organization from the tribe as a social institution. Therefore, CBO formation and operations are highly vulnerable to tribal conflicts. The level of interaction between traditional power structures and CBOs varies depending on the local setting. While traditional power structures are included and/or represented in the EBs of some CBOs, the majority of organizations assigned honourable positions to tribal leaders.

Socioculturally marginalized groups

The ethnic composition of Yemeni society is characterized by the existence of marginalized and socially excluded groups (*Akhdam*). In the study areas, they were found in KBS, GBY and Aden. Their existence alongside the strong tribal system in KBS led to their exclusion from the social system and, in turn, from participation in CBO formation (fewer than 20 percent of them are members of CBOs, and they are without any representation in the EBs). The situation is different in Aden and GBY. In Aden, marginalized groups are

² The effects of local settings on CBOs were not confined to their formation; they also affected their internal operations and relationships with the environment.

³ People of the same tribe often settle in the same place. The land under the control of the tribe is perceived as one of the most important factors determining the position of a tribe in the overall social hierarchy.

actively involved in the formation as well as the operations of CBOs, which might be explained by Aden's multiracial character as well as its ideological and political history. In GBY, the sociopolitical effects of the former governing socialist party strengthened the concepts of equality.

Purpose and ownership of CBOs

The general challenges facing CBOs at their formation stage include the need to respond to critical local gaps and to attract membership on that basis. A common risk during their formation is that local organizations often establish themselves either to respond to an outside demand or to an opportunity to tap available financial resources. The CBOs studied were not an exception in this regard. It was crucial that CBRDP was aware of this phenomenon and designed appropriate strategies that strengthened local ownership, community commitment and shared responsibility.

Good practices and lessons learned

- The formation process of CBOs proved to be essential since it influenced their operations and sustainability. At this stage, the following were among the prerequisites shown to be crucial:
 - a clear mission and vision based on genuine local needs;
 - wide participation of all community members and groups (especially the poor and women) in order to reach a joint agreement on CBO objectives and activities. CBO membership should jointly devise clear and transparent plans to attain tangible benefits for its members (such as access to credit, training, etc.);
 - precise participatory development of the CBO's constitution and bylaws;
 - committed leadership (people who are ready to invest time and energy for the collective good) that has the trust of and is supported by community members. In addition, there should be an active group ready to support the leaders. However, experience has highlighted that this combination

of leadership and drivers can be a potential risk element during later stages if not carefully monitored. Thus, the specific roles, responsibilities and rights of leaders, the EB and the general assembly (GA) should be clearly developed, agreed upon and documented in the CBO constitution and bylaws.

- If the creation of a CBO has been proposed by an external programme, the decision to establish it (or not) should be made solely by the local community, with the role of the external programme limited to consultation, awareness raising and provision of technical support.
- The term "community-based organization" explicitly indicates its remit, that is, the community as a holistic concept implying the people and their relationships as well as their association with the place. This notion emphasizes both the social "people and relations" and the physical "place and resources" dimensions. Therefore, in rural areas, a CBO's territory should be determined by a combination of factors, including social homogeneity, common interests and geographical proximity, instead of focusing exclusively on tribal geographical boundaries and/or geographical proximity.
- In the urban context, CBO formation could be based on the smallest possible geographical zones (e.g. *Hara* [neighbourhood]) that would ensure a reasonable level of social homogeneity. Moreover, the establishment and strengthening of the specialized local associations on an occupational/vocational basis can be recommended.
- CBO activities should be kept separate from political activities.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES

As membership-based organizations, CBOs are judged not only by how their results

compare with their objectives, but also in relation to the processes that they adopt to produce these results. Consequently, they face common challenges in responding to the critical demands of their members and in keeping them interested and engaged in activities.

Community participation is understood here as “a social process in which specific groups with shared needs living in a defined geographical area take an active part in the process of planning and implementing development activities as well as enjoying their benefits” (Beatty, al-Thawr and Bagash, 2002). This definition implies the concepts of community and participation.

A community is defined, first, geographically and, second, in terms of social factors and the sharing of specific resources and needs. In the context of Yemen, this strongly implies that the concept of community is not synonymous with the concept of a village as a geographical term. Participation, on the other hand, refers to the active involvement of groups and individuals. In this sense, participation can range from simple information sharing to extensive consultation, joint decision-making and situations where the relevant stakeholders take on responsibility for monitoring the process and evaluating its success.

General findings and examples of good practice

Targeting mechanisms

The study revealed that all CBOs give high importance to the participation and direct benefit of the poor. To this effect, all CBOs successfully apply a participatory targeting mechanism known as the revolving labour pool (RLP). In the process of establishing an RLP, community members identify simple community-driven indicators reflecting their perception of poverty (e.g. income, number of livestock, house structure and furniture) and use these indicators to develop specific well-being categories (e.g. destitute, poor, middle-income, rich). Thereafter, all households within the community are classified according to the specified categories. The primary target groups for

CBO assistance are members or households classified as poor. The destitute are supported by the CBOs in gaining access to the social welfare fund and other relevant direct cash support mechanisms including the *Zakat* (Islamic religious tax destined for the poor). Middle-income community members only benefit directly from CBO-managed credit interventions under restricted conditions such as the creation of employment opportunities for the poor. Project data prove that poor CBO members benefited directly from CBO credit activities. They constitute 61 percent of direct credit beneficiaries, compared with middle-income (30 percent) and rich community members (9 percent).

Representation of women

Women represent 36.8 percent of the membership of the CBOs studied. This figure is low in absolute terms, but higher compared with the average figure of women’s representation in other CBOs in Yemen, which is 29 percent (MoPIC and UNDP, 2001). The relatively slow speed in moving towards higher participation of women in CBO activities is partially attributable to sociocultural factors. It also stems from the fact that the CBRDP initially adopted a unified gender strategy for all action areas without sufficiently acknowledging the location-specific differences that women face in different areas. In this regard, the programme unit in Al-Makha developed a simple implementation approach that capitalizes on awareness raising of both men and women as an entry point to changing attitudes and increasing women’s participation and, ultimately, women’s economic empowerment. This approach appears appropriate and consistent within the local setting.

Scope and diversity of CBO services

The extent to which CBOs addressed the concerns of various community groups was related to the size of their membership and the success of their activities. In addition to their basic service portfolio promoted

by CBRDP (mainly institutional building, training and capacity building, provision of credit to groups for productive income generation activities and mediating for provision of basic services), most CBOs also provided additional services to make their activities more attractive to community members. Most of these additional priority services addressed the poor and, to a lesser extent, middle-income groups. While this gave the CBOs an additional pro-poor focus, it limited the level of involvement of other community wealth groups in some cases. Nevertheless, it can be concluded that those CBOs that kept their interventions limited to the above-mentioned basic service portfolio experienced a lower level of community involvement in their activities.

The following were found to be the most significant among the self-selected, additional services.

1. Implementing communal investment projects with a social dimension (e.g. water tanks, telecommunications, pharmacies, small shops, bakeries). By responding to pressing community needs, these projects increased CBO membership and, simultaneously, promoted interactions between the EB and GA members. Additionally, they provided good mechanisms for the expansion of the benefits from the CBOs to all socio-economic strata, including the poor and non-members.
2. Provision of consumption credit to the poorest CBO members on a seasonal basis.
3. Implementing self-help initiatives within the larger community context (practised by 67 percent of the CBOs). These initiatives covered a wide and diverse range of activities, including cash support to destitute community members; liaising with government departments to establish pro-poor policies and procedures; vocational training and literacy education for women; environmental activities; cultural, health, sport and religious activities; support to public facilities; and community-driven informal

agreements to organize communal issues and mediation to reduce harmful/negative behaviour.

Analysis of these self-help initiatives revealed that there are positive correlations between the level of the CBO's self-help initiatives and both its organizational maturity and the level of participation at the GA.

Spatial analysis disclosed that:

- (i) Aden's CBOs were most advanced with regard to self-help initiatives. This is partly explained by Aden's rich experience with CBOs, as well as by the competition among CBOs to intensify and diversify self-help initiatives in order to attract membership. In addition, the high level of awareness of Aden's CBOs enabled them to realize that waiting for government response to all their needs might not be the correct approach.
- (ii) The local settings had a strong impact on the scope of CBO self-help initiatives. For instance, in rural areas CBOs gave the highest emphasis to different cash support mechanisms for destitute families, the provision of basic community needs and, to a lesser extent, vocational training and literacy education for women. In the urban area of Aden, CBOs liaise with different government departments to lobby for pro-poor policies and procedures and for cultural and sport initiatives. Although it is too early to conclude, the apparent success of this approach indicates the potential future role CBO influence may play in government policies and practices.
- (iii) Particularly in rural areas, CBOs successfully attracted financial assistance from local wealthy and/or charitable people in support of CBO self-help initiatives.
- (iv) In rural areas, the highest level of self-help initiatives was found where the indigenous local culture

of solidarity among the tribes' members was strongest.

Economically heterogeneous groups for income-generating activities

The experiment of CBOs linking poor with middle-income community members for joint group-based income-generating activities (IGAs) yielded interesting results. Successful, good practice examples include labour-intensive activities in the agriculture and fishery sectors. For example, the Kheyol Al-Badeya CBO (Al-Makha) financed a group of 72 middle-income small-scale farmers (after environmental studies indicated a sustainable production basis) for the purchase of certified onion seeds and other production inputs for four production seasons. On average, per production season, 208 poor agricultural labourers directly benefited from the job opportunities created. Before credit, each middle-income farmer employed 1.63 labourers per season; the number increased by 78 percent, i.e. an additional 1.3 jobs per onion farmer per season, as a result of the increased area under cultivation. The same intervention also boosted the local transportation sector, and benefited water pump owners (who provided water to farmers in need against certain fees) as well as agricultural traders and marketing agents (Table 1).

A second example was where CBOs financed fishing boats for mixed groups of poor and middle-income fishers. Each boat was owned by three families and created permanent employment opportunities for a further three poor labourer fishers.

Another positive benefit from linking poor community members with better-

skilled members through group-based financing was that unskilled poor households obtained access to and learned about responsible credit operations. "In Al-Makha, about 30.3 percent of the members of groups funded had no previous experiences with credit. Currently, this group is acquiring these experiences through knowledge transfer of their group colleagues" (CBRDP, 2003).

Lessons learned

- The best representation of different social groups within CBOs revealed a correlation between reasonable geographical coverage, high degree of social homogeneity, high level of awareness and sensitivity regarding communal issues, and appropriate mechanisms that ensure equitable representation of all socio-economic groups in the EB.
- Approaches to increasing women's participation in CBO operations should be location- and situation-specific and developed on the basis of a comprehensive analysis.
- Generally, the CBOs should not limit their focus solely to activities assisted by outside agencies. Instead, they should initiate, even at a very small scale, complementary activities that address all segments and age groups of the community. The promotion of self-help activities identified within the CBOs showed a strong propensity to: (mobilize and rationalize the use of community resources; induce and foster self-reliance; contribute significantly to the social and economic development

TABLE 1

Effects of support to onion farmers from Kheyol Al-Badeya CBO (Al-Makha)

Variable	Before intervention	After intervention	Percentage change
Number of middle-income farmers	59	72	22
Number of agricultural labourers employed	96	208	117
Job opportunities created per farmer	1.63	2.89	78
Number of water pump owners benefiting	13	17	31
Number of loading trucks involved	14	25	79
Number of intermediaries and marketing agents	8	13	63

of the communities; (make the CBOs very attractive to the community and GA members; have a pro-poor focus; and respond to the various interests of different socio-economic and age groups. CBOs should emphasize the implementation of such initiatives based on their sociocultural particularities and settings.

- The experience of CBOs with regard to the development and use of the participatory targeting mechanisms of the RLP showed that, in addition to being a relevant methodology to strengthen community solidarity, its application facilitated transparent community-owned decisions to promote the interests of the poor and the linking of poor community members with middle-income, better-skilled community members for joint group-based productive IGAs.
- Labour-intensive IGAs were an appropriate mechanism for facilitating group-based collaboration between poor and middle-income community members through which the poor could tap employment opportunities. The group-based financing provided good opportunities for skills transfer and experience-sharing within the groups and was favoured by poor and less-skilled community members.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF CBOS

Governance can be defined as the process by which stakeholders articulate their interests, their input is absorbed, decisions are taken and decision-makers are held accountable. One goal of good governance is to enable an organization to do its work effectively. However, good governance entails more than “getting the job done”. The “process” is as important as the product, particularly in the context of CBOs, where values typically play an important role in determining both organizational purpose and style of operation. Good governance is therefore about both achieving the desired results and achieving them in the right way. As the “right way” is largely shaped by cultural norms and values, there can be

no universal template for good governance. Nonetheless, some common characteristics of good governance include participation, transparency, responsiveness, consensus orientation, equity, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability and strategic vision (UNDP, 1997). The study applied two main indicators in assessing CBO governance: (i) EB operations and response to the above-mentioned characteristics; and (ii) the interaction between the EB and GA. However, because integration of traditional power structures into CBO structures had a significant influence on governance, the study also assessed this variable.

General findings and examples of good practice

Operations of CBO EBs

The basic rules of CBO operations state that their EBs must be democratically elected by the GA and must adhere to the CBO’s constitution and bylaws and adopt accountability and transparency measures. The EBs maintained a division of labour via specialized technical committees. In view of the above-mentioned characteristics of good governance and the EBs’ tasks, the study showed that the decision-making process within the EBs followed participatory patterns with a reasonable participation of all members. Consensus building was the most common approach. For decision-making, EBs rarely resorted to voting as a decision-making mechanism (limited to only 8 percent of the EBs’ decisions). EB members attributed this to the clarity of the implementation systems adopted. Nevertheless, in some EBs that included *Sheikhs*, the participatory interactions within the EB were directly or indirectly hampered by the *Sheikh*. In these cases voting was more appropriate.

In some CBOs, the EBs consulted some of their constituencies before deciding on crucial issues, often done in an informal manner and seldom through exceptional GAs. In some CBOs, GA members were invited to attend the EB meetings as observers. While consensus orientation is considered high within EBs, equity measures were not followed in the majority

of CBOs. This was caused by the low involvement of women in decision-making within the EBs, with the exception of Aden and a few CBOs in Al-Makha.

Most EBs communicated their decisions to the GAs through informal channels and a few, mainly in Aden, used signboards and other formal means.

Financial accountability was significant, which can be attributed to the use of simple and clear financial systems.

On the other hand, it was obvious in some CBOs that the number of active members in the EBs was rather limited and that, as a result, a few members were handling most of the executive work. The following causes were highlighted by the EBs:

1. EB members worked on a purely voluntary basis. Under pressing economic conditions, it was difficult for the majority of them to allocate enough time to CBO operations.
2. Some EB members lacked essential skills such as the ability to read and write, which are prerequisites for executive work. This disqualified them for some of the executive tasks (such as accounting and bookkeeping). Hence, local communities need to be informed in advance of the responsibilities of the EBs and the necessary selection criteria in order to assist them in making informed selection decisions.
3. The division of labour within the EB was not properly allocated and rationalized. For instance, members of the *Sandug* (fund) committee were usually very busy, while other committees had less work. This high workload of some tasks created a reluctance to participate among the underutilized members. Therefore, it is extremely important to define the size of EBs and their subcommittees in accordance with their duties.

Interactions between EBs and GAs

The nature and strength of linkages between the EBs and the communities were important for sustainable CBO operations. The study identified the following key factors in this respect:

- *Electing appropriate EB members at the outset is crucial.* They must be trustworthy and of good repute. Much time and many cumbersome processes can be necessary at a later stage to replace people initially chosen as “place holders”.
- *Frequency of formal meetings between the EB and the GA.* Regular GA meetings (both formal and informal) were critical. However, this was not a common practice among CBOs. The reason for this is largely attributed to the MoSAL Law No. 1/2001, which links mandatory GA meetings with the re-election of the EB every three years. Exceptional GA meetings upon request from either the EB or the GA are allowed by law under restricted conditions. However, this issue was not addressed in the constitutions of some CBOs, although legally permitted. In addition, in some CBOs, the GA was not fully acquainted with the CBO bylaws, either because of the poor level of GA participation in preparations or because documents were presented in a formal, technical language that was too complex for illiterate members to understand.
- *Negative effects of creating a CBO on a purely geographical basis.* With the exception of Aden with its unique urban setting, the GA-EB gap was wider in those communities that decided to form their CBOs on a purely geographical basis, especially those that covered vast geographical areas.
- *Differences in political affiliations.* Such differences widened the gap between the GAs and EBs, especially in highly politicized areas. EB members should differentiate between their personal political activities and their institutional roles as executive members of non-political entities.

Integration of existing power structures into CBO structures

The predominantly tribal organization of rural Yemen has been challenged by the activities of CBOs, especially the

participatory interactions within the EBs. For example, the CBOs' intended shift away from individual *Sheikh*-centred leadership to institutional/group-based (EB) leadership at the community level put the traditional privileges of *Sheikhs* at risk. In view of this, the level of involvement of the *Sheikhs* in CBO structures varied from complete lack of involvement (2 percent), to involvement as GA members (25 percent), as EB members (14 percent) and as honourable members in certain advisory positions (11 percent). Twenty-eight percent of *Sheikhs* were represented in the EBs by a family member. In addition to the impact of the overall local setting, the leadership style and these variations were induced by personal characteristics of the *Sheikhs* as well as their understanding of their roles *vis-à-vis* the CBO. Within the EBs, the interaction pattern of *Sheikhs* varied from participatory leaders and event-driven *Sheikhs* who did not have time to interact regularly with the CBOs, to tribe-oriented leaders who constantly mixed tasks and responsibilities between the CBO and the tribe.

Lessons learned

- Frequent GA meetings proved to be an appropriate mechanism for promoting lively interactions among GA members to increase the GA–EB dialogue and to foster good governance.
- Laws are usually developed to provide an overall organizational and regulatory framework. Therefore, they do not necessarily refer to specific locations or thematic foci or other peculiarities of any specific CBO. CBOs should recognize this fact as well as the fact that laws do not prevent a CBO from reflecting its interests and concerns in its own internal regulations and bylaws.
- The previous point, however, does not mitigate the serious need in Yemen to adjust the current MoSAL Law No. 1/2001 to respond better to the requirements of all development-oriented CBOs.
- The constitutions and bylaws of CBOs, which are established by communities

that lack previous experience with formal organizations, are too often simply transcripts of the sample documents offered by the legislative authorities. Each CBO should develop these essential documents in accordance with its interests and specifications with the maximum participation of and consultation with its members and within the overall legal limits. In this regard, Al-Mustagbal CBO (As-Swadeya) offered a good example by translating its constitution and bylaws into the local dialect using simple language.

- No overall lesson could be drawn with regard to the inclusion of *Sheikhs* in EBs; instead, this would need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis. While *Sheikhs* in EBs may block democratic decision-making and/or affect EB operations owing to their personal agendas, their exclusion may seriously damage the CBOs' operations. One of the good practices adopted by some CBOs in this regard is to assign *Sheikhs* certain honourable tasks (e.g. to act as “moral collateral” for credit recipients) and positions (e.g. in advisory bodies). For instance, the intertribal compensation system (*Aghram*), though it encourages conflicts, could be used to promote community-driven development initiatives. Another good practice, adopted by a CBO in As-Swadeya, is to use the ethics of honour (*Sharaf*) as an efficient and flexible informal “moral” collateral to guarantee repayment of due credit.

CBO LINKAGES WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Mechanisms to promote horizontal linkages

The fact that all of the CBOs studied were initiated with the assistance of the same external programme implies the following consequences: (i) similarity of structures and systems; (ii) good opportunities for sharing information and experiences among CBOs in the same area through programme-organized activities; and (iii) an increased level of competition among

CBOs. The first two factors facilitated good collaboration and coordination among CBOs in the same area. This collaboration manifested itself in several ways: (i) older, established CBOs assisted in the formulation of new ones through participation in the sensitization process; (ii) advanced CBOs organized training programmes, using their trained staff, for the newly established organizations; (iii) exchange visits among CBOs were arranged; and (iv) inter-CBO consultative and coordination meetings were held.

However, the CBOs did not utilize the above-mentioned comparative advantages and initiatives to develop organized coalitions among CBOs in the same area. This might be associated with: competition among CBOs; legislative barriers that hamper the formation of CBO federations into unions; a lack of awareness among CBOs about the potential benefits of coming together in an organized form; and the absence of successful models to emulate. CBOs in the same action area should promote their existing coordination mechanisms into institutionalized networks as a strategic means of fostering their capacities for advocacy and lobbying and of facilitating institutional-based vertical linkages with other institutions.

Linkages with the local councils

Decentralization began in Yemen in February 2000 and local council (LC) elections were held in April 2001. However, three years after their election, most LCs were not yet functional as foreseen by the law. They neither planned the development of their jurisdictions nor budgeted their resources. Many local people did not see the value added of the LCs *vis-à-vis* the pre-existing traditional authorities.

Because the CBOs were established before the LCs, the initial design of the CBOs did not emphasize coordination between the two entities. While in some areas coordination was initiated positively, LCs in other areas negatively intervened in CBO activities. As of 2003, the coordination had not yet been properly institutionalized and remained

attributed mainly to people who were both CBO and LC members. Strikingly, CBO members represented 35 percent of all membership in the ten districts where CBOs operated. A considerable percentage of CBO/LC common members who had evolved as the new local leaders appeared highly qualified for LC elections as a result of their competency in CBO management. In this situation, the common CBO/LC members worked for the benefit of both the CBOs and the LCs in two main ways:

1. They included community priorities identified by CBOs in the LCs' plans, which also strengthened the plans.
2. They added extra value to the LCs' operations owing to their experience in working with communities and the technical skills they had gained through training in their CBOs.

Yemen's new macropolicies further emphasize decentralization processes. In this context, CBOs must strengthen their vertical linkages to increase complementary and institutional sustainability. Thus, it is important for the two entities to institutionalize and strengthen their relationships. The CBOs studied revealed high comparative advantages to operating as competent partners with LCs at the community level, as justified by the following.

- Unlike in other similar countries adopting decentralization, the administrative structure in Yemen (before 2001) did not go beyond the district level, that is, none existed at the community level. This traditional gap challenges the transparency and accountability of the LCs' operations especially when considering the unfavourable demographic and topographical factors. However, as the CBOs have been formed democratically and operate at the community level, they could help bridge this critical gap, especially in terms of a two-way information flow.
- As shown by the LCs, communities that have CBOs are better organized in comparison with others. Thus, CBOs

represent organized communities that can more easily interact with LCs.

- Common CBO/LC members often have better skills and richer experience compared with other LC members. This implies that CBOs could offer more competent candidates for LC elections.
- CBOs have often tested technical systems for participatory planning and targeting. This experience could be particularly useful for the LCs, which currently lack such systems.
- CBOs have collected and updated diversified data at the community level. They could offer data as well as data collection and management expertise to strengthen LC plans.

Despite these comparative advantages, which encourage future institutional linkages between CBOs and LCs, there are two major risk elements that need to be addressed.

1. There are critical legislative gaps and inconsistencies between the MoSAL Law No. 1/2001 and the Local Authority Law No. 4/2000. Both laws claim a supervisory role in CBO activities without a clear definition of the term “supervision”. This leads to subjective, individual interpretations of the term by each LC. While some LCs understood their objective to be to monitor CBOs associated with supporting them, the majority saw autocratic control as their objective.
2. The Local Authority Law No. 4/2000 does not as yet describe the legal relationship between LCs and CBOs.

Linkages with other local and national institutions

With CBRDP’s assistance, CBOs were prepared to take a proactive role in liaising and coordinating with other relevant actors at local and national levels. As a result, CBOs succeeded in tapping a total of YR1 402 million (US\$2.2 million) from 36 agencies in addition to non-cash contributions from 15 other agencies. The tapped financial resources represented 62 percent of the CBOs’ total resource

portfolio. The interventions implemented through targeted coordination efforts included access to additional capacity-building activities, basic services, agricultural development, livestock development, support to women’s activities and cash support for the poor. These activities resulted in improved recognition of CBOs as partners in development; increased complementarity of development interventions among actors; better access by local communities to services; and greater recognition of CBOs by the local communities as active players in the identification and prioritization of community needs and in the implementation of their projects. The fact that there are many development organizations that currently support CBO initiatives in Yemen is mainly attributed to the comparative advantage of CBOs in terms of organizational capacities compared with other CSOs in the area.

However, these are still preliminary results and they lack sustainability, as there are no well-documented institutional coordination mechanisms in place between the CBOs and the other actors. This is an example of how the recommended CBO networks and federations could be very helpful.

Lessons learned

- The common CBO/LC members demonstrated better skills and a richer experience than other LC members. Thus, strategically, the promotion of CBOs’ capacity-building experience could be a good vehicle to ensure qualified people are elected to the LCs.
- Initiatives for coordination among CBOs and LCs need to be institutionalized and based on a clear legislative vision that maintains the identity of each institution. To this effect, the comparative strengths of both types of institution should be jointly assessed and the value added maximized. At the same time, legislative inconsistencies as well as the legal relationship between both entities should be addressed urgently.

- CBOs should emphasize strong vertical relationships with relevant actors. The CBOs studied offered good practical examples of how resources can be obtained from different sources, which was probably due to their comparative advantage and the organized approach adopted for this purpose. However, all CBO coordination activities should be institutionalized (instead of being on a personal basis) to foster sustainability.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the study findings and in view of the general organizational aspects and performance of CBOs in Yemen, the CBOs studied showed fair successes regarding: (i) empowerment of local communities through self-owned and managed community-driven organizations; (ii) responsiveness to the demands and aspirations of local people, particularly the poor, in both processes and results; (iii) pro-poor inclusiveness of structures and mechanisms; (iv) interactions with traditional power structures; and (v) coordination of local poverty alleviation initiatives through various means.

Moreover, CBOs showed good potential and comparative advantages – although some were not yet used – in terms of their institutionalized coordination with LCs and in their tendencies to influence pro-poor policies and to contribute to good governance within the decentralized context. The new orthodoxy of “good governance” has thrust CBOs, including the CBOs under assessment, on to the centre-stage of the development arena, but with a new dual role. In addition to being service providers, through their advocacy activities, CBOs are seen as having a role in local policy development and in holding local governments accountable for their actions. This dual role requires competent CBO coalitions, alliance building and strong advocacy skills.

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Analyse des incidences régionales de la réforme agraire au Brésil

Le présent article décrit les processus de changement à court, moyen et long termes résultant de l'établissement de colonies rurales dans le cadre de la réforme agraire au Brésil. Son objectif est de comprendre les transformations intervenues dans la vie des colons dans les zones de réforme agraire et dans les régions où ces colonies sont situées. L'article repose sur une étude effectuée dans des régions du Brésil qui présentent la plus forte concentration de projets de colonisation et le plus grand nombre de familles de colons par unité de territoire. La création de colonies dans les zones de réforme agraire a amélioré la stabilité sociale et permis de modifier les stratégies de subsistance. Toutefois, le gouvernement n'a pas répondu de façon satisfaisante aux demandes d'amélioration des infrastructures qui ont suivi

Análisis de las repercusiones regionales de la reforma agraria en el Brasil

En este artículo se describen los procesos de cambio a corto, medio y largo plazo derivados del establecimiento de asentamientos de reforma agraria rural en el Brasil. El objetivo consistía en comprender las transformaciones acaecidas en las vidas de los colonos en los asentamientos de reforma agraria y en las regiones donde radican los asentamientos. El artículo está basado en un estudio realizado en determinadas regiones del Brasil en las que se registra la mayor concentración de proyectos de asentamiento y el mayor número de familias de colonos por unidad territorial. El establecimiento de asentamientos de reforma agraria ha comportado una mayor estabilidad social, así como cambios en las estrategias relativas a los medios de vida. Sin embargo, las ulteriores solicitudes de mejora de la infraestructura no han sido correctamente atendidas por el Gobierno.

Regional impacts of land reform in Brazil

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This article describes short-, medium- and long-term change processes resulting from the establishment of rural agrarian reform settlements in Brazil. It is based on a study carried out in selected regions of Brazil with the greatest concentration of settlement projects and number of families of settlers per unit of territory. The research goal was to understand the transformations in the lives of the settlers as well as the changes in the regions where the settlements are located. The establishment of agrarian reform settlements has provided greater social stability as well as shifts in livelihood strategies. However, the subsequent demands for improved infrastructure have not been adequately addressed by the government.

INTRODUCTION

Much of the research on agrarian reform settlements (ARS) in Brazil has analysed internal conditions, related policies and the progress of agrarian reform settlers. However, few studies have examined the importance of the implementation of ARS for the regions in which they are located. This article addresses the issue by identifying the processes of change that the ARS have brought about in their local settings.

The creation of ARS results in short-, medium- and long-term changes, the effects of which are felt both within the projects – affecting the lives of the settlers – and externally. Rather than assigning them a negative or positive value to changes identified, this analysis is designed to measure and characterize the changes. The aim is to create indicators and identify relationships by comparing the current and previous situations of the settlers, as well as by comparing the social and economic conditions within ARS with those in the surrounding areas. The article also analyses the effects of local and regional projects.

METHODOLOGY AND SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

The focus of this study was a set of Brazilian regions with a large concentration of settlement projects and a high density of settled families per land unit. The defining criteria were the existence of a set of neighbouring municipalities with a relatively high concentration of ARS in terms of number of projects, families and occupied areas; and common historical, economic, social and organizational dynamics. Six large zones were chosen: the Federal District and surrounding areas, the northeastern sugar cane region, the Sertão (semi-arid) region of Ceará State, southern Bahia State, southeastern Pará State and western Santa Catarina State.¹ Within each of these greater zones, sample zones were chosen

¹ The choice of zones also took into account data from previous studies on the settlement projects, as well as the existence of teams with prior experience of studying these regions. Regions that were already covered by the study *Os impactos regionais dos assentamentos rurais: dimensões econômicas, políticas e sociais* (Regional impacts of rural agrarian reform settlements: economic, political and social dimensions) were avoided; these included the States of Acre, Mato Grosso, Rio de Janeiro, Rio Grande do Sul, São Paulo and Sergipe (Medeiros and Leite, 2002).

that contained groups of municipalities with the largest concentrations of projects and the greatest proportion of settlers compared with the overall rural and urban populations.²

The ARS analysed were implemented by the Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária (INCRA – National Institute for Rural Settlement and Agrarian Reform) from 1985 to 1997. The starting date was based on the initial implementation of the Plano Nacional de Reforma Agrária (PNRA – National Land Reform Plan), which represented a turning point in settlement policies that had, until then, remained similar to those of colonial times. The year 1997 was chosen as the end of the study period because it was believed that 12 years would be the minimum amount of time the projects would take to have an observable impact. Further details of the sample are provided in Table 1.

ESTABLISHMENT OF ZONES AND THE LAND DISTRIBUTION PROCESSES

The main motivation for establishing the PNRA was to establish priority areas for land reform. However, opposition from the anti-reform movement led to this idea being abandoned. Subsequently, only expropriations led by workers' movements were carried out. These took place more frequently than during the time of the military regime and occurred as a consequence of social struggle and mobilization.

Although landless workers' initiatives have taken many different forms (sometimes involving a combination of strategies and changing over time), 64 percent of the ARS studied were the result of "land occupation" (Table 2). "Land resistance" tactics also played an important role and were responsible for the creation of almost one-third (29 percent) of the ARS studied.

² The choice of municipalities to be studied in each zone was made on the basis that the sample should cover 10 percent of the families of settlers in each municipality and that 100 to 300 questionnaires should be distributed in each zone, so that the final count for all zones should not exceed approximately 1 500 questionnaires, representing 15 000 families settled between 1985 and 1997.

An analysis of the time distribution of the implementation of these projects shows an unequal distribution: 25 percent of the projects were started between 1985 and 1989, a mere 8 percent from 1990 to 1994 and 67 percent from 1995 to 1997.³ This variation could plausibly be attributed to the different political stances on land reform during successive Brazilian governments. The drop between 1990 and 1994 may be explained by a delay in regulating constitutional norms, which took place in 1993. However, the percentage distribution of the establishment of ARS in the 1985–89 and 1995–97 periods tends to coincide with a change in the distribution of forms of struggle used by the landless workers (towards land occupation), thus suggesting that the initiatives of the landless workers were the true driving force of the expropriations.

A careful analysis of the variations in the overall pattern in each zone strengthens this hypothesis. The drop in the number of new ARS during the 1990–94 period occurred in all but the Pará zone. There was also an increase in the number of ARS during the 1995–97 period in all zones except for Santa Catarina. Southeastern Pará is the only zone in which there was a rise in the number of ARS between 1985 and 1997; this trend was repeated in the whole State of Pará and in all of northern Brazil. This situation in the Amazon region was the result of a combination of factors: the pressure applied by those struggling to acquire land; the old idea of colonization as an alternative to land reform; and the perspective of good farming business through INCRA's expropriation of formerly public land that had been purchased by private parties at extremely low prices.

³ This distribution roughly reflects that of the whole country, considering both the agrarian reform settlements implemented by INCRA and projects for colonization, resettlement and other initiatives by the federal, state and municipal governments, as described by Dataluta (database of the struggle for land) (NERA, 1999). According to this source, of the 4 264 projects carried out during the 1985–99 period, 14 percent occurred in the period 1985–89, 11 percent in 1990–94 and 75 percent in 1995–99.

TABLE 1

General characteristics of the sample zones

Sample zones (and states)	Number of municipalities	Total number of families settled in the municipalities (1985–97)	Total area (ha) of settlement projects (1985–97)	Number of projects	Number of questionnaires*
Southern Bahia (cocoa-producing region) – BA	8	734	12 919.5	14	87
Ceará Sertão (Canindé) – CE	4	2 999	110 401.7	10	306
Federal District and surrounding areas – DF, GO and MG	6	2 409	114 803.2	14	237
Southeastern Pará (Conceição Araguaia) – PA	2	3 320	240 929.3	10	366
Western Santa Catarina – SC	8	1 802	27 292.9	19	185
Northeastern sugar cane region – AL, PB and PE	11	3 849	29 888.7	25	387
Total	39	15 113	536 235.3	92	1 568

Source: INCRA records and data from the study.

State initials: AL = Alagoas; BA = Bahia; CE = Ceará; DF = Federal District (located within the State of Goiás); GO = Goiás; MG = Minas Gerais; PA = Pará; PB = Paraíba; PE = Pernambuco; SC = Santa Catarina.

*A “profile” was drawn up for each project in order to collect general information on the agrarian reform settlements. Not all projects implemented in a given state between 1985 and 1997 were included in the survey. Nevertheless, the sample of questionnaires covered 10 percent of the families settled in all of the projects. A questionnaire was issued to the person responsible for each plot of land (i.e. the person managing it, usually the head of the household, regardless of whether or not he or she was legally the owner). This ensured that each questionnaire represented one production family unit. The study also utilized qualitative interviews with representatives of different local and regional institutions, geographic data, technical reports and secondary statistical sources.

TABLE 2

Distribution of the ARS by workers’ methods of resistance in the sample zones

Zone	Land resistance*	Occupation**	Other***	Total (=100%)
Southern BA	6 (43%)	8 (57%)	-	14
CE Sertão	4 (40%)	6 (60%)	-	10
DF and surrounding areas	2 (14%)	9 (64%)	3 (22%)	14
Southeastern PA	9 (90%)	1 (10%)	-	10
Western SC	-	16 (84%)	3 (16%)	19
Northeastern sugar cane region – AL, PB and PE	6 (24%)	19 (76%)	-	25
Total	27 (29%)	59 (64%)	6 (7%)	92

Source: Settlement profile – field study data, 2000. See Leite *et al.*, 2004.

* Land resistance: this includes all cases of struggle on the part of rural workers (inhabitants, partners, tenants and squatters) to stay on the land where they were living and/or working. It also includes cases of “gradual occupation” (four in southern Bahia and nine in southeastern Pará), i.e. clandestine occupation usually carried out by small groups of squatters who wish to build and eventually acquire land tenure rights. In these cases, conflicts only arise when the occupation is “discovered”, at which point resistance on the land begins.

** Occupation: this refers to the massive and public occupation of land that has become frequent over the past 15 years. This action initially stemmed from the efforts of the Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra (MST – Landless Rural Workers’ Movement), but was then adopted by other movements, including the union movements, which in some regions play a more important role than the MST.

*** Other: all cases in which the initiative was not carried out by the workers and their movements, as well as those in which the actions of the workers and their movements do not fit into the other two categories.

The large number of ARS established in Santa Catarina during the first period was the result of the large-scale occupation of land in the western part of the state by the MST and by some rural workers’ unions, with the support of the Comissão Pastoral da Terra (CPT – Pastoral Land Commission), when the PNRA was first proposed.

Another striking situation is that of the northeastern sugar cane region. In this zone, the occurrences of land expropriations and number of ARS created during the 1985–89 period were extremely low; they

increased only after 1995 as a consequence of the unprecedented crisis affecting the sugar cane industry since the second half of the 1980s. In the wake of MST actions, land occupation, which was infrequent, until recently, has become the rural workers’ main instrument for dealing with the crisis.

The regional concentration of ARS is thus the result of a battle waged by the different players who fought for repossession of the land and rationalization of its use. In the confrontations, workers’ movements have been able to define “priority areas”

for government intervention and have been hegemonic in the design of models for ARS, i.e. patterns of social relations.

THE SETTLEMENTS AND REGIONAL, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL DYNAMICS

Settlers and their families

A large number of settlers were already living in the rural areas where they are now before they moved into the ARS: over 80 percent of those studied in the sample came from the same or a close municipality.

Before joining the settlements 75 percent were previously employed in farming activities as permanent or temporary paid workers, squatters, partners or land tenants or as unpaid family members.⁴

As to the level of schooling of those responsible for the plots of land, the overall results show that 87 percent had not attended school after fourth grade and 32 percent had received no schooling. Only 2 percent had attended school beyond eighth grade.

The average number of children was three per family.⁵ In many cases (24 percent), the families lived with other relatives, such as parents, in-laws, children, siblings and grandchildren. In most cases, these relatives did not live with the nuclear family before moving into the ARS but were subsequently incorporated into the family unit,⁶ which implies that ARS have reunited families.

⁴ The only exception is the western Santa Catarina zone, where many of the settlers used to live in other parts of the same state (29 percent). In the Federal District and southeastern Pará, a large percentage of settlers were born in other states, which indicates that the ARS are receiving populations that had resulted from previous migrations. The lowest proportions of plot holders who previously lived in rural areas were found in the Federal District (62 percent) and southern Bahia (66 percent) zones. These proportions represent the total number of working-age settlers, and therefore include both the plot holders and other family members over the age of 14 at the time the projects were created. The category "unpaid family members" includes people who worked with their parents (or other relatives), family farmers and "housewives".

⁵ Only plots settled by families with children are considered here.

⁶ The percentages of other relatives who lived in urban areas before going to the agrarian reform settlements were 52 percent in the zone of the Federal District and surrounding areas, 42 percent in southern Bahia, around 30 percent in the sugar cane region, 33 percent in Santa Catarina and 22 percent in Ceará.

Moving into a settlement does not only involve isolated families (with or without added relatives), but also extended family groups: 62 percent of settlers have a relative who lived on another plot in the same settlement.

Characteristics and internal organization of settlements

The locality and size of the settled areas are usually an ad hoc occurrence, because they are the result of conflicts that extend over time, and because they depend to some degree on the features of the agrarian structure. The set of zones can be divided into three groups based on the total area of settlement projects and the number of settler families.

The first comprises southeastern Pará, the Federal District and surrounding areas, and the Ceará Sertão, with settlements characterized by large tracts of land and a large number of families (more than 60 percent of the projects with areas larger than 2 000 hectares and over 50 families). The second group includes southern Bahia and western Santa Catarina, where the settlements tend to be smaller with fewer families (most of them with less than 1 000 hectares and fewer than 50 families). The third group is the northeastern sugar cane region, where small tracts of land are occupied by large numbers of families, which reflects a greater rural and urban population density (more than 60 percent of the projects with less than 2 000 hectares and more than 50 families).⁷

The average area of plots in the whole sample is 35.5 hectares, but this varies greatly between zones, ranging from 7.8 hectares in the northeastern sugar cane region to 72.6 hectares in southeastern Pará. There is a clear-cut difference between southern Bahia, western Santa Catarina and the northeastern sugar cane region, on the one hand, where the average settlement

⁷ This may be because of pressure from the rural workers' unions to ensure that none of those who participated in the struggle for the land would be excluded. A similar phenomenon occurred in Ceará, where the settlers refused to divide the settlement into plots.

size is greater than 2 000 hectares and plots are smaller than 20 hectares and, on the other hand, southeastern Pará, the Federal District and surrounding areas, and the Ceará Sertão, with ARS larger than 8 000 hectares and an average plot size of more than 30 hectares.⁸

In general, the internal physical organization of the projects follows a pattern that already existed among the local family farmers before the ARS were established, although some innovations have taken place.

In most of the units studied, the houses are located on the plots. Farming communities are found in almost a quarter of the projects (most of them in southern Bahia and in the sugar cane region), usually coexisting with population groupings that predated the ARS. In the Ceará Sertão zone, there are communities (different-sized groupings of settlers' houses) surrounded by subsistence croplands. The pastures are often collective. In the larger projects, each community has an association that organizes the economic activities of its members, and the settlement as a whole has one central cooperative that coordinates the associations. In the southeastern Pará zone, although most of the houses are on the plots, the occupation of the areas has led to the foundation and/or expansion of villages. In some cases, these villages are developing into small commercial and service-providing centres, which attract other people in addition to the settlers.

In the Santa Catarina zone, the houses are on the plots and the communities follow the local pattern and may precede the ARS or be formed as a consequence of them. One new form of organization is that of the *núcleos* (centres), i.e. political and organizational divisions within the ARS, the creation of which was proposed by the MST to facilitate the discussion of problems and demands made to the government. In the northeastern sugar cane region, old mills,

⁸ The three zones have in common the predominance of extensive cattle ranching and (as described below) the tendency to maintain the hegemony of cattle grazing in the agrarian reform settlements.

farms or, in some cases, farm dwellings built by INCRA became meeting places for the settlers to discuss economic or political initiatives.

Comparison of ARS and total farming area

In the states studied, a comparison of the total area of rural ARS established by INCRA up to 1999 (excluding the ARS implemented by the state governments) with the total area of farming and cattle ranches listed in the 1996 census reveals that, except in Pará, the ARS area ranges from 0 to 5 percent of the total farming area.

Nevertheless, in the sample zones studied, the ratio of settlement area to farming area in the municipalities is significantly greater, which indicates a territorial development process in land reform. As shown in Table 3, there are important variations among the zones (and even among the municipalities that compose a given zone), ranging from a mere 3.1 percent (1999 data) in the southern Bahia zone to 40.4 percent in the southeastern Pará zone. This indicates that, although the impact may seem modest at the state level, it tends to be meaningful in the chosen areas, especially in those municipalities where it increased significantly between 1997 and 1999.

Access to public policies and conditions of infrastructure

In general, the infrastructure of the settlements in the zones studied is quite poor, in keeping with the substandard conditions found in most Brazilian rural areas. However, this does not mean that nothing has changed; the creation of the ARS and the expectations of those involved necessarily gave rise to a number of demands and claims, the satisfaction of which depends on the extent to which settlers can organize themselves and on the local political situation.

In the settlements studied, 81 percent of the families benefited from development credit, 72 percent from housing credit and 75 percent from food credit, which represents a reasonable amount of coverage. However, these data must be

TABLE 3

Settlement project area as percentage of total farming area

Zones	States (up to 1999)*	Municipalities in sample (up to 1997)**	Municipalities in sample (up to 1999)**	Area strata (up to 1997)***
Southern BA	BA	3.0	2.3	5.5
CE Sertão	CE	5.3	15.9	113.2
DF and surrounding areas	GO and MG	1.4	3.1	57.6
Southeastern PA	PA	25.3	34.6	119.5
Western SC	SC	1.1	9.6	18.8
Northeastern sugar cane region	AL, PB and PE	1.5	12.1	142.7
Total zones		5.6	8.7	62.0

Sources: INCRA, 1999; IBGE, 1996.

* States: percentage of total area of the SPs created up to 1999 in the zone state(s) compared with the total area of farmlands in those states. The projects belonging to the Land Title Programme in Bahia, Ceará, Minas Gerais and Pernambuco were included.

** Municipalities in sample: percentage of total settlement area (established by INCRA up to the year shown) in comparison with the total farming area in the set of municipalities of the sample zone.

*** Area strata: the comparative size is used to determine the percentage of the total area of the settlement plots compared with the area of farms within the same size range in the municipalities (according to data from the 1996 Farming Census). An average of the areas reported by the settlers was used to establish the size range that predominated in each zone, which was 0 to 20 hectares in the sugar cane region; 0 to 50 hectares in southern BA, CE Sertão and western SC; and 0 to 100 hectares in the DF and surrounding areas and southeastern PA.

evaluated taking into account the fact that the credit approval process is extremely lengthy. Delivery of the development and food credit took an average of nine months from when the projects were officially created. The housing credit took over two years (28 months on average), which made the initial stages more difficult and undermined families' capacity to carry out their activities.⁹

When questioned about their current and past housing conditions, 79 percent of the settlers reported an improvement. Answers varied between regions. On average, only 8 percent of the settlers stated that their situation had become worse.

With regard to the water supply, most settlements have problems related to a lack of or bad-quality water. In nearly 46 percent of settlements, interviewees reported that there were plots with insufficient water available for production. Seventy-eight percent of the projects had on-farm electricity, but only 27 percent received an adequate supply. In 66 percent

of the cases studied, electricity was only furnished some time after the settlement had been established. In 53 percent of the projects that have electricity, the settlers reported having made demands in order to obtain it.

Living on a settlement seems to improve the chances of children attending school. A large percentage of the school-age population attends school: around 90 percent of children between the ages of 7 and 14, and 60 percent of young people between 15 and 19. In a comparative assessment, settlers were asked to compare the current versus previous schooling situations. They acknowledged shortcomings but 70 percent considered that the situation had improved, 20 percent that it had not changed much and 9 percent that it had worsened.

There were also youth and adult education programmes in 64 percent of the cases studied. Most of the programmes are sponsored by the Programa Nacional de Educação na Reforma Agrária (National Programme for Education and Land Reform), created by the federal government as a result of pressure from workers' movements (especially MST) and a small number by the local authorities. This has made literacy possible for some of the adult population on the ARS: in the projects

⁹ Some figures are even worse: considering the dates on which the families effectively entered the project areas, the average time until the development credit was received was four years, and five years for the housing loans. The figures for western Santa Catarina considerably lowered the averages, perhaps because the farmers there had a greater capacity to apply pressure.

studied, 6 percent of adults over 30 years of age participated in these programmes. There is a lack of classrooms, however, and most of the courses teach reading and writing only, and are short-term, offering no prospects for continuity.

As for the health services, although there were a significant number of community health workers (in 78 percent of the projects), community health centres existed in only 21 percent of the ARS studied, mostly built as a result of pressure from the settlers. Even when there are medical facilities, there are usually no doctors available on a regular basis.¹⁰ Given this bleak situation, most of the settlers seek health services in the same municipality (in 92 percent of the projects), in neighbouring municipalities (42 percent) or in cities that have general hospitals (25 percent).

Principles of association and political participation

Given the precarious infrastructure, combined with the difficulties of settling on the land and, in more general terms, in reproducing the family farms, the establishment of the settlements is less an end point of a struggle and more the starting point for new social and economic demands. The new situation forces settlers into life experiences that they would have rarely encountered in their previous situation. They begin to organize themselves, establish dialogues with the government, make demands, apply pressure and negotiate. In short, they begin a number of activities that put them at the front line of political participation.

The study showed that the presence of settlements in the various zones brought about changes in the relationships between the workers who live in them and the local

authorities, by either demanding new forms of action, strengthening traditional patronage systems or empowering new leaders to run for public office.

Associations, present in 96 percent of the ARS studied, are a predominant form of organization for settler representation. Their existence is essential because they represent the settlements legally and in formal dealings with government departments and other agencies.

These data indicate that the political experience acquired in the struggle for the land has produced new leaders and forms of representation, as well as lessons on the importance of different forms of organization and their capacity to produce demands.

SETTLEMENTS AND THE DYNAMICS OF REGIONAL ECONOMIES

Work and job creation

In the current context of crisis in the farming sector and of difficulties in reproducing family farming, the ARS provide an important source of employment and access to land tenure. In the total population above the age of 14, 79 percent worked only on the plot, 11 percent worked both on the plot and elsewhere, 1 percent worked elsewhere only and 9 percent declared they did not work. Thus, 90 percent of the settlers over 14 years old worked or helped on the plot, with an average of three people per plot. Of the 12 percent who worked elsewhere (including those who worked only elsewhere and those who worked both on the plot and elsewhere), 44 percent did so occasionally, 24 percent temporarily and 31 percent on a permanent basis. It is worth mentioning that of those who worked elsewhere, more than half (56 percent) carried out activities only within the settlement itself, including non-farm work created by the project (construction of roads and collective infrastructure, teaching, food and health services, collective work, product processing, etc.).

Although the ARS are evidently job creators, some settlers choose to leave

¹⁰ The daily presence of doctors on the ARS was reported in only four cases out of the whole sample. In most cases, doctors were reported to visit a few times a week. In seven ARS, frequency dropped to once a month. The visiting doctors are usually general practitioners. In two cases, specialists were mentioned: one gynaecologist and one paediatrician. Only one settlement (in the municipality of Goiana, in Pernambuco) had access to a full medical team, including a general practitioner, paediatrician, gynaecologist and dentist.

TABLE 4

Main plant products grown in the 1998/99 crop season by category in each zone*

Zone	Category	Highest percentage	2nd highest percentage	3rd highest percentage	4th highest percentage	5th highest percentage
Southern Bahia (cocoa farms)	produced	cassava	maize	bananas	beans	pineapples
	sold	cassava	pineapples	bananas	maize	cocoa/coconuts
	considered important	cassava	bananas	coconuts	maize	pineapples/cocoa
	GP**	cassava	pineapples	cocoa	rubber	coconuts
Ceará Sertão	produced	maize	beans	cotton	squash	watermelon
	sold	cotton	maize	beans	squash	bananas
	considered important	cotton	maize	beans	bananas	
	GP	maize	beans	cotton	watermelon	rice
Federal District and surrounding areas	produced	maize	rice	cassava	sugar cane	beans
	sold	maize	rice	cassava	beans	sugar cane
	considered important	maize	rice	cassava	sugar cane	beans
	GP	cassava	beans	maize	rice	soybeans
Southeastern Pará	produced	maize	rice	cassava	squash	watermelon
	sold	rice	maize	pineapples	bananas	cassava
	considered important	rice	maize	pineapples	cassava	bananas
	GP	cassava	pineapples	rice	maize	squash
Western Santa Catarina	produced	maize	beans	cassava	rice	sweet potatoes
	sold	maize	beans	tobacco	soybeans	rice
	considered important	maize	beans	tobacco	soybeans	
	GP	maize	beans	tobacco	soybeans	matte
Northeastern sugar cane region	produced	cassava	beans	maize	taro root	bananas
	sold	cassava	beans	maize	taro root	bananas
	considered important	cassava	taro root	beans	sugar cane	maize
	GP	cassava	taro root	beans	potatoes	sugar cane

Source: Field study data, 2000. See Leite *et al.*, 2004 and IBGE, 1999a.

* This table was compiled using the five products with the greatest percentage in each zone collected in interviews with those who declared growing the product, selling it or considering the product important. Empty cells represent cases in which there was no single product representing at least 1 percent of the total.

** GP = gross production.

(temporarily or definitively): 28 percent of the families in the ARS in the zones studied reported having had a family member leave the plot. Overall, 42 percent of the departures were a result of the need to search for employment and/or another land property (the highest percentage being 60 percent, in Ceará).¹¹ Twelve percent of the plots in the ARS studied had lost members who left in order to find employment elsewhere.

Farming production

The ARS produce a wide variety of products. Table 4 shows the five top percentages (by zone) of farm products cultivated, sold and considered important in the 1998/99 crop season. It also includes the five products

that contributed the most to the plots' gross production (GP).¹²

It is evident that there is not necessarily a match between the most common products, those sold and those considered important, nor between these and the products with the greatest GP. Maize, cassava and beans are clearly the most commonly grown products as well as those considered important by the greatest number of settlers, with exceptions in some zones. This choice has a strategic value, as these products are easily sold and are crucial in the families' daily diet. They are followed by taro root, bananas and rice.

Analysis of the share of different farming products in the overall GP (the only animal

¹¹ Other reasons for departure included marriage (35 percent), study (18 percent), and health problems or conflicts with the family or other settlers.

¹² The GP was calculated by multiplying the total reported production by the prices in the different regions. It is an approximation because not all the products are sold, and the prices effectively charged by the settlers are not always the same as those in the rest of the region.

products included are milk and eggs),¹³ showed that milk, cassava, maize, beans, eggs, rice, pineapples, soybeans, taro root and cassava flour were in the top ten positions (representing 78 percent of the GP). Of these, the first three account for 48 percent of GP and the first five for 61 percent.

Both dairy and beef cattle are important in all the zones except for southern Bahia and the sugar cane region. They are especially important in southeastern Pará (sale of calves and milk production), western Santa Catarina, and the Federal District and surrounding areas. Poultry for meat is considered important by many producers but they seem to be reserved mostly for subsistence rather than commercial use (meat and eggs), except in the zones in southeastern Pará and Federal District and surrounding areas, in which they are also sold. Pork production is common (except in the southern Bahia and sugar cane region zones) and is almost exclusively used for subsistence.

Impacts on local production

A comparison between the data on production obtained from the study and secondary data may provide some indication of the impacts of the ARS on the municipalities in which they are located.¹⁴

Comparing the settlers' overall production (based on an estimate of the ARS' farming products in 1998/99) and the municipalities' overall production (using data from the 1999 municipal farming and livestock studies [IBGE, 1999a, b] and from the 1996 farming census [IBGE, 1996]), it can be observed that most of the ARS contribute to diversifying the farming

¹³ The GP for all animal products except milk and eggs could not be calculated because there were insufficient data available for the year preceding the field study.

¹⁴ The data were extracted from the 1996 farming census and the 1999 municipal farming and livestock studies (IBGE, 1999a, b), all conducted by the Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE). There is a lapse between the years in which the data were collected (on the different harvests) and the IBGE census and sample studies. The latter are not specific enough regarding data on the ARS.

products in their areas by introducing new crops and by significantly increasing the production of some secondary crops. Moreover, these ARS are leading producers of many of the products that are already traditional in the areas studied.

It is clear that there has been a diversification of products in areas where monocultures or extensive cattle grazing have been predominant. This has led to changes in the forms of production in regions afflicted by the crises caused by the patronage farming systems. Diversification has also had an effect on the lives of the settlers because the coexistence of subsistence and commercial production acts as a safeguard for families when sales are difficult, in addition to representing a quantitative and qualitative improvement in the local and/or regional market.

Productivity, technical assistance and level of technology

Relevant products were compared in terms of productivity by comparing the average productivity in the ARS (1998/99 crop season) with the average productivity in their respective municipalities, according to the 1996 farming census.¹⁵ This analysis revealed that, in 42 percent of cases, the projects attained greater productivity than the average farms in the region. In 10 percent of cases, their productivity was approximately the same and in 48 percent it was well below that of the other farms. These figures varied between zones.

This increase in productivity could not have taken place without access to technology and technical assistance. Data from the 1998/99 crop season showed that, in the sample studied, only 55 percent of these ARS benefited from the frequent presence of technical assistants, 22 percent received occasional assistance and 13 percent received none at all. These percentages varied greatly

¹⁵ The productivity of each product was compared in each zone and in each municipality (by number of settlers who produce, sell and consider the produce important, and by their participation in the GP) in a total 146 cases.

between zones.¹⁶ In nearly 80 percent of the projects that did have regular technical assistance, it was provided by technicians brought in by the programme *Lumiar*, a technical assistance programme for ARS. Implemented by the federal government, *Lumiar* began in 1996 and was terminated in 1999.¹⁷

The term “facilities” includes structures used for raising animals (such as corrals, chicken coops, pig sties, fenced pastures and stables – which were the most commonly reported type of facilities), for storing water (tanks and dams), for drying and storing produce (sheds, silos, terraces, warehouses, etc.) and for product processing. In the plots studied, 57 percent declared that they had facilities. Of these, the average number is 2.36 facilities, which reflects a lack of infrastructure on the plots.

The final observation relates to the utilization of machinery and equipment. Only 65 percent of interviewees declared having utilized any type of machine or mechanical equipment during the 1998/99 crop season.¹⁸ This means that nearly one-third of the settlers in the projects studied had no access to any kind of machinery or equipment except for basic hand tools (hoes, sickles and machetes, for example). However, although the figures are low in absolute terms, comparison with the settlers’ previous situation shows that their access to means of production has increased.

¹⁶ The best rates were found in western Santa Catarina (where 74 percent of the ARS had frequent access to technical assistance). The worst were found in southern Bahia (where only 21 percent had such access) and in the Federal District and surrounding areas (where 43 percent had no technical assistance whatsoever).

¹⁷ The state governments – through the *Empresas de Assistência Técnica e Extensão Rural* (State Technical Assistance and Rural Extension Agencies) – also offered technical assistance, especially in the Ceará Sertão, southeastern Pará and Federal District zones. A high number of projects, however, received no assistance.

¹⁸ A wide range of machinery and equipment was included: tractors, harvesting and sowing machinery (both mechanical and manual), small tractors, animal-driven equipment, irrigation equipment, animal-driven carts, lorries and utility vehicles, processing machinery and equipment (for threshing, hulling, shelling, classifying, etc.), animal-raising equipment (animal feed grinders, shredders, storage devices, milking machines, milk coolers, etc.), chainsaws and other equipment. Hoes, sickles and machetes were not counted.

Access to credit

Of the rural worker families interviewed, 93 percent had never had access to credit for financing production before becoming settlers. Moreover, as the availability of financial resources for credit fosters a set of local activities, it also increases the circulation of currency in the municipality. A further consequence is that a direct dialogue is established with the state government authorities, i.e. policy-makers and financial agents.

In the 1998/99 crop season, 66 percent of families interviewed received rural credit, which represents a reasonable amount of coverage, and the average amount was 2 200 reais each.¹⁹ The main source of financial resources (88 percent of the interviewed families who had access to credit) was the INCRA-funded Programa de Crédito Especial para a Reforma Agrária (Special Credit Programme for Agrarian Reform). However, more than half (59 percent) of interviewees who received credit reported difficulties in obtaining it. The main complaint (78 percent) was related to the delay in disbursement which, in agriculture, can significantly undermine the results, e.g. if the money is not available at the time of planting when it is most needed. Several statements collected by the researchers suggested that the credit received by the ARS has a direct repercussion on the dynamics of the local commerce of neighbouring municipalities, where a high number of the settlers buy their goods.

Impacts on sales

With regard to the sale of products, the study showed that the ARS sometimes reproduce pre-existing local situations, without introducing innovations in the marketing channels. In other cases, however, they may create new possibilities or alter existing channels. It must be

¹⁹ There are differences between zones: in the Ceará Sertão, 83 percent of families received credit (however, this zone had the lowest average credit: 553.81 reais (US\$1 = R\$1.98 approx. at that time); in southern Bahia only 43 percent of families received credit (average amount: 1 608.14 reais). The highest average amount was received in Pará: 5 698.00 reais (26 percent).

borne in mind that the poor condition of roads and other negative aspects of the infrastructure have a detrimental effect on marketing.

In all of the zones, intermediaries are very important. The presence of the ARS increased the volume of production and/or introduced new crops, in some cases facilitating the creation of new networks of intermediaries which, even when operating traditionally, can benefit local farming activities.

The study also showed that sales to other settlers play an important role within the ARS, and that the projects may, in some cases, provide a market for the settlers' products, especially when there are large numbers of families.

Marketing and processing through associations have also been experimented in several places, often by establishing new points of sale (farmers' fairs or roadside stands) and sales cooperatives, by implementing small agro-industries, or by creating new brand names for the products sold. These associative enterprises are often an important factor in the sale of products but, in addition, they serve to reaffirm the settlers' social and political identity as well as underlining the success of the settlement experience.²⁰

Impacts on living conditions

Access to land gives families greater stability and enables them to reorganize their family development strategies. In most cases, this leads to an improvement in income and in living conditions, in clear contrast to the poverty and social exclusion that many of the families suffered before entering the settlement projects.

An analysis of income components (or, rather, the capacity to generate income) for the 1998/99 crop season reveals the importance not only of the income derived from the plots in all zones, but also that of other sources of income, such as pensions,

²⁰ One example is a regional cooperative, run with the help of MST in western Santa Catarina, in which commercial, credit and agro-industrial activities (for example, long-lasting milk) have great importance for the settlers' economic perspectives.

and the diverse forms of employment outside the plots. The average percentage for each type of income is 69 percent for income derived from the plot, 14 percent for external employment and 17 percent for social security benefits.

Although the issue of settlers' income has often been raised – to prove both the success and the failure of the land reform settlements – the present study attempted to break down this variable and to obtain a more qualitative measurement of the settlers' living conditions, of their chances of gaining access to goods and services, and of the way they view this new situation and the opportunities it offers.

Comparing their previous living conditions with their current conditions, 91 percent of the settlers interviewed said they considered their situation had improved after arriving in the settlement. A more global analysis would seem to confirm this perception. The Ceará Sertão and the northeastern sugar cane zones (where incomes were below the threshold of poverty in the previous analysis) are among those that had the highest rates of perceived improvement: 95 percent and 92 percent, respectively.

Despite the relatively poor conditions, settlers expressed much hope when they assessed their families' future. Overall, 87 percent of interviewees believed that the future would be better, with very little variation between the zones. As other studies indicate – and the data from the present study confirm – the settlers appear confident about their future; their access to land has given them the prospect of greater long-term stability.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Factors such as the extent of social conflicts in the struggle for land in Brazil, the adoption by social movements of forms of struggle that were effective (such as the collective occupation of land) and the greater concentration of ARS in certain regions – many of whose large properties are undergoing crises in their production systems – all contributed to forcing the

government to carry out expropriations in one or several municipalities. This process gave rise to the zones analysed in the study, some of which are truly “reformed areas”, in contrast with the previous method of isolated expropriations, and created a new paradigm in the regions in which they were established.

As shown in this article, the changes brought about by the existence of the ARS are multiple and depend on the specific contexts in which they arise, the density of the different projects, the history of the settlers and the regional differences in public policy.

It would be safe to say that the establishment of the ARS led to land redistribution and made land tenure possible for rural workers, who usually come from the same region, but it did not drastically alter the overall scenario of land concentration in the zones: the changes in the agrarian structure are only noticeable locally. The ARS are the result of a struggle for the land. They are a point of reference for public policy but they lack infrastructure. For all of these reasons, the settlements may be viewed as starting points for other demands, such as the affirmation of new identities and interests and the establishment of new forms of organization within the projects. Thus, the ARS can bring about changes in the local political scenario, taking the presence of the settlers to political spheres and to electoral campaigns.

In some of the zones analysed, the ARS have caused a reorganization of the rural areas, modifying the landscape, the population distribution patterns and the course of roads and highways. This has led to the formation of new population agglomerations and has changed levels of production, often stimulating the autonomy of districts and even the creation of new districts.

The establishment of the ARS has provided greater stability and shifts in livelihood strategies, which have led to an improvement in the living conditions of the settlers, increasing their buying

power not only of foodstuffs, but also of consumer goods in general, such as home appliances, farming inputs and equipment. In this manner, they bolster local commerce, especially when there is a high concentration of settlers.

In many areas, the settlers have obtained the social and political recognition of other social groups, overcoming the tension that occurred initially, often marked by the impression that the settlers were “foreigners” or “troublemakers” (especially in the areas where the ARS resulted from land occupations). Beyond the economic issues, new social actors have appeared and the dignity of a previously excluded population has been re-established. Many settlers gave testimonials about what it means to be a settler, especially in the areas where there used to be monocultures and the power relations that characterize them.

Within the zones studied, important changes have stemmed from the ARS. Nevertheless, the health services, schools, infrastructure, access to technical assistance and other necessary items are clearly lacking, which indicates inadequate government intervention in the process of agrarian transformation and a marked continuity of the substandard conditions that afflict the Brazilian rural landscape.



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From land-use management to food security

This article proposes the integrated and systematic participatory analysis of food security in a given area as a means of designing a practical and rapid programme and policy decision-making tool. Programmes and policies should consider the human and physical conditions and ensure the equity and sustainability of microcatchment areas in which water is the key resource. The study first looks at the prevailing food situation, examining the local geography, the relationship between population and environment, and access to water and land as preliminary indicators of food vulnerability. It then considers food security and access to and use of agricultural resources from an environmental, social and economic perspective. Finally, it assesses food security on the basis of access and availability, regularity of supply and food safety. These parameters then serve to gauge food vulnerability in an area according to zones, population groups or communities and households.

De l'aménagement du territoire à la sécurité alimentaire

Le présent article propose une analyse participative intégrale et systématique de la sécurité alimentaire dans un territoire donné afin de mettre au point un instrument pratique, rapide et simple facilitant la prise de décisions concernant les programmes et les politiques. Les programmes et les politiques devraient tenir compte de la spécificité des ressources humaines et du territoire et garantir l'équité et la durabilité dans une zone de microbassin versant où l'eau est la principale ressource pour la préservation de la vie. La situation alimentaire dans le territoire est le premier élément analysé dans cette étude qui procède par approximations successives. Elle examine ensuite les caractéristiques géographiques du territoire, les relations entre l'être humain et son environnement et l'accès aux ressources en eaux et en terres, pris comme indicateurs initiaux de la vulnérabilité alimentaire. Elle aborde ensuite la sécurité alimentaire et l'accès aux ressources agricoles (et leur utilisation) du point de vue écologique, social et économique, puis se penche sur les paramètres qui mesurent la sécurité alimentaire: accès, disponibilité, régularité des approvisionnements et sécurité sanitaire des aliments. Sur la base de ces paramètres, l'étude évalue enfin le degré de vulnérabilité alimentaire du territoire en fonction des zones, des groupes/communautés et des familles vulnérables.

De la ordenación territorial a la seguridad alimentaria

L.E. Guillén Dordelly y J. Van Wambeke

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En este artículo se propone un análisis participativo integral y sistémico de la seguridad alimentaria en un territorio determinado con vistas al diseño de un instrumento práctico, rápido y sencillo para la toma de decisiones sobre programas y políticas. Los programas y políticas deberán tomar en consideración la especificidad de las condiciones humanas y territoriales, y garantizar la equidad y la sostenibilidad en una zona de microcuenca en la cual el agua es el recurso esencial para la preservación de la vida. La situación alimentaria imperante en el territorio constituye el primer elemento de un estudio que procede por aproximaciones sucesivas. Se examinan las características geográficas del territorio; las relaciones del ser humano con su entorno, y el acceso a los recursos hídricos y la tierra entendidos como indicadores iniciales de la vulnerabilidad alimentaria. Seguidamente, la seguridad alimentaria y el acceso y uso de los recursos agrícolas se estudian desde el punto de vista ambiental, social y económico. Se analizan posteriormente los parámetros que miden la seguridad alimentaria: acceso, disponibilidad, regularidad de suministro e inocuidad de los alimentos. Según estos parámetros se evalúa finalmente el grado de vulnerabilidad alimentaria en función de las zonas, grupos/comunidades y familias.

INTRODUCCIÓN

La planificación de los proyectos de seguridad alimentaria en beneficio de las comunidades rurales se orienta generalmente hacia acciones específicas, limitadas al área productiva, y pone énfasis en el mejoramiento de la producción y productividad, y por lo tanto en la generación de ingresos. Poca atención reciben en estos proyectos las consideraciones ambientales, y el ser humano suele ser considerado como objeto y no como sujeto de la seguridad alimentaria.

Los efectos de los proyectos que se llevan a cabo bajo estos criterios son limitados en el tiempo, y criticables debido a su excesiva orientación al aprovechamiento de los recursos naturales como fuente generadora de ingresos. La mayoría de los proyectos de seguridad alimentaria que se ejecutan en la actualidad responden a este patrón.

La inseguridad alimentaria¹ se considera mayormente un asunto de orden económico que resulta de la falta o de la escasez de ingresos de las familias para adquirir los alimentos; en consecuencia, se analiza de preferencia el parámetro «acceso a los alimentos» al estudiar los ingresos agrícolas. Este planteamiento toma en cuenta uno de los factores de producción –la tierra– entendido solamente como generador de capital y trabajo, pero no atiende al equilibrio que debería existir en el espacio rural entre el hombre y el medio ambiente.

Tres autores (L.E. Guillén Dordelly, C. Mijares y J. Van Wambeke, 2004) han elaborado una propuesta metodológica denominada «visión sistémica de la seguridad alimentaria», que se basa en

¹ «Existe seguridad alimentaria cuando todas las personas tienen en todo momento acceso físico y económico a suficientes alimentos, inocuos y nutritivos, para satisfacer sus necesidades alimentarias y sus preferencias en cuanto a los alimentos a fin de llevar una vida activa y sana.» (FAO, 2000).

una experiencia de campo llevada a cabo en el asentamiento campesino «Agua Viva» del municipio Peña, estado de Yaracuy (Venezuela). El análisis se concentró en la capacidad de acumulación de los productores en función de sus ingresos, y en la seguridad alimentaria de las familias. Se tomaron en cuenta los parámetros relacionados con la seguridad alimentaria en general, pero la medición de ésta se efectuó principalmente con arreglo a la capacidad de acceso a los alimentos en función del ingreso; se propuso también un método para caracterizar la disponibilidad de alimentos según la cuantificación del aporte nutricional por sistema de producción (adecuación del sistema de producción a las necesidades de la familia).

Las reflexiones y discusiones sobre este método llevaron a conceptualizar el acceso y gestión/uso de los recursos naturales como elementos determinantes de la consecución de la seguridad alimentaria sostenible. La presente propuesta incorpora por ende el ordenamiento territorial, y considera la microcuenca hidrográfica como la unidad de planificación.

La Reunión de Ministros de medio ambiente de América Latina y el Caribe de 2003 formuló las Iniciativas latinoamericanas y caribeñas para el desarrollo sostenible; éstas identificaron una serie de metas orientadoras y propósitos indicativos entre los que figuran la diversidad biológica (aumento de los terrenos boscosos y áreas protegidas); la gestión de los recursos hídricos (eficiencia del uso del agua en la agricultura y para el consumo humano, fortalecimiento del marco institucional para el manejo integrado de las cuencas, mejoramiento de la calidad del agua); y la implementación de planes y políticas de ordenación territorial a partir de un enfoque de desarrollo sostenible. Los propósitos indicativos ambientales sirven de orientación para la seguridad alimentaria, tal como se propone en este estudio.

El enfoque que conduce de la ordenación territorial al logro de la seguridad alimentaria constituye un instrumento de

trabajo rápido y sencillo que contribuye a mejorar las intervenciones territoriales² de los programas de seguridad alimentaria partiendo, a fines prácticos, de una unidad territorial, que en el caso de este estudio es la microcuenca. El «enfoque de microcuenca» es de tipo integral y pone de manifiesto la interacción entre los aspectos ambientales, sociales y económicos del sistema agrario. Estos aspectos garantizan la reproducción de la fuerza de trabajo en una situación de seguridad alimentaria sostenible. Los componentes del sistema objeto del estudio influyen tanto de forma aislada como en conjunto en el estado nutricional de la población, y pueden por consiguiente causar inseguridad alimentaria y vulnerabilidad.

La ordenación territorial facilita una gestión armónica de los componentes del sistema mediante acciones planificadas, coordinadas y ejecutadas por agentes que entran en relación recíproca en el espacio rural. Por ordenación territorial se entiende también la regulación de los asentamientos y de las actividades económicas y sociales, y el desarrollo general del territorio. Los objetivos fundamentales de un desarrollo integral son el bienestar de la población, el uso óptimo y conservación de los recursos naturales y la protección y valorización del ambiente. La seguridad alimentaria es el producto de la conservación del ambiente y de la sostenibilidad territorial.

PLANTEAMIENTO SOCIAL DE LOS RECURSOS NATURALES

La familia y las comunidades juegan un papel importante en la transformación del territorio, pero al mismo tiempo aseguran la preservación y permanencia de los recursos naturales, y por consiguiente de la seguridad alimentaria. La familia es el sujeto (y no el objeto) de la seguridad alimentaria.

Existe una relación directa entre el acceso a los recursos (la tierra y el agua),

² El territorio se define como el espacio en el cual se desarrollan las relaciones sociales; el territorio –y su geografía– están determinados históricamente y socialmente.

la seguridad alimentaria y la explotación de los sistemas de producción. Estos últimos afectan a los patrones de uso del suelo, las prácticas agrícolas y la preservación del medio ambiente³.

El estudio de la microcuenca puso de manifiesto las estrechas relaciones entre uso y manejo de los recursos naturales; las repercusiones ambientales del uso de los recursos naturales y la posibilidad de medirlas fácilmente; la integración de los objetivos de producción con la protección de los recursos naturales; la posibilidad de establecer un proceso productivo organizado; y las interacciones entre diversas instituciones que prestan servicios en las comunidades.

El enfoque territorial identifica además cuatro aspectos de la seguridad alimentaria que permiten conocer la vulnerabilidad de la población:

- el acceso a los alimentos y a los recursos naturales (la tierra y el agua), y la generación de ingresos familiares;
- la disponibilidad de alimentos para la familia mediante la producción de autoconsumo realizada en la parcela, y la oferta local de alimentos;
- las variaciones de los suministros según los calendarios de producción; las formas de adquisición de suministros y el mercadeo/comercialización de los productos;
- la utilización biológica, es decir el buen manejo/manipulación de los alimentos y la inocuidad de los éstos (estudio de las técnicas de manejo de los cultivos, nivel de educación alimentaria y disponibilidad de agua potable en la zona).

Objetivo del enfoque

El objetivo del enfoque del estudio es la caracterización de la situación de seguridad alimentaria en la microcuenca a través

³ El acceso a la tierra es un factor fundamental de la erradicación de la inseguridad alimentaria y de la pobreza rural, y fue reconocido como tal por los jefes de estado y gobierno en la Cumbre Mundial sobre la Alimentación. En el Plan de la Acción de la Cumbre se observó que la mayoría de las poblaciones pobres tiene un acceso inadecuado a la tierra y a otros medios de producción.

de la detección de *a*) los parámetros de vulnerabilidad; *b*) las zonas vulnerables; *c*) los grupos (comunidades) vulnerables, y *d*) las familias vulnerables. Este desglose permitirá la formulación de propuestas de consolidación fundadas en un reordenamiento coherente del territorio con la finalidad de preservar los recursos y conseguir la seguridad alimentaria sostenible.

Aplicación

Se deben utilizar todos los recursos disponibles y garantizar la participación de los interesados, tanto cuando se recopila como cuando se elabora la información.

El ámbito de aplicación del estudio está determinado generalmente por las políticas y programas de cada país, pero para la selección de la microcuenca se deben considerar criterios como la preservación de las fuentes de agua, la presión sobre los recursos naturales, el grado de deterioro de los recursos naturales, la facilidad para implementar y ampliar el trabajo, la «visibilidad» y representatividad de los agentes y la facilidad de acceso a la tierra y el agua.

El tiempo estimado de las intervenciones dependerá de las dimensiones de la microcuenca. El equipo de trabajo encargado de las intervenciones debe ser interdisciplinario, ya que se requiere del aporte de técnicos agrícolas y forestales, geógrafos, especialistas en comunicación, sociólogos y nutricionistas.

El acceso de la población a los recursos sigue patrones de uso y de idoneidad cultural; la influencia de dichos patrones también se observa en la explotación de los sistemas de producción y en las interrelaciones sociales. Las interrelaciones sociales de explotación generan resultados que se miden según los parámetros de la seguridad alimentaria, y permiten agrupar a las familias de acuerdo con su nivel de vulnerabilidad (Figura 1).

Un estudio en dos etapas –analítico y sintético– lleva gradualmente al examen de la situación de seguridad alimentaria en el territorio. La etapa de análisis es una

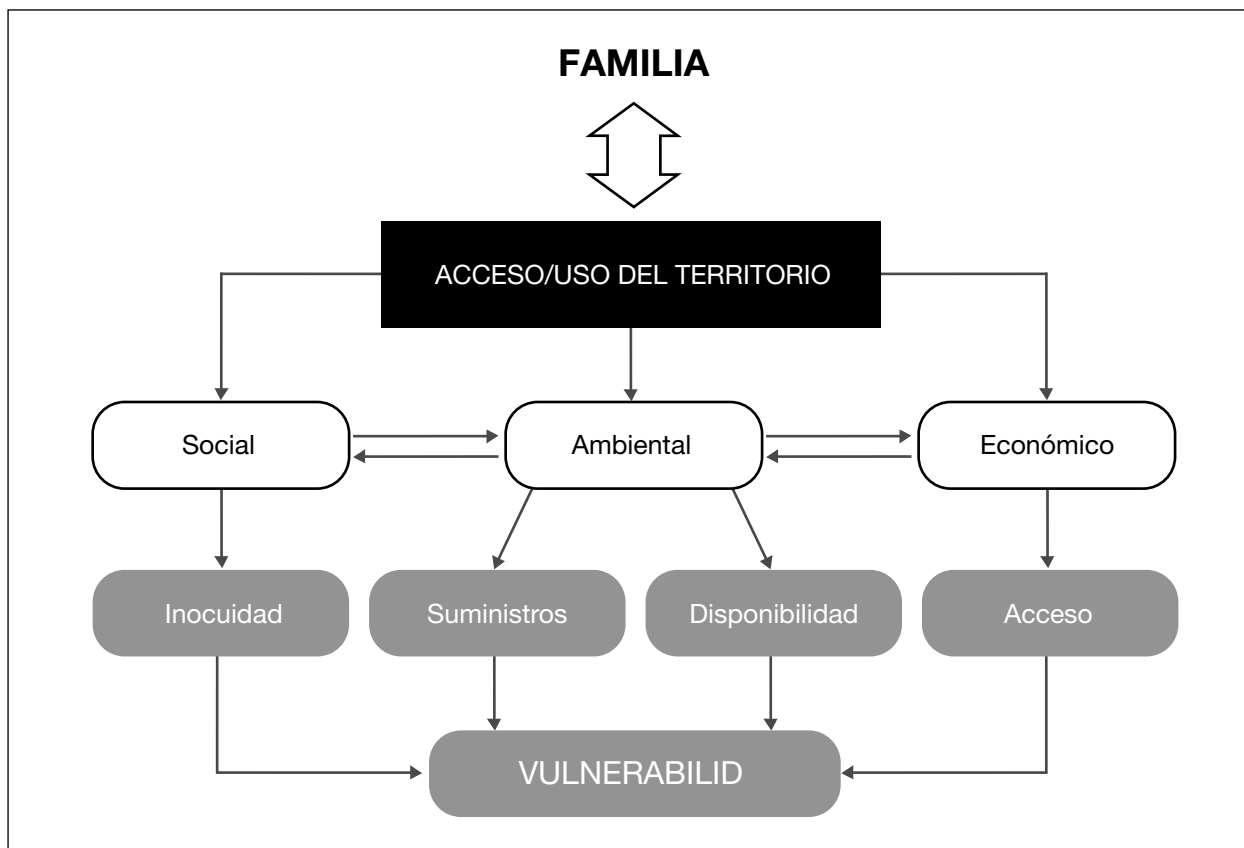


FIGURA 1

Diagrama de las relaciones entre familia, ambiente, medio social y económico y vulnerabilidad

primera aproximación; la de síntesis, una caracterización más detallada.

DE LA DETECCIÓN DE LOS NIVELES DE VULNERABILIDAD A LA SEGURIDAD ALIMENTARIA

La seguridad alimentaria en el territorio

En esta etapa se parte del análisis del territorio de la microcuenca, y de las relaciones que se establecen al acceder a los recursos naturales, para llegar finalmente a una visión general de la seguridad alimentaria.

Inicialmente se lleva a cabo la recolección y análisis de información mediante material secundario (mapas, censos, etc.) para obtener una referencia acerca de la superficie, geología y clima de la zona. Estas informaciones se complementan con datos específicos sobre vegetación (cobertura y deforestación, etc.), suelos (tipos, erosión, topografía, prácticas de conservación, uso de plaguicidas, etc.), hidrología (aguas superficiales y aguas profundas, pozos, sistemas y formas de riego, contaminación,

deforestación en cabeceras/nacientes, etc.), empleo (zonas principales de desarrollo, vialidad, infraestructura, servicios, asentamientos, actividades agrícolas y no agrícolas, etc.). Estos conocimientos permitirán definir el ámbito de las acciones que se pondrán en práctica.

En el estudio se identifican los agentes (productores, instituciones, intermediarios, trabajadores agrícolas y no agrícolas, etc.) y se revisan las relaciones internas y externas entre los agentes; los conflictos y competencias; los tipos de programas y proyectos que desarrollan las instituciones en la zona; y se propone un enfoque histórico⁴ que permitirá conocer las

⁴ El enfoque histórico aplicado al análisis del sistema territorial, definido como «modalidad de organización social en función de [la] relación [del grupo social] con el medio ambiente», es fundamental para conocer la visión de los agentes del mundo en que viven y sus estrategias de supervivencia. El objetivo del enfoque histórico es comprender las causas actuales de la problemática territorial, del acceso y uso de la tierra y de los demás recursos naturales, y las tendencias futuras. El estudio histórico permitirá sentar las bases de posibles soluciones e intervenciones que deben discutirse en una mesa de negociación.

transformaciones que ha sufrido el territorio por la intervención del hombre en su búsqueda de la seguridad alimentaria.

Seguidamente, se procede a una zonificación de la microcuenca con la finalidad de obtener una visión homogénea del paisaje y conocer con más detalle y más rápidamente la realidad de cada agente. La zonificación puede efectuarse «por pisos» (por estratos), por comunidades, por uso potencial del suelo o por elementos fisiográficos (divisores de aguas, áreas de recogida o captación y drenaje)⁵.

Luego, se construye la matriz de acceso a los recursos de tierras y aguas para cada una de las zonas identificadas, partiendo del desglose demográfico de la población de la microcuenca. Esta matriz proporcionará un panorama general de la inseguridad alimentaria⁶.

Evaluación de la seguridad alimentaria en el territorio

Basándose en la información recogida, se procede a la evaluación de la seguridad alimentaria en la microcuenca (se estima que, dependiendo de la edad y sexo y del nivel de actividad física, las necesidades energéticas de la población son de 2 000 a 2 350 kcal/día/persona)⁷. En cada zona y comunidad, se seleccionan familias con y sin acceso a los recursos naturales con el fin de conformar una muestra. Indudablemente, las familias sin agua y sin tierra son consideradas vulnerables desde un principio, pero estas familias son igualmente encuestadas para determinar sus ingresos extraagrícolas y su nivel de vulnerabilidad. En cuanto a las familias con acceso a los recursos, se seleccionan aquellas cuyos sistemas de producción son los más representativos.

⁵ La zonificación por elementos fisiográficos resultó exitosa en un proyecto realizado en El Salvador. Véase *Agricultura sostenible en zonas de laderas*. Proyecto FAO/CENTA/Paises Bajos GCP/ELS/005/NET, 2002, por J. Van Wambeke.

⁶ La inseguridad alimentaria tiene múltiples causas. Existe inseguridad alimentaria cuando las personas están desnutridas porque no disponen los productos necesarios para la producción de alimentos, o cuando carecen de acceso social o económico a los alimentos, o cuando el consumo de alimentos es insuficiente. La malnutrición puede ser tanto por déficit como por exceso de consumo de alimentos.

Tras la determinación del ingreso familiar, se investigan los parámetros de seguridad alimentaria, a saber, acceso, disponibilidad, estabilidad e inocuidad; estos parámetros permitirán establecer el nivel de vulnerabilidad⁸ de la población.

Determinación del ingreso familiar

Es importante considerar todos los ingresos del núcleo familiar, ya que los no agrícolas juegan también un papel importante en la seguridad alimentaria. En muchos casos, el ingreso no agrícola solapa los resultados de un sistema productivo y permite que las familias logren cubrir sus necesidades mínimas.

Para conocer el ingreso agrícola, se parte del uso de la tierra y el agua y de un análisis técnico-económico de los sistemas de producción referido a la identificación de los diferentes sistemas predominantes y representativos de la zona. Se recoge información sobre producción de la parcela, volúmenes de producción, mercados, tiempos de utilización y tipos de mano de obra.

Medición de la vulnerabilidad

Los ingresos familiares agrícolas aportan cierta información sobre la situación de seguridad alimentaria en la microcuenca referida solo al parámetro de acceso, pero no constituyen una referencia absoluta; el análisis (L.E. Guillén, C. Mijares y J. Van Wambeke, 2004) se ha realizado utilizando como referencia el umbral de reproducción simple (URS) y la canasta alimentaria (CA) (Recuadro 1).

⁷ Estas cifras equivalen a la ingesta mínima de alimentos determinada por la FAO. Las personas expuestas a la inseguridad alimentaria son aquellas cuya ingesta de alimentos está por debajo de sus necesidades calóricas (energéticas) mínimas. Se encuentran asimismo expuestas a la inseguridad alimentaria las personas que presentan trastornos físicos causados por carencias energéticas o de nutrientes que resultan de una alimentación insuficiente o desequilibrada o de la incapacidad del organismo de utilizar eficazmente los alimentos a causa de una infección o enfermedad.

⁸ El nivel de vulnerabilidad de una persona, hogar o grupo está determinado por su exposición a los factores de riesgo y su capacidad para afrontar o resistir situaciones problemáticas.

RECUADRO 1

Medición del acceso a los alimentos según el ingreso agrícola

La comparación de los ingresos obtenidos en los distintos sistemas de producción, referidos al umbral de reproducción simple (URS) y a la canasta alimentaria, permite distinguir tres tipos de familias con arreglo a su acceso a los alimentos y su situación de seguridad alimentaria.

Tipo I. *Familias con acceso bajo a los recursos naturales:* sus ingresos están por debajo del URS y del acceso a los alimentos de la canasta alimentaria; estas familias realizan sistemas de producción que no remuneran adecuadamente el trabajo y se encuentran por lo tanto en una situación alimentaria crítica.

Tipo II. *Familias con acceso medio a los recursos naturales:* sus ingresos están en un punto intermedio entre el URS y el acceso a los alimentos de la canasta alimentaria; estas familias realizan sistemas de producción que generan ingresos que les permiten acceder a los alimentos de la canasta pero que no llegan a cubrir la totalidad de sus necesidades elementales ni garantizan la reproducción de la familia.

Tipo III. *Familias con acceso alto a los recursos naturales:* sus ingresos están sobre el URS y garantizan tanto la reproducción simple como el acceso a los alimentos de la canasta; estas familias se encuentran en una situación de mayor seguridad alimentaria.

Las familias que componen la muestra fueron entrevistadas para asignar un puntaje a los indicadores de cada uno de los parámetros. La suma de los puntos es igual a 100 (Recuadros 2 a 6).

RECUADRO 2

Indicadores de medición del parámetro Acceso

Tierra

(10 puntos)

Derechos de uso (con/sin)

Título de propiedad (con/sin)

¿Existen conflictos por el acceso a la tierra?

¿Son los encuestados agricultores sin tierras?

Agua

(10 puntos)

Calidad (buena/mala)

Regularidad del suministro

¿Existen conflictos por el acceso al agua?

¿Existen fuentes en las cercanías?

- familias con vulnerabilidad baja (60 a 100 puntos);
- familias con vulnerabilidad media (30 a 60 puntos);
- familias con vulnerabilidad alta (0 a 30 puntos).

Los niveles de vulnerabilidad total se pueden representar mediante un triángulo en el que los parámetros de estabilidad e inocuidad se adicionan. Cada parámetro deberá tener un valor comprendido entre 0 y 100 (Figura 3).

b) El parámetro que determina mayormente la situación de vulnerabilidad alimentaria (que resulta de la suma de los puntajes de los indicadores), y orientar las acciones correctivas correspondientes.

CONCLUSIÓN

El enfoque de ordenación territorial facilita la alerta temprana tanto en las situaciones de emergencia alimentaria como en las de emergencia ambiental, y permite conocer rápidamente las necesidades que es preciso satisfacer en ambas.

La metodología para estudiar los sistemas agrarios y el territorio procede de lo general a lo particular, y del análisis a la síntesis, y

RESULTADOS

Los datos y cifras obtenidos permiten conocer:

a) Los niveles de vulnerabilidad (inseguridad) (Figura 2) alimentaria en la microcuenca; estos niveles se calculan sumando los puntajes correspondientes a cada familia:

RECUADRO 3

Indicadores sociales (10 puntos)

Agua potable (sí/no): calidad; regularidad del suministro
Edad y sexo: ¿es nucleada la familia?
Miembros de la familia: número total, número de niños
Servicios (todos/alguno [¿cuál?]/ninguno)
Educación: nivel; educación de los padres; índice de analfabetismo
Vivienda (sí/no): propia; condiciones
Asistencia técnica (sí/no): ¿para el hombre?; ¿para la mujer?
Crédito (sí/no): ¿para el hombre?; ¿para la mujer?

Indicadores económicos

(10 puntos)

Total de ingresos anuales. ¿Son estos ingresos sólo ingresos agrícolas?
¿Acceden los encuestados al URS con los solos ingresos agrícolas?
Total de otros ingresos anuales. ¿En concepto de qué?
¿Sirve el ingreso no agrícola de complemento para acceder al URS?; ¿para acceder a los alimentos de la canasta alimentaria?

RECUADRO 4

Indicadores de medición del parámetro Disponibilidad de los alimentos (20 puntos)

Disponibilidad de alimentos dentro de la parcela: autoconsumo (sí/no); monocultivo; disponibilidad de alimentos diversificados; huertos
Disponibilidad de alimentos fuera de la parcela: ¿es la oferta de alimentos continua y variada?
¿Están los alimentos disponibles en la comunidad misma o en las cercanías?
¿Cuántas calorías proporciona la cosecha?
¿Cuántas calorías proporcionan los alimentos que provienen de las cercanías?

logra una definición progresiva clara de la situación imperante en la microcuenca, en la comunidad y en la familia, tanto en este orden como en orden inverso.

Las propuestas de intervención se pueden basar en la ocupación actual o

RECUADRO 5

Indicadores de medición del parámetro Estabilidad (20 puntos)

¿Son estables los ingresos agrícolas?
¿Son estables los ingresos no agrícolas?
¿Se producen alimentos durante todo el año?
Cuándo existen, ¿son los mercados cercanos y seguros?
¿Se practica la comercialización directa?
¿Son verbales o escritos los contratos que se estipulan?
¿Existen intermediarios comerciales?

RECUADRO 6

Indicadores de medición del parámetro Inocuidad (20 puntos)

¿Se usan productos agroquímicos? ¿En qué forma? ¿Se proporciona capacitación para este uso?
¿Cuál es la calidad del agua de consumo y del agua de riego?
¿Se adoptan buenas prácticas agrícolas?
¿Se practica la conservación del suelo?
¿Se practica un manejo de cultivos adecuado?
¿Se proporciona capacitación y asistencia para el manejo de cultivos?
¿Existen áreas de reserva forestal? ¿Se practica la conservación y la reforestación de estas áreas?
¿Se conservan y protegen las fuentes de agua?
¿Contamina el usuario el agua? (sí/no/a veces)

en comparaciones de usos y manejos potenciales del territorio (mediante zonificación agroecológica y agro-socioeconómica). Los planes de desarrollo del territorio se pueden fomentar o reorientar gracias a la participación de los interesados con el objeto de conseguir la seguridad alimentaria.

Uno de los antecedentes para este estudio ha sido que el desconocimiento del manejo adecuado de los recursos naturales y de las repercusiones negativas que la actividad del hombre puede tener en la naturaleza son factores que comprometen el desarrollo rural y la seguridad alimentaria de las generaciones futuras.

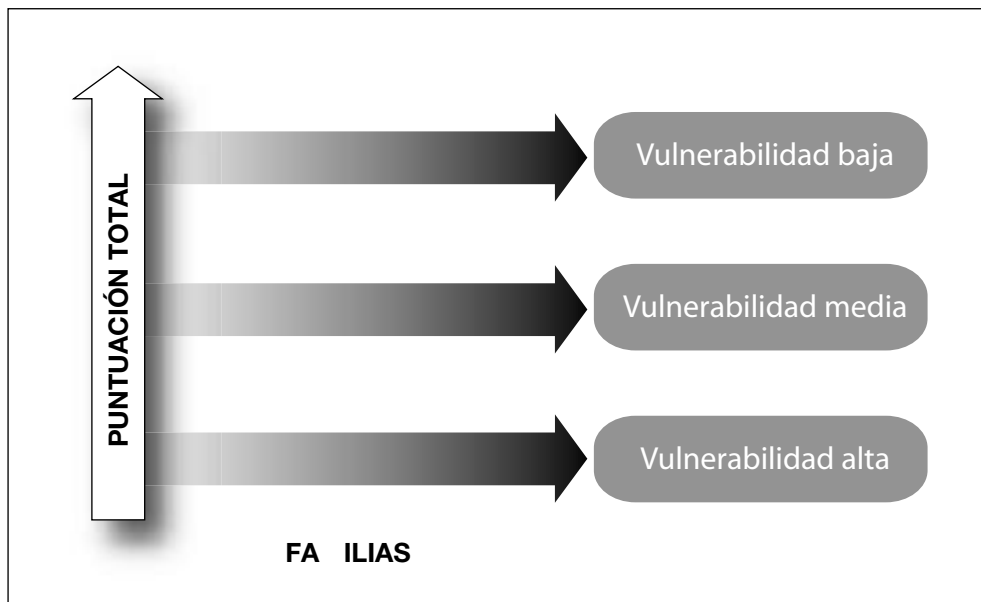


FIGURA 2
Puntuación total de vulnerabilidad de las familias



FIGURA 3
Niveles de vulnerabilidad de la familias

El estudio ha facilitado el proceso de toma de decisiones y ha contribuido a promover un uso racional de los recursos económicos y humanos; ha proporcionado un método para conocer los niveles de vulnerabilidad alimentaria y las tipologías de comunidades y familias; además, ha facilitado el diseño de programas de desarrollo más justos que toman en consideración la situación real de los beneficiarios.

Debido a la vulnerabilidad de las prácticas agrícolas, la consecución de la seguridad

alimentaria rural es un asunto complejo que depende de muchos factores que no son controlados por el hombre. El acceso a los recursos naturales –y su uso adecuado– son esenciales aun cuando no signifiquen necesariamente el logro de la seguridad alimentaria.

El parámetro de acceso, que da la medida primordial de la seguridad alimentaria, comprende tanto el acceso a los recursos naturales (tierra y agua) como a los alimentos. El acceso a estos

últimos está determinado por los ingresos y es consecuencia del uso de los recursos naturales.

La experiencia en el campo ha permitido a las familias adoptar estrategias de reducción de los riesgos, por ejemplo, el trabajo no agrícola, que proporciona ingresos complementarios para la adquisición de alimentos cuando las cosechas son malas.

Los indicadores sociales como la educación y la capacitación son fundamentales para el estudio de la seguridad alimentaria. Para los grupos-objetivo, la formación que proporciona la escuela básica debe comprender, además de las asignaturas habituales, la educación ambiental y la educación en alimentación y nutrición. Para los técnicos u otros agentes cuya visión del desarrollo rural suele ser meramente productivista, la educación en seguridad alimentaria es igualmente imprescindible.

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Le rôle des institutions locales dans la réduction de la vulnérabilité aux catastrophes naturelles et dans la promotion des moyens d'existence durables

En 2003/04, le Service des institutions rurales et de la participation de la FAO a entrepris une étude globale intitulée Le rôle des institutions locales dans la réduction de la vulnérabilité aux catastrophes naturelles. Ses objectifs étaient les suivants: a) recueillir et comparer des données d'expérience et des preuves sur le terrain pour fournir des orientations aux décideurs sur la manière dont les organisations locales pourraient au mieux assumer la responsabilité de la gestion des risques de catastrophe et b) élaborer des stratégies visant à incorporer la prévention et la réponse aux catastrophes dans les programmes de développement rural durable à long terme. Cette étude repose sur l'hypothèse qu'une bonne compréhension des capacités institutionnelles existantes, ainsi que des avantages comparatifs des différents interlocuteurs, est le critère fondamental qui permettra de passer d'une politique de réaction aux catastrophes à une politique de prévention et de préparation à long terme aux risques de catastrophe ainsi qu'à son intégration dans la planification ordinaire du développement rural.

Une analyse exhaustive de matériel complémentaire et de neuf études de cas (Afrique du Sud, Argentine, Burkina Faso, Honduras, Mozambique, Niger, Philippines, République islamique d'Iran et Viet Nam), a porté sur les enseignements pratiques tirés de l'expérience au niveau local avant, pendant et après des catastrophes naturelles. Un atelier interrégional s'est ensuite tenu à Rome pour analyser et comparer ces données.

La función de las instituciones locales en la reducción de la vulnerabilidad ante las catástrofes naturales y en el fomento de medios de vida sostenibles

En 2003/04, el Servicio de Instituciones y Extensión Rurales de la FAO inició un amplio estudio sobre la función de las instituciones locales en la reducción de la vulnerabilidad ante las catástrofes naturales. Sus objetivos consistían en: a) recopilar y comparar experiencias y datos sobre el terreno con objeto de orientar a los responsables de la formulación de políticas sobre la mejor forma de dotar a las organizaciones locales de los medios necesarios para gestionar los riesgos de catástrofes; y b) elaborar estrategias para incorporar actividades de respuesta y prevención de desastres dentro de las estrategias de desarrollo rural sostenible a largo plazo. En el estudio se partió de la base de que un buen conocimiento de las capacidades institucionales existentes, así como de las ventajas comparativas de las diferentes partes implicadas en la gestión de riesgos de catástrofes era un requisito fundamental para pasar de forma satisfactoria de operaciones de socorro en respuesta a emergencias a la preparación y prevención de riesgos de catástrofes a largo plazo y su integración en la planificación ordinaria del desarrollo rural.

El análisis exhaustivo del material accesorio y de nueve estudios de casos (Argentina, Burkina Faso, Filipinas, Honduras, Mozambique, Níger, la República Islámica del Irán, Sudáfrica y Viet Nam) se centró en las enseñanzas prácticas extraídas de ejemplos de actuación local antes, durante y después de situaciones de peligro natural. Se celebró luego un taller interregional en Roma que sirvió de foro de análisis y comparación.

The role of local institutions in reducing vulnerability to natural disasters and in promoting sustainable livelihoods¹

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In 2003/04, the FAO Rural Institutions and Participation Service initiated a comprehensive study entitled The role of local-level institutions in reducing vulnerability to natural disasters. Its objectives were (a) to gather and compare experiences and field-based evidence in order to provide guidance to policy-makers on how local organizations could best be empowered in disaster risk management (DRM) and (b) to elaborate strategies for incorporating disaster prevention and response activities into long-term sustainable rural development strategies. The study built on the basic assumption that a sound understanding of existing institutional capacities, and of the comparative advantages of different actors in DRM, are key requirements for a successful shift from reactive emergency relief operations towards long-term disaster risk prevention and preparedness as well as for their integration into regular rural development planning.

A comprehensive analysis of secondary material and nine case studies (Argentina, Burkina Faso, Honduras, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mozambique, the Niger, the Philippines, South Africa and Viet Nam) focused on practical lessons learned from local action before, during and after situations of natural disasters. An interregional workshop was then held in Rome as a forum for analysis and comparison.

CONTEXT

Increasing impact and frequency of natural disasters

Global data indicate that, in the last decade, natural hazards have occurred more frequently than in the past and have been more destructive. Weather-related hazards continue to increase, from an annual average of 200 per year between 1993 and 1997, to 331 per year between 1998 and 2002. Although reported global deaths from natural disasters have fallen (24 500 people were reported killed in 2002 against an annual average of 62 000 in the previous

decade), the number of people reported to be affected is increasing dramatically (608 million people in 2002 compared with an annual average of 200 million in the previous decade).²

Development and disaster risk management are closely related

The relationship between development and disaster risk management is clearly described in the recent United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report on disaster risk reduction (UNDP, 2003): about 75 percent of the world's population live in areas affected at least once between 1980

¹ This article is a summary of a comprehensive report published by the same authors. The report is available at http://www.fao.org/sd/dim_pe4/docs/pe4_041001d1_en.doc.

² IFRC, 2003. Numbers do not include those killed or affected by war- or conflict-related famine and disease.

and 2000 by earthquakes, tropical cyclones, floods or drought. While only 11 percent of the people exposed to natural disasters live in countries that were classified according to the UNDP human development index (HDI) as countries with a low HDI, these countries account for more than 53 percent of the total recorded deaths. Figures show that there is a clear link between development status and disaster impact; there is also evidence that disaster risk accumulates historically through inappropriate development interventions. Disaster reduction policies should therefore include a twofold aim to “enable societies to be resilient to natural hazards and ensure that development efforts do not increase vulnerability to those hazards” (UN/ISDR, 2004).

The International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) reflects a shift in focus from hazard protection to risk management and provides a framework for complementary action on the part of different United Nations (UN) agencies involved in disaster reduction. It aims to build disaster-resilient communities by promoting increased awareness of the importance of disaster reduction as an integral component of sustainable development. The promotion of public commitment to DRM is one of the four main objectives of the ISDR. Increased importance is given to socio-economic vulnerability as a key risk factor, underlining the need for wider participation of local communities in disaster risk reduction activities.

FAO's contribution to DRM

FAO has a crucial role in DRM. The vast majority of natural disasters occur in rural areas and threaten agricultural production and food security in particular. The 1996 World Food Summit (WFS) Plan of Action stresses the need to develop efficient emergency response mechanisms and recommends that governments involve communities, local authorities and institutions [...] “in implementing emergency operations to better identify and reach populations and areas at greatest risk”

(Objective 5.3. FAO, 1998). In the same spirit, the WFS Plan of Action recommends that governments “strengthen linkages between relief operations and development programmes [...] so that they are mutually supportive and facilitate the transition from relief to development” (Objective 5.4. FAO, 1998).

The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) Plan of Implementation reiterates the importance of the issue and calls for action at all levels for an integrated, multihazard, inclusive approach to address vulnerability, risk assessment and disaster management, including prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery (UN, 2002).

FAO's work on “The role of local-level institutions in reducing vulnerability to natural disasters” was initiated in 2002 with the objective of reporting on experiences and gathering field-based evidence in order to provide guidance to policy-makers on how local organizations could best be empowered in DRM and to elaborate strategies for incorporating disaster prevention and response activities into long-term sustainable rural development strategies.

As part of this activity, FAO tackles DRM from an institutional perspective within the context of rural development and decentralization. The approach builds on the basic assumption that a sound understanding of existing institutional capacities and possible gaps, and of the comparative advantages of different actors in DRM, particularly at decentralized levels, are key requirements for a successful shift from reactive emergency relief operations towards long-term disaster risk prevention and preparedness and their integration into regular rural development planning.

The first phase of the programme activity focused on a comparative study on the role of local institutions in reducing vulnerability to natural hazards. The study included a comprehensive analysis of secondary material; nine case studies in different countries (Argentina, Burkina Faso, Honduras, the Islamic Republic of Iran,

Mozambique, the Niger, the Philippines, South Africa and Viet Nam), focusing on lessons learned from local action before, during and after natural disasters; and a workshop for a comparative analysis of the case studies (31 March–2 April 2004).

FRAMEWORKS AND STRENGTHS OF KEY ACTORS IN DRM

Case study findings and workshop discussions confirmed the basic hypothesis that locally organized preventive action as well as responsive action to disasters could be very powerful in limiting damage and losses, and that both are crucial to complement higher-level activities in emergencies. They also confirmed that what is lacking is a clear understanding of local experiences and knowledge, and concrete guidance on how to strengthen the role of local government and community-based organizations in DRM and improve their methods of communication and active interaction. The data and workshop discussions indicated that local institutions and organizations are key actors with comparative strengths in several areas. Local institutions derive their strengths from proximity, responsiveness to social pressures and adaptation. However, the evaluation of comparative strengths should include the additional considerations outlined below.

- **Local institutions need the appropriate frameworks and an enabling environment to function.** Local actors often act without a mandate from the central level. Concrete and effective action at the local level requires such a mandate and a revenue system that also allows for resource mobilization at local level. The central administration/government is the key actor in policy formulation. DRM requires a combination of top-down and bottom-up approaches to reduce risk and make disaster response and rehabilitation more effective.

Effective coordination systems benefit from decentralized governance, once clearly defined roles of local government are in place. Critical aspects include:

- (i) devolution of responsibilities;
 - (ii) appropriate budget allocations;
 - (iii) institutions at different levels and in different sectors that are mutually supportive (vertical and horizontal coordination);
 - (iv) clear definition of tasks;
 - (v) strong partnerships with civil society and the private sector; and
 - (vi) integration with sectoral development plans.
- **The functioning and comparative strengths of local institutions depend upon the type and scale of natural disasters.** There is a threshold beyond which local institutions are no longer able to prepare for and respond effectively to a disaster. While recurrent natural disasters are better managed at the local level, exceptional events also require support from the national/local government and international community.
Some elements of natural hazard management, in particular agricultural risk adaptation practices, require a combination of institutional capacity building and technical assistance or transfer of technology practices. This fact underlines the important link between DRM and agricultural extension.
 - **Integration with natural resource management and long-term rural development, particularly in the areas of land use and watershed management.** Natural disasters are often a consequence of inappropriate natural resource management and there is often a clash between local DRM strategies and practices and national development policies strategies. These issues need to be addressed at the central government level and require negotiation and participation at local level.

Comparative strengths of local communities in DRM

Social capital is the key factor in ensuring immediate responses to disasters (saving lives and moving people to safer grounds, providing emergency food and shelter) and it also has an important role in the rehabilitation phase (e.g. credit and mutual

support in reconstruction work), especially when there is no formal system in place.

Where there is no official coordinating mechanism, the local community carries out all rescue and relief functions via its informal networks. Emergency relief operations can facilitate the recognition of the role of local social capital by:

- a) allocating roles and responsibilities in the distribution of relief goods and provision of relief services;
- b) identifying policy and legislation gaps;
- c) providing local and national government support to develop normative frameworks that would capitalize on local informal networks.

However, spontaneous initiatives related to the prevention of and preparedness for disasters and risk are rare. Mitigation measures normally require support from formal institutions. Adaptation strategies for dealing with recurrent small-scale hazards are common but extreme events are often perceived as “acts of God” and no preventive measure is taken.

Comparative strengths of local governments

The overall emerging pattern is that local governments are the key actors in:

- **monitoring of risk and vulnerability:** pre-disaster vulnerability assessments and emergency needs assessments, early warning systems (dissemination of alerts requires that the message is understood by various users and that there is community involvement/ownership);
- **contingency planning and coordination of emergency operations:** setting up local coordination bodies for evacuation, timely planning for the distribution of relief goods, health services, transport and planning of rehabilitation;
- **integration of DRM components into natural resource management plans;**
- **development of horizontal partnerships** with the private sector, non-governmental organizations and community groups, and establishment of intermunicipal agreements.

A preliminary overview of the comparative strengths of different local institutions in

DRM *vis-à-vis* higher level institutions – as emerged from the case studies – is summarized in the Annex table, pp. 52–55.

Weaknesses of local institutions in DRM

Despite the comparative strengths of local organizations in DRM, the studies also identified shortcomings of local institutions. Local institutions are often not adequately prepared to respond efficiently to emergencies. Some of the institutional weaknesses are:

- lack of institutional coordination in responding to situations of extreme need;
- weak communication mechanisms between different levels of the administration;
- lack of capacity to anticipate major events, inhibiting appropriate responses, particularly to early warning;
- lack of efficient channels and mechanisms for dissemination of information on natural hazard management to communities that need the information;
- centralization of decision-making at the national level and non-flexible mechanisms for information flow from the bottom up. As a result, most of the decisions taken do not reflect the needs and expectations of people in the areas at risk;
- fragile and incompatible links between the different powers created in a context of new democratization. At the local level, there is no clear allocation of roles between the traditional and administrative authorities; this sometimes results in conflict, which can have a negative effect on institutional coordination in disaster management;
- poor coordination with donors and inability to challenge their conditions and impositions of how and where to provide support.

IMPROVING THE LINK BETWEEN DRM SYSTEMS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

DRM systems should be perceived as an integral part of regular sustainable development planning at different levels

and, in addition to improved early warning and response mechanisms, should also recognize mechanisms and issues related to disaster risk mitigation and preparedness. A better integration of DRM systems and rural development policies can be tackled at different levels. The issues of general governance, poverty reduction and sustainable use of natural resources are the preconditions for effective DRM. However, several framework conditions need to be in place or improved to mitigate disaster impacts further and build communities' resilience to shocks. They are briefly outlined below.

Policy design

- Include disaster prevention and mitigation components (and vulnerability/risk analysis elements) in rural development plans and other sectoral plans (“retrofitting” of rural sector development projects with DRM components).
- Integrate land-use and watershed management strategies, promoting cooperative planning among countries/ municipalities in regional watershed management (e.g. the floods in Mozambique in 2000) and crossboundary risk management.
- Mandate national policy for disaster risk reduction at the local level and the development of local DRM plans.
- Improve revenue systems allowing for resource allocation to local relief-calamity funds, budget allocations for prevention and mitigation and resource mobilization strategies (including twinning programmes between municipalities in the South and North, bringing together resources and experiences).
- Develop post-disaster financial measures that can facilitate recovery (tax alleviation, credit payment rescheduling, etc.).
- Include preparedness and response coordination systems in local institutions.
- At the local and national levels, link the representatives and interest groups

of development with those of disaster management and establish alliances among different actors.

- Create incentives for different actors to become involved in what would be defined as “good practice”; disincentives should be designed for unsustainable practices.

Governance and coordination

- Encourage central government to acknowledge the role of local actors and provide an enabling normative framework.
- Establish cross-sectoral (horizontal) disaster coordination committees at the local level (not necessarily new structures) and add new specialized functions and services to existing structures.
- Design and operationalize emergency coordination mechanisms (contingency plans and evacuation plans) with a clear definition of authority roles and responsibilities. These are normally more effective when designed at the provincial level and below; when this is not the case, the level of detail is not sufficient for translating recommendations into action.
- Establish effective vertical decision-making mechanisms (where higher-level organizations support lower-level) for periods of emergency.
- Build local capacities for immediate response (normally, all relief operations rely on the local community during the first four days).
- Recognize and enhance local knowledge, specifically on risk identification and monitoring, risk mitigation strategies, early warning and conflict resolution.
- Recognize and enhance social safety nets, especially in the relief and rehabilitation phase. A key related governance issue that requires analysis is how to combine modern democratic institutions with traditional knowledge and livelihood and communication strategies, and how to adapt traditional organizations to modern requirements.

Rethinking emergency relief

- Promote more consistency with long-term rural development objectives where possible (rural development policies in disaster-prone areas should include sections on recommendations for emergency food aid distribution).
- Improve current monitoring and evaluation practices on relief operations (including impact on rural development).
- Identify relief interventions that support and sustain local livelihoods.
- Build an exit strategy, based on local sustainability, for all external relief interventions.
- Use emergency relief operations to generate momentum and the opportunity to rethink and foster long-term rural development.

Monitoring

- Identify and monitor risk on a regular basis.
- Develop local risk indicators adapted to climate-related changes.
- Undertake local vulnerability and needs assessments before and after hazards occur (including differentiated, but standardized, vulnerability criteria) and prepare risk maps and hazard risk diagnosis.
- Evaluate the consequences of development choices on disaster impact.
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of relief distributions.
- Measure the impact of a disaster in terms of loss of livelihoods and not loss of lives.

Key services

- Improve the local asset base: sustainable natural resource management strategies, appropriate technology development, stock reserves for emergencies, access to capital and markets, livelihood diversification, insurance mechanisms and improvement of existing buildings to increase their resilience against damage.
- Improve early warning systems, including clear information dissemination

practices and outreach mechanisms to populations in remote areas (mixed formal and informal information systems and local radio communications proved to be the most efficient).

- Integrate scientific understanding of natural hazards with local knowledge and traditional beliefs.
- Include regularly updated contingency plans within systematic disaster-preparedness planning mechanisms.
- Improve understanding of how people interpret and respond to warnings.

Capacity building and public awareness

- All case studies show evidence of a lack of relevant capacity building, public awareness and training activities on DRM at the local level.
- Capacity-building efforts should target both government and civil society representatives and be site-specific.
- Information on disaster risk protection options should be provided to citizens in easily understood, ideally local language and through means appropriate to the local context.

Targeting vulnerable groups

- Relief operations have consistently demonstrated the need for accountable community-based structures to oversee the implementation of emergency interventions, which also ensure that interventions are culturally acceptable.
- Such structures, which usually take the form of committees, need to be legitimate. Because emergency operations need to be swift and tend to involve at least some free distribution of assets of one kind or another, they are also more prone to corruption and bribes. Community-based structures thus need to include a rigorous selection of credible and trusted local individuals, who should be chosen by community members themselves.

THE WAY AHEAD

The issues described above are a synthesis of the case studies' findings and workshop

discussions. The comparative analysis of the case studies highlights that the following are key requirements for effective local DRM systems and mechanisms.

- enabling legal frameworks
- social capital formation
- integration of DRM and natural resource management
- conflict resolution over natural resources
- disaster preparedness and contingency planning
- financial services factoring in risks associated with natural disasters
- early warning systems and outreach strategies
- vertical and horizontal communication and cooperation linkages
- coordination mechanisms among actors at all levels
- community training and public awareness

A strategic framework is currently being developed by the FAO Rural Institutions and Participation Service to translate these requirements and principles into action. This implies identifying in more detail how to operationalize them and who the key actors could be in designing and implementing specific tasks in the field. This should also lead to a better understanding of how relief operations could be used as an entry point to promoting longer-term development and of how to include disaster risk prevention and preparedness activities into regular development planning.

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Annex table
Overview of the comparative strengths of local and higher-level institutions in DRM

Central and provincial governments are key actors in:		
PREVENTION	PREPAREDNESS	RESPONSE AND REHABILITATION
<p>Policy development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting the normative framework for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – integration of DRM and NRM – land tenure/use patterns – devolution of responsibilities to local level – participatory processes in policy development and implementation – overall coordination among line ministries and levels of government – cross-sectoral communication and integration – establishing decision-making systems for emergencies – monitoring – infrastructural development <p>Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertaking scientific surveys and assessments for disaster mitigation, recording and disseminating information on disaster impact and losses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminating guidelines <p>Capacity building</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinating design and promoting training and capacity-building programmes for government agencies, officials, local government, etc. • Initiating public information campaigns • Integrating core DRM concepts in school curricula in high-risk areas 	<p>Providing and promoting basic instruments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing guidelines for contingency planning and mechanisms to capture resources for relief and rehabilitation • Setting up national early warning systems and supplying appropriate information and communication technology, equipment and training • Promoting large-scale awareness-raising programmes (e.g. media campaigns, schools and extension services) • Establishing, managing and monitoring national food stocks 	<p>Coordinating resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinating relief operations among national and provincial governments and with international donors • Providing additional resources (special transport, relief goods and specialized staff) during extreme events • Providing infrastructure rehabilitation <p>Mobilizing financing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Releasing additional national financial resources through relief funds, calamity funds, etc. • Raising additional resources with international donors • Allowing central banks to open flexible credit systems in times of crisis and backstop local credit schemes. Credit payments and taxes can be rescheduled (longer-term and adjusted to the harvest season) <p>Monitoring and evaluation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluating rehabilitation process and trends for demand-responsive policy (re)formulation

Local government (municipality and lower) is a key actor in:

PREVENTION

- Local coordination and implementation**
- Operationalizing integrated development programmes incorporating DRM components
 - Promoting participatory planning and enabling civil society to implement programmes
 - Establishing intermunicipal agreements (early warning, watershed management, post-disaster foreign aid coordination, etc.)
 - Recognizing and registering of land use rights
 - Developing/implementing mechanisms to capture remittances for rehabilitation
 - Making payments for environmental services
 - Facilitating conflict resolution among resource users
 - Maintaining infrastructure
- Capacity building and awareness raising**
- Implementing capacity building and training programmes in DRM for civil servants and local leaders
 - Implementing awareness-raising programmes on natural hazards

Resource mobilization

- Developing partnerships with civil society organizations and private sector
 - Seeking external support when local resources are not sufficient (national government, twinning arrangements, private sector, donors, etc.)
 - Setting up payment mechanisms for environmental services
- Monitoring and assessment**
- Carrying out pre-disaster vulnerability and preparedness needs assessments (jointly with civil society)

PREPAREDNESS

- Local coordination and implementation**
- Setting up local coordination bodies (disaster coordination committees/councils) including government departments, civil society representation and private sector
 - Training and advising community-based organizations (CBOs) on DRM
- Contingency planning**
- Developing and regularly implementing contingency plans
- Early warning**
- Collecting and evaluating information at local level, declaring state of emergencies
 - Ensuring dissemination of alerts to people and officials responsible

RESPONSE AND REHABILITATION

- Local coordination and implementation**
- Coordinating disaster and relief operations (evacuation, relief goods, health services and transport)
 - Establishing local DRM mechanisms effective for annual/routine flooding; exceptional events require national support
 - Communicating and coordinating with national bodies
 - Coordinating and channelling foreign aid
 - Planning and coordinating rehabilitation efforts
- Monitoring and assessments**
- Submitting damage reports to higher government levels
 - Monitoring relief goods distribution (with others)
 - Carrying out post-disaster needs assessments (with civil society)
- Fundraising and releasing of funds**
- Releasing rehabilitation funds/reserves
 - Raising funds with donors and advocating with national government for rehabilitation resources

Other locally operating organizations (NGOs, CBOs, cooperatives, local businesses, etc.) are key actors in:

PREVENTION

Natural resource management (NRM)

- Conservation policies without local participation perceived as hostile by the community (Viet Nam). Effective when local users' and private sector role is institutionalized (Fishers' and Irrigators' Association in the Philippines, community-based watershed management in Honduras)
- Traditional pastoral organizations normally based on the principle of collective action for collective benefit. Under the collective systems in NRM there are strong incentives to act for the common good. Deep understanding of drought-prone ecosystems and related risk management strategies (Burkina Faso, Islamic Republic of Iran and the Niger)

Conflict management

- Mixed conflict-resolution systems (local government, traditional leadership, pastoralists' and agriculturalists' representatives) operate in the Niger and Burkina Faso. These are better set up by civil society organizations and need refinement

Savings and credit

- Credit schemes more efficient when administered at community level (Burkina Faso). However, local cooperatives and associations in times of severe crisis may need support from national banks to ensure availability of credit. Often cooperatives managed by government are accused of corruption and inefficiency (Islamic Republic of Iran)
- Lack of access to credit is a major issue for the poorest, owing to collateral requirements (the Philippines, Viet Nam) or lack of facilities in remote areas (general)

Local-level capacity building

- Support in establishing and training local disaster management committees in contingency planning (including technical support for early warning systems)
- Training volunteers in first aid and emergency relief (often undertaken by national Red Cross)
- Training of households in disaster mitigation measures (crops and housing)
- Implementing awareness-raising and public information campaigns (in partnership with local government)

Advocacy and bottom-up policy information

- Unions of pastoralists' associations created in the Niger in 2001 have been important local actors in: representing pastoralists within administration, fighting against food insecurity, protecting animal health, NRM and conflict management

PREPAREDNESS

(Local) early warning systems (EWS)

- National communication system often paralysed during disaster
- Local institutions (village level) most effective in reaching out to community in disseminating an alert. Examples of (relatively) efficient EWS capitalizing on existing CBOs: youth and farmer associations as well as Red Cross in Viet Nam, fishers' councils, irrigators' associations and local radio in the Philippines (South Africa). Mixed EWS can complement the weaknesses of national and local systems: national level (weather and scientific parameters), local level (on-the-ground monitoring, informal local knowledge). Examples: Honduras, the Niger and the Philippines
- In remote areas, with limited institutional presence or capacity, schools can be the entry point of early warning systems: via teacher-student-family links (Mozambique)

RESPONSE AND REHABILITATION

Relief

- All studies highlight that distribution should be managed with civil society, with transparent assessment criteria established in partnership with local government
- Regional/national relief funds and food distribution without standard assessment procedures result in ambiguity in entitlement to emergency assistance/food aid (social relief funds/South Africa, food aid in Burkina Faso) or simply is not commensurate to vulnerability (Viet Nam)
- Coordination mechanisms are effective when capitalizing on existing local organizations (Viet Nam – mass organizations; the Philippines – users' associations and volunteer groups)
- CBOs are most efficient in rescue activities but lack training

Rehabilitation

- In most cases, when phasing out relief, socio-economic rehabilitation (asset rehabilitation income-generating activities, awareness raising and training), initiatives are handed over to international or national and local NGOs

Local-level capacity building

- Advice and training on locally suitable livelihood adaptation options to increase future resilience

Social capital, informal norms and accumulated community experience and knowledge

PREVENTION

- **Community experience/knowledge**
 - Risk management
 - livelihood diversification strategies
 - migration patterns including transhumance
 - Natural resource management
 - livestock and crop breeding
 - rangeland management and rehabilitation
- **Infrastructure maintenance**
 - Volunteer community labour in infrastructure maintenance is a practice in some countries (dykes/Viet Nam; protection work for microbasin/Honduras)
- **Informalization**
 - Informal processes are not always effective, as they embed the danger of politicization and clientelism and often favour the most powerful and wealthy
- **Reciprocity**
 - Pastoralists' strategy to manage drought and conflicts was based on reciprocity principles among pastoralists, including:
 - tacit agreements based on kinship and alliances (among pastoralists and with agriculturalists)
 - access to village wells negotiated between pastoralists and sedentary population
 - Reciprocity decreasing significantly between farmers and herders due to tendency towards privatization of wells (Islamic Republic of Iran, the Niger)
 - Risk managers in vulnerable ecosystems are often pressurized to adopt profit maximization strategies instead of "traditional" risk minimization strategies

PREPAREDNESS

- **Early warning**
 - Early warning often does not reach remote areas. Communities use their traditional knowledge to predict the coming of hazards. They know the period of the year when floods, cyclones and drought are likely to occur. However, the uncharacteristic nature of extreme events is not predictable at community level (in general)
 - The only functioning, effective method to inform and warn poor households living in specifically risk-prone areas, such as river banks, is to use community-organized systems
 - Pastoralists have sophisticated mechanisms to predict drought on the basis of migratory itinerary and timing decisions (Burkina Faso, Islamic Republic of Iran and the Niger)

RESPONSE AND REHABILITATION

- **Extreme events interpretation**
 - Marginalized communities with weak community organizations and limited access to local authorities do not normally benefit from official relief mechanisms and rely solely on their social networks (South Africa, Burkina Faso). They will often demonstrate an inherent ownership of risk and have no expectations of support from local institutions (Argentina, Islamic Republic of Iran and South Africa)
- **Immediate relief operations**
 - Informal mechanisms for life-saving operations, removal to safer grounds and provision of food and shelter
- **Informal and traditional leadership**
 - Informal/traditional leadership often leads the coordination of response (Islamic Republic of Iran, Viet Nam). Although they have a very positive role in coordination and often compensate for the lack of formal support, they are rarely included in the formal coordination systems. Because they have sometimes been accused of nepotism and favouritism in relief goods distribution, the establishment of committees with civil society representation is recommended (Mozambique)
- **Voluntary rescue bodies**
 - Volunteer rescue and emergency bodies can be established with local government resources (the Philippines) or external support (Mozambique)
- **Relief assistance to the most vulnerable**
 - Social networks provide mutual support and act as a conduit to the poor. Communities normally help their members in post-disaster recovery and asset rebuilding by:
 - rebuilding destroyed homes
 - restocking herds
 - donating seeds
 - plot and harvest sharing.
 - Wage labour and migration are a resource in times of disaster. Remittances sustain households in times of crisis

Brève introduction à la planification microrégionale

De nombreux pays d'Europe ont assisté ces dernières années à une résurgence du régionalisme et des stratégies de développement régionales. Les fonctions spécifiques des régions dans un contexte de mondialisation suscitent de vifs débats et les responsables des décisions et des stratégies ont redécouvert la région comme unité géographique importante située entre le niveau local et le niveau régional pouvant assurer un lien essentiel entre les interlocuteurs locaux et les réseaux nationaux et transnationaux.

Le présent article décrit les caractéristiques et les fonctions de la planification microrégionale ainsi que les phases typiques du processus de planification, notamment l'élaboration des profils de projet et des plans d'action. Il s'adresse à des personnes d'horizons professionnels différents travaillant en zone rurale et participant aux processus de planification microrégionaux. Certains d'entre eux sont des interlocuteurs locaux, d'autres des intermédiaires du processus de planification.

Breve introducción a la planificación microrregional

En los últimos años, han resurgido el regionalismo y las estrategias de desarrollo regional en muchos países de Europa. Existe un intenso debate sobre las funciones específicas de las regiones en un mundo que se está globalizando. Los responsables de la formulación de políticas y la planificación de estrategias han redescubierto la región como unidad geográfica de importancia entre los niveles local y nacional que puede actuar como vínculo fundamental entre las partes interesadas locales y las redes nacionales y transnacionales.

En este artículo se describen las características y funciones de la planificación microrregional, así como las etapas habituales del proceso de planificación, incluida la elaboración de perfiles de proyectos y planes de acción. El artículo está dirigido a personas con diversa formación profesional que trabajan en zonas rurales y participan en procesos de planificación microrregional. Algunas de ellas pueden ser partes interesadas a nivel local; otras pueden ser facilitadores en un proceso de planificación.

A short introduction to microregional planning¹

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In recent years, there has been a resurgence of regionalism and regional development strategies in many countries across Europe. There is an intensive debate on the specific functions of regions in a globalizing world, and policy-makers and strategic planners have rediscovered the region as an important spatial unit located between the local and the national levels that can provide an essential link between local stakeholders and national and transnational networks.

This article describes the characteristics and functions of microregional planning as well as typical phases in the planning process, including the elaboration of project profiles and action plans. It is intended for people of different professional backgrounds working in rural areas and involved in microregional planning processes. Some of them may be local stakeholders; others may be facilitators in a planning exercise.

INTRODUCTION

Rural areas worldwide face manifold problems, including outdated production techniques in agriculture, a scarcity of grazing land, a lack of access to drinking-water, inadequate education options, poor healthcare, a lack of land titles, legal uncertainty and low participation in decision-making. In most cases, there are clear-cut disparities between large cities and rural areas. Rural development has been on the agenda for many years and numerous approaches have been pursued to come to terms with the urban–rural divide.

In most rural areas there are many individuals who can play a meaningful role in improving the economic and social well-being of their area. There are technical specialists who have been posted to a remote part of their country by their government, such as foresters, irrigation engineers, agricultural extension agents. There are local politicians,

activists belonging to non-governmental organizations, members of farmers' associations and other civil society organizations (CSOs); there are business people and ordinary citizens. All of them may be interested in bringing about improvements to the area.

Unfortunately, sectoral experts tend to look at rural problems with a bias towards their specific field of interest. Foresters tend to be more interested in forests than anything else; irrigation engineers tend to look mostly at irrigation canals; teachers are more concerned with the education of the young population than with the well-being of the elderly. Politicians and CSO representatives have their own bias.

But sectoral approaches are not enough to resolve the multifaceted problems of the rural population in a holistic manner.

Microregional planning has been practised in many parts of the world, in countries as diverse as Ghana, Hungary, Indonesia and Malawi. It has a longer tradition in countries such as Austria, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland, but there are also some very good experiences from African, Asian and Latin American countries. Outside observers witnessing a

¹ A more comprehensive version of this article will be published shortly by the FAO Subregional Office for Central and Eastern Europe in Budapest. The printed version will be available in English and Russian. An electronic version will be available at http://www.fao.org/regional/SEUR/pubs_en.htm.

planning workshop in countries as diverse as Guatemala and the United Republic of Tanzania may be surprised to hear villagers talk about their future in a similar way to village groups in, for example, northwestern Germany. This article is based on experiences from many different parts of the world. For those who want to bring about improvements in a small rural area, it is always useful to share experiences with others in a similar situation.

Over the last decade, regional development and microregional planning have also reached Central and Eastern Europe. In these countries, planning has a negative connotation for many people. Planning reminds them of the central planning machinery that was in place during the socialist period. The planning process outlined in this article, however, is deeply rooted in democracy and participation by ordinary people.

WHY MICROREGIONAL PLANNING?

We have already mentioned that rural development should be multisectoral and holistic in character. A region is a complex fabric with a large number of interrelated problems that can be solved only by an integrated approach.

There is another reason for microregional planning, related to global trends. Throughout the world, global networks are shaping the development opportunities of rural people. These networks tend to be hierarchical in character. International and global cities are linked to the national capitals; the national capitals establish links with the lower tiers in the hierarchy such as secondary and tertiary centres (small towns). The villages are the smallest settlements and are linked in terms of trade and communication to the nearest small town and, to a much lesser extent, to the neighbouring village.

In contrast, horizontal networks can develop within small regions and help improve living conditions for people in rural areas. This could be a network of localized trade links among neighbouring villages, for example exchanges of commodities,

information and innovation. In remote areas, a small region is much stronger than villages that try to develop on their own. One village may have assets that another lacks, and villages may complement one another through their different potentials.

WHAT IS MICROREGIONAL PLANNING?

The term regional rural development has been in use for the last 25 years. This term refers to a coherent spatial unit that is located between the local and the national level. The “microregion” is usually much smaller than conventional planning regions.

A **microregion** is a distinct territorial unit with clearly marked boundaries below the regional level, but above the village level. The microregion may be:

- an existing territorial unit;
- a formal planning unit gazetted under the planning law of the country;
- the living space of a particular ethnic group or an area with a common history;
- defined by physical features, such as water catchment areas;
- defined by functional interrelationships, such as market-hinterland relations.

Planning for one’s future – setting goals for the future and deciding on the steps that help to attain these goals – is part of our daily life. Individuals, families, businesses and government departments all plan their activities.

Microregional planning attempts to coordinate the planning activities of the numerous actors within a limited territorial unit. It deals with:

- economic, social and cultural life;
- infrastructure;
- housing and the settlement pattern;
- rural organizations and institutions; and
- the natural environment within the microregion.

Above all, microregional planning is about the *people* who live in the area. People as individuals, as households, people in enterprises and in organizations and institutions. These people have a past, a present and a future in their area. The

people have their dreams, their aspirations, their values and their goals.

Obviously, in the course of a planning process, not every actor can attain his or her individual goals to the fullest. There are differences of interest, sometimes clashes, and there is a need for compromise. Very often planners have to mediate between the interests of different actors – they have to find a good compromise that serves the interests of a number of different groups.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GOOD MICROREGIONAL PLANNING

Good planning is:

- *bottom up*, i.e. it is initiated by the local people or their representatives. If a government body such as a planning board or a land consolidation agency initiates planning, there must be a mandate from the local people;
- *participatory*, i.e. all important stakeholders within the area have a say in the elaboration of the plan and are continuously consulted;
- *action-oriented*, i.e. there must be a close link between planning and implementation; a step-by-step approach to complex development; and a package of projects that can be implemented immediately.

Bottom-up, target group participation and action orientation are essential requirements in terms of process management. Three more important elements of the conceptual orientation of microregional planning need mentioning:

- development of endogenous potentials;
- orientation towards sustainability;
- linking land-use planning and land management.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF PROFESSIONAL PLANNERS?

Professionals can play an important role in initiating the process of microregional planning. “Professional” in this context refers to any technical specialist who plays a mobilizing role and pursues a multisectoral approach. He or she need not necessarily hold a degree in urban and regional planning.

Three points are noteworthy:

- Professional planners may play a useful role, but they are not the owners of the process.
- Planners act as catalysts that set the planning process in motion.
- In addition, planners ensure continuous communication among the planning team, decision-makers and the target group.

TYPICAL PHASES OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

Microregional planning is usually organized in a typical sequence of distinct phases and practical steps. Figure 1 depicts the ideal steps of a microregional planning process. The stages and practical steps form a logical sequence that proceeds in the same chronological order. The main phases are:

- analysis;
- scenario writing;
- elaboration of development strategy and sector strategies;
- elaboration of project profiles.

The planning process is followed by the implementation stage and the monitoring and continuous revision of the microregional plan. The planning practice necessitates feedback among the stages and a review of the work accomplished in the previous steps. During this process, new information may arise that requires modification of the goals that were initially set, or elaboration of later phases (for example reformulation of a mid-term development strategy) may require an additional inventory of the current situation to be conducted.

It is of the utmost importance for the local stakeholders to be involved in all phases of the planning process.

ANALYSIS PHASE

In order to be able to plan for the future development of a small region, the point of departure is obviously a solid understanding of the current situation, its problems, its potentials and its opportunities.

However, the analysis phase of a microregional planning study is not a geographical handbook of the area. The

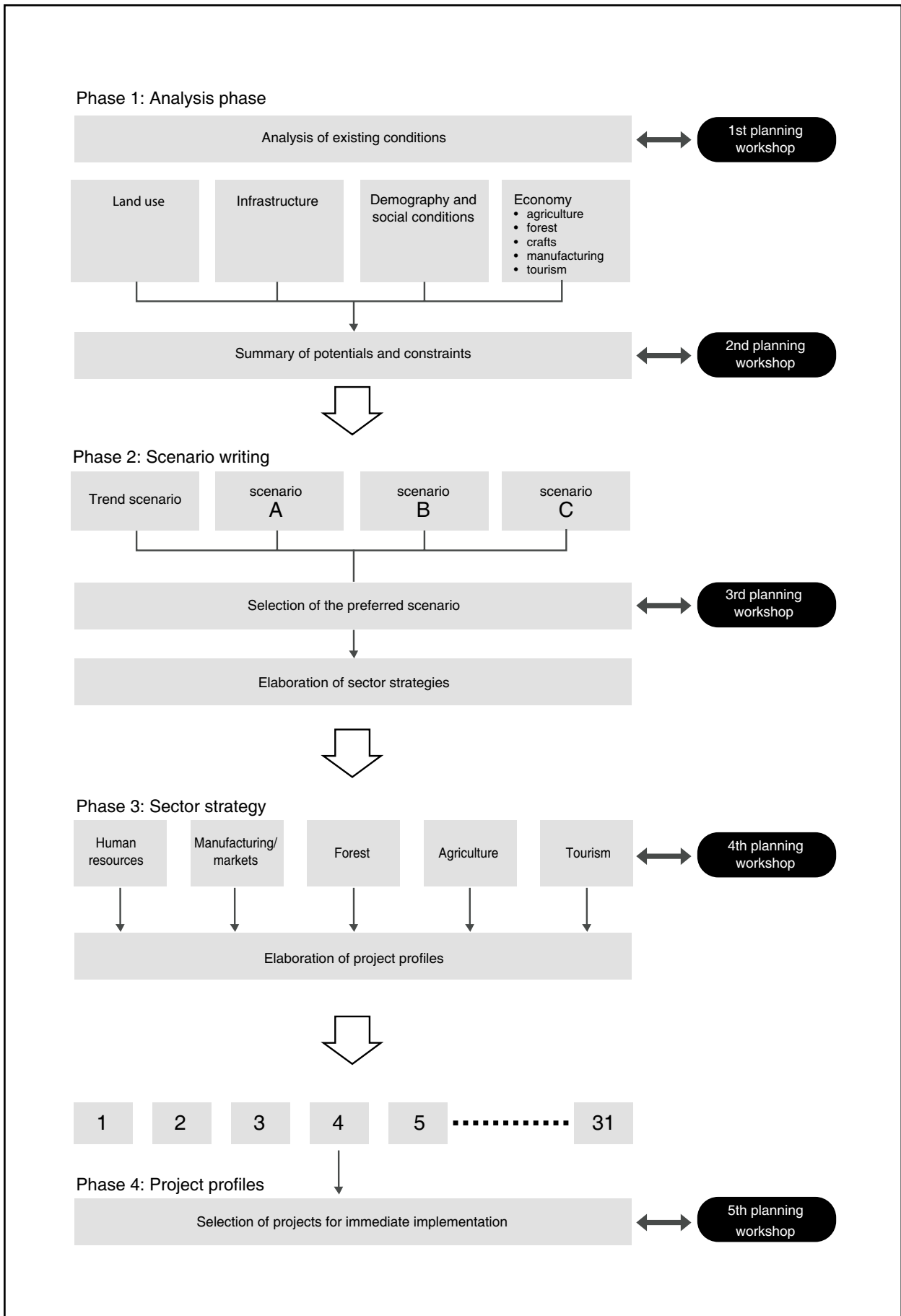


FIGURE 1
Main phases of the microregional planning process

analysis of the current situation does not need to be conducted with encyclopaedic goals in mind. Data on issues that are of secondary importance in the particular microregion or that are not necessary for the planning process do not need to be collected or analysed. The inventory of the current situation should focus from the start on the most pressing problems and needs of the local people.

Therefore, it can be helpful to hold a workshop at the outset that serves to familiarize the planning team with the definition and perception of the problem as seen by the local population and local decision-makers. Even before the planning team begins its own field investigations, this workshop should be held with decision-makers and representatives from the relevant interest groups.

Usually, the most important sectors for analysis are:

- demography and social conditions;
- the economy, broken down into agriculture, forestry, manufacturing and tourism;
- infrastructure;
- land use.

When analysing the results of the inventory of the current situation, care should be taken to go beyond a purely descriptive presentation and to analyse the particular features of the region, for example, to make comparisons with neighbouring regions.

The last step of the analysis phase involves the synthesis of the situation analysis. For this purpose, another workshop with the local stakeholders should be held. The planning team must now decide which they consider to be the most important potentials and problems of the microregion. This can be done in a very simple way by writing the important points on a flip chart. The findings of the planning team should then be compared with the local stakeholders' own views. This step of the analysis phase forms the basis for all future development.

A region's potentials and problems must also be presented in terms of its spatial

dimensions, i.e. in map form. Geographic information systems allow the overlay of different thematic maps in such a way that the accumulation of the various favourable and unfavourable sectors at a particular place becomes clearer.

SCENARIO WRITING

This phase deals with projections – forecasting from the existing situation into the future. A particularly useful approach is the scenario method, which is a qualitative and holistic method of forecasting.

The time frames for the projections and for planning should agree with one another. In the past, most regional planning studies set a planning time frame of 20 years. In recent years, the emphasis has shifted to shorter-term programmes and project packages that are easier to implement. As a result, a planning time frame of five years (for short-term action plans) or ten years (medium-term) is usually advocated. This may be justified for a short-term action plan.

However, microregional planning should not completely ignore the longer-term view. Scenario planning in particular requires a clear and recognizable difference between the current situation and the end state depicted in the scenario. A time horizon of 20 years is recommended for scenario planning.

The scenario method is a qualitative forecasting attempt in which the emphasis is placed on describing the interdependence between individual phenomena and sectors. It describes a complex end state, i.e. the imaginable conditions in the target year (e.g. 20 years from now). Scenarios should be based on a clear analysis of the potentials and constraints of the current situation. The conditions described in the scenarios must be attainable with the known technical and organizational tools and with the potential of the land in the microregion.

Scenarios should also be formulated in their spatial dimension. Each scenario relates to a specific land use concept, a specific distribution of settlements, central places and infrastructure. If possible, a map should accompany each scenario.

At the end of this phase, a decision must be taken on the preferred scenario. This is a very important juncture, as it gives legitimacy to all subsequent steps in the planning process. Therefore, the planning team should present the alternative scenarios at a further stakeholder workshop and invite the participants to select the preferred scenario.

ELABORATION OF DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

This phase describes the route that must be taken to reach the end state outlined in the preferred scenario. The strategy must determine the required specific measures, their temporal sequence and the respective actors (i.e. the people who are responsible for certain measures).

However, there is usually more than one route to the same goal or the same desired end state. Therefore, it may be appropriate to describe several possible development strategies. This should be done at least in a draft form.

It is recommended that the development strategy be broken down into sector-specific strategies for the main development sectors, such as

- agriculture
- agroprocessing
- manufacture
- crafts
- social development
- infrastructure

Each sector strategy first defines the respective development goals (in line with the selected preferred scenario) and sets overall priorities for the sector. Based on these priorities, subprogrammes with a set of more detailed activities or measures are identified. Care must be taken to select project activities that are expected to help in the attainment of the goals set for each sector.

Typical structure of a sector strategy:

- strategic goals
- priority areas for intervention
- subprogrammes
- specific interventions
- result indicators
- impact indicators

Indicators will allow the results and impacts of planned development to be evaluated. The result indicators refer to the output of project implementation; the impact indicators refer to the wider and more complex effects of development on the social, economic and natural environment.

The fundamental elements of the spatial development strategy are land use, settlement pattern, important corridors of infrastructure, population distribution and distribution of manufacturing jobs.

Formulating a good development programme is not easy given that microregional development is the sum of innumerable actors' actions. The decisions of government officials should be considered as well as the numerous daily decisions of the individuals who live and work in the area – from the decision of where to live or the choice of transportation, to the question of in which market a resident of a rural settlement should buy or sell his or her goods. Ideally, all these actions need to be forecast in a development strategy. In practice, the planner must concentrate on certain key elements.

Having developed the strategy, the planner should crosscheck whether the proposed development path strikes a balance between short-term and long-term goals and the interests of the most important actors within the microregion. The so-called “triple-win approach” may help in this crosscheck.

This triple-win approach links three development objectives:

- economy
- positive environmental impacts
- sound institutions

The triple-win approach does not aim at the maximum, but at the optimum. Triple win means compromising among these three objectives.

ELABORATION OF PROJECT PROFILES AND ACTION PLAN

This phase of the process is especially important because it bridges planning and implementation activities. In order to initiate rural development programmes

started, the long-term scenario and the medium-term strategy need to be broken down into easily implemented projects. The project profiles are the points of leverage to bring about development. At a later stage, some of the project profiles may be presented to potential funding agencies, either outside donors or national government agencies. Others may be passed to private investors (e.g. key projects in the tourism industry).

Locally based non-governmental organizations or local associations may also implement some of the projects. The elaboration of sector strategies may result in a long list of up to 50, 100 or, in some cases, even 200 individual projects that are considered essential for fulfilling a development ambition and attaining the preferred scenario. At this stage, however, it is important to select projects that:

- can be easily and quickly implemented;
- yield short-term benefits;

- are sustainable;
- mobilize the target group.

A shortlist of not more than 30 projects should be selected at this stage. Sometimes it is also useful to make a distinction between short-term projects, which will show an immediate impact within one year, and key projects, which can be considered the main points of leverage.

Obviously, the choice of individual projects for a short-term plan of action is not a technical matter that the planning team can undertake by itself. Again, the active contributions of local decision-makers and target groups are extremely important. At the end of this phase, which deals with the elaboration of sector strategies, another workshop should be held with local stakeholders. Apart from presenting the sector strategy, this workshop can also be used to select and prioritize the list of project profiles to be elaborated.

Réforme agraire et marchés fonciers en Europe de l'Est: rapport de situation

Le présent article examine la situation des marchés fonciers agricoles dans 23 pays d'Europe de l'Est, en mettant l'accent sur les différences régionales. Il examine en particulier trois principaux domaines qui sont des indicateurs des progrès du développement des marchés fonciers: i) le cadre général et législatif de la réforme foncière; ii) les options en matière de propriété foncière; et iii) l'administration foncière, en particulier le cadastre et les titres fonciers. De façon générale, les marchés fonciers d'Europe de l'Est se sont développés très lentement. Bien que les transferts de terres agricoles soient librement effectués dans beaucoup de pays, les nouveaux marchés ont été freinés par la lenteur initiale du processus de privatisation et d'attribution des titres fonciers. La location des terres agricoles est beaucoup plus fréquente que l'achat et la vente, et rares sont les pays dans lesquels les ventes sont équivalentes à celles des marchés d'Europe occidentale. Mais dans l'ensemble, des progrès importants ont été réalisés depuis une quinzaine d'années vers la création de marchés fonciers agricoles fonctionnels, notamment par la privatisation des terres et le développement de systèmes d'administration foncière. Ces changements d'ordre juridique et général ont ouvert la voie à l'amélioration constante du secteur du marché foncier.

La reforma agraria y los mercados de tierras en Europa oriental: informe de la situación

En este artículo se examina la situación de los mercados de tierras agrícolas en 23 países de Europa oriental, haciendo especial hincapié en las diferencias regionales. Se estudian tres temas principales como indicadores de progreso en el desarrollo de los mercados de tierras: i) el marco legislativo y de políticas para la reforma agraria; ii) las opciones de titularidad de las tierras; y iii) la administración de las tierras, en particular el registro y la titulación. Por lo general, los mercados de tierras en Europa oriental se han desarrollado de forma muy lenta. Aun cuando las tierras agrícolas se transmiten libremente en muchos países, los nuevos mercados se han visto frenados por la lentitud de la privatización inicial y la titularidad de las tierras. El arrendamiento de tierras agrícolas es mucho más común que la compra y venta y sólo en unos pocos países las ventas de tierras se encuentran al mismo nivel que en Europa occidental. No obstante, en general se han realizado grandes progresos sistémicos en los últimos 15 años hacia la consecución de mercados de tierras agrícolas funcionales, muy singularmente en la privatización de las tierras y en el desarrollo de sistemas de administración de las mismas. Estos cambios jurídicos y en las políticas han sentado las bases para la mejora constante de la actividad en los mercados de tierras.

Land reform and land markets in Eastern Europe

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This article reviews the status of agricultural land markets in 23 Eastern European countries, with particular emphasis on regional differences.¹ Three major topics are surveyed as indicators of progress in the development of land markets: (i) the policy and legislative framework for land reform; (ii) landownership options and (iii) land administration, in particular, registration and titling. In general, land markets in Eastern Europe have been very slow to develop. Even though agricultural land is freely transferable in many countries, the emerging markets have been hampered by the slowness of the initial privatization and titling of land. Lease of agricultural land is much more common than purchase and sale, and there are only a few countries where land sales are on par with Western Europe. Overall, however, much systemic progress has been made over the past 15 years in paving the way for functional agricultural land markets, most notably in the privatization of land and the development of land administration systems. These legal and policy changes have laid the groundwork for the continued improvement in land market activity.

INTRODUCTION

This article explores the relative status of land reform and the development of agricultural land markets in Eastern European countries. The article is organized by topic to allow the reader to compare the different regional approaches to land reform and their outcomes.

The countries included in this study have been divided into four groups:

- European Union (EU) accession countries: the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia, as well as Slovenia (acceded), and Bulgaria and Romania, which are both expected to join the EU in 2007;
- Western Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS): Belarus, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine;
- CIS Transcaucasus: Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia;

- The Balkans: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Serbia and Montenegro.

Despite the shared history of socialism and a common agricultural structure of large-scale collective and state farms in these countries, there are strong social, economic and political differences. Since the beginning of the transition era in 1989–91, they have applied different approaches to agrarian reform. Generally, the status of their agricultural land markets is a result of these different approaches to land reform and their political differences. Agricultural land markets range from being non-existent in countries that lack the legal and policy framework to support land markets, to being semi-functional and increasingly active in countries where the market infrastructure is in place and the political climate encourages market activities.

The EU accession states are by some standards the furthest advanced in terms of land market development, although several

¹ A longer version of this article can be found at http://www.fao.org/sd/dim_in1/in1_040901_en.htm

of these countries have resisted change in the agriculture sector and continue to support failing farms in the large, collective style. Furthermore, land fragmentation has generally increased throughout the region as a result of the land reform process.

In the western CIS, two countries (Belarus and the Russian Federation) still lack the legal and policy framework for private ownership of agricultural land and land transactions. The state controls the agricultural land and there is not enough political will to prevail over those who oppose private ownership and sale of agricultural land.

In contrast, the Transcaucasus countries made very different choices at the beginning of the transition and quickly privatized agricultural land and restructured farms into small family units. This initial political will to create change, accompanied by actual privatization, has provided the necessary preconditions for a functioning land market.

Finally, the history of the Balkan countries has had a major impact on their agriculture sector and land market possibilities. Despite a tradition of supporting private farms, the war and ethnic strife have complicated the land transition process.

LAND REFORM POLICY AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

Land privatization methods and status

EU accession

All of the EU accession countries, except Hungary and Poland, engaged in some form of restitution of land rights to former owners. Land reform activities in these countries can be divided into three categories:

1. those that re-established the ownership rights of individuals whose land had not been expropriated, and restituted smaller portions of state land (Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia);
2. those that compensated former owners and provided or sold land to farm workers (Hungary); and

3. those that restituted land to former owners only (Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania).

In the Czech Republic, restitution was only applied to state farm land; for collective land, the primacy of ownership rights over users' rights had to be re-established. The restitution process is now nearly complete in the Czech Republic, although there are ongoing legal disputes relating to land that cannot be returned and a lack of title on restituted lands (Travnicek *et al.*, 2002). Slovakia's land restitution process is now more than two-thirds complete, but much land remains in the Slovak Land Fund. As of the beginning of 2005, plans were under way for the sale of 133 000 ha of state-owned Slovak agricultural land (Hudecova and Csókásová, 2004). Although Polish and Slovenian agricultural land was never effectively collectivized, in Slovenia state farms did hold a small share of land and a land restitution process was undertaken to compensate those landowners. As of 2001, just over 49 percent of agricultural land had been restituted (Udovc, 2003).

Hungary's land reform was based on compensating former owners, rather than restituting the land, with landless workers on state farms and cooperatives also receiving small land grants. One outcome of this land reform method was that the people who acquired land were often not engaged in agriculture, so much of the newly acquired land was subsequently leased out.

Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania restituted land to former owners. In these countries, land had formally been expropriated from the owners during the collectivization process. Most of the new owners who received land through restitution did not actually farm the restituted land (i.e. work on the collectives farming the land). Each of these countries has faced unique restitution problems. Estonia sought to reconstitute land to pre-1940 property owners and their heirs. Because of a withdrawal of claims once claimants realized the difficulties of rural life, the land restitution process in Estonia returned

only 25 percent of the agricultural land to individual owners. Estonia is now trying to identify and dispose of unclaimed land to bring it into productive use and allow it to be taxed. Latvia restituted landownership rights exclusively to native Latvians on the basis of the old land boundaries from the period 1924–40. As of 2004, landownership rights had been restored to 89.5 percent of applicants, and an area of more than 3.1 million ha of land was legally registered under private ownership (Daugaliene, 2004).

In Romania, the initial restitution law liquidated collective farms and returned their lands to the households that had ceded them during collectivization. Furthermore, in 2000, a law was passed allowing for the restitution of state farm land. While much of the collective farm land was restituted in the 1990s, little progress has been made in disposing of the state farm land. In Bulgaria, agricultural land was divided into two categories for restitution: “real boundary land”, i.e. parcels whose original boundaries were preserved; and “land division land”, i.e. parcels that the state had amalgamated into large state and collective farms at the time of expropriation. Official sources state that the land restitution was finalized in 2000 (Nedialkov, 2004). However, fewer than 70 percent of former owners or their heirs have a legal document confirming their ownership.

Poland, like the former Yugoslavia, never collectivized the bulk of its land during the communist era, although it still had to privatize the large state farms which occupied one-fifth of the country’s arable land (3.7 million ha). Unlike the other EU accession countries, Poland did not provide for restitution, but it did privatize state land through lease, sale, transfer and redistribution of parcels.

Western CIS

Among the western CIS countries, only Belarus restricts private ownership of agricultural land (except for household plots). The other countries (the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and

Ukraine) allow for private ownership of land, but the bundle of rights associated with ownership varies. The greatest changes have recently occurred in Ukraine, where a new version of the Land Code was passed in late 2001, permitting private ownership and the transfer of agricultural land (OECD and World Bank, 2004). In the western CIS countries other than Belarus, agricultural land was privatized under a “land share” system, in which a large majority of private owners (former members of the state and collective farm system) still hold their rights in common, with some form of right to partition land in kind. The advantage of this system is that farm members who had been working on the land received a portion of the land together with ownership or ownership-like rights.

This type of land share system does not exist in Belarus and, therefore, members of collective and state farms do not have even a theoretical right to a share of land. Rather, if a farmer wants to create a private peasant farm, the local administration can allocate land from the collective farm enterprise or from the state land reserve. Private farmers have user rights to land but not ownership rights. As of January 2003, 7.5 percent of the territory in Belarus was held in private ownership (Vaskovich, 2005). The situation in Belarus contrasts sharply with that in the Republic of Moldova, which demarcated, titled and registered land plots for individual farm members.

The Russian Federation and Ukraine privatized agricultural land under the land share system, with the exception of household plots, which were fully privatized. Of the 41.9 million ha of agricultural land in Ukraine, 26.7 million ha (64 percent) were transferred to the control of 6.5 million individuals, each of whom received a land share certificate. The certificates do not correspond to demarcated land but represent a portion of land formerly used by the state farm or collective farm. The majority of those who received land share certificates quickly leased them to the collective farm so little changed in terms of their ability to exercise ownership rights.

In 1999, Ukraine began an initiative to convert all land shares into privately owned individual land parcels and to issue title documents to the new landowners. As of January 2004, 3.32 million people, or more than 58 percent of eligible rural residents, had received their land titles (OECD and World Bank, 2004). Although the Russian Federation also distributed land to former collective and state farm members in the form of land shares, problems persist in terms of exercising ownership-like rights to that land. The procedure for converting land shares into demarcated land parcels can be difficult to implement and offers little in the way of a firm guarantee that the resulting land parcel will be of reasonable quality and in a reasonable location.

CIS Transcaucasus

In Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, private ownership of agricultural land is allowed and agricultural land is freely transferable. In all three countries, land from the former collective and state farms was distributed to farm members or rural citizens free of charge or for a very small sum. In Armenia and Azerbaijan, most of the state-owned land was distributed to rural residents, including farm members, and the privatization process is substantially complete. In Georgia, however, a portion of land was distributed to rural households for subsistence farming and a portion remained in state ownership for lease to larger, market-focused farms. As a result, less than 30 percent of the agricultural land in Georgia has been transferred into private ownership. Thirty six percent is leased out by the state and the rest is neither leased nor privatized. Today, these land parcels that remain in state ownership are excluded from the land market (Ebanoidze, 2005). However, there are a number of proposals under consideration to complete the privatization of the remaining state-owned land in Georgia (Stanfield, 2002).

The Balkans

Private ownership of land is a legal reality in all the Balkan countries. However, despite having the legal framework for

private landownership in place, war and ethnic strife in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Croatia have meant that the rights to land are inaccessible in practice. The status of agricultural land privatization varies among these countries, although their general levels of privatization easily exceed those in the western CIS countries. In former Yugoslavia, two million peasants were forced into collective farms in the 1940s, but the programme was cancelled in 1952 because of low output. The private sector dominated in former Yugoslavia, but state farms and cooperatives also existed. Recently, war and ethnic strife, combined with relatively high productivity on state-owned farms, has delayed privatization of the remaining state agricultural land.

In The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, approximately 85 percent of agricultural land is privately owned and farmed, and the average farm size is 2.5 to 2.8 ha. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, about 94 percent of agricultural land is privately owned and about 5 percent of arable land is held by state farms. In Serbia and Montenegro, by 2004, 86 percent of agricultural land was privately owned and farmed, although large parts remain uncultivated or are used part-time (Bozinovic, 2004). In Croatia, by 2000 approximately 83 percent of arable agricultural land was privately owned and used.

In Albania, by 1994, over 94 percent of all land available for distribution had been decollectivized and privatized. The land allocation method was per capita distribution rather than restitution. State-owned land was initially distributed to state farm workers on a “use only” basis in the same fashion as the collectively farmed land. In 2004, a new law was introduced on restitution and compensation of property. Under this law, expropriated owners have a right to their immovable property or to receive adequate compensation for it.

Farm restructuring

EU accession

Despite significant privatization efforts, agriculture is still dominated by large,

collective-style farms in most EU accession countries. Farm breakup did not necessarily accompany the restitution process. Many of those who received land were urban dwellers with no interest in farming who immediately leased their land back to the former collectives. In other cases, restored land rights were acknowledged in terms of area but not specified in terms of location, remaining as a “share” of a common landholding utilized by the former collective. Shareholders have entitlements to the land, but these are rarely converted into individualized, private plots. Instead, shareholders either exchange their land entitlement for an equity share in the company (from which they are supposed to receive dividends) or they lease out their land shares. In general, the restitution process in many countries has not resulted in smaller family farms.

Agricultural landholdings in the EU accession countries are characterized by their dualistic nature. Of the 9.2 million farms, 82 percent are cultivated in holdings under 5 ha, but these farms only use 27 percent of the land and the majority of them should be classified as part-time farms (IAMO, 2004). The share of land held in smallholdings ranges from 42 percent in Latvia to 97 percent in Bulgaria. In general, the profitability of agriculture and the availability of off-farm job opportunities have greatly influenced farm structure in the years since transition. However, as noted above, large-scale farming remains a significant feature of agriculture in these countries. The total land cultivated by cooperatives and commercial companies in Slovakia is 76 percent; Bulgaria, 74 percent; the Czech Republic, 72 percent; and Hungary, 50 percent.

Western CIS

The western CIS countries have not broken up the large collective farms to a significant extent. Although the great majority of the collective and state farms were cosmetically reorganized into other legal forms, only 30 percent of the farms reported having a less centralized system of

management. By and large, farm managers from the former collective farms managed to capture management control of the former farm assets. In Ukraine, the new farm enterprises generally rent all the land under their control from the land share and land titleholders. Similarly, in the Republic of Moldova, in spite of land demarcation and titling, only 20 percent of former farm members actually separated from the collective farms, while the remaining 80 percent lease their land to successor collectives.

CIS Transcaucasus

Armenia and Azerbaijan have dismantled former collective and state farms, and their agriculture is now based primarily on family farms. The private sector produces almost all of the agricultural goods and the average farm size ranges from 1.99 ha to 2.8 ha. In Georgia, three types of agricultural land tenure have emerged since 1992: families with privately owned land; families and groups with leased land; and legal entities with leased land. For families, the average holding size is 0.72 ha, while for the groups with leased land it is 11.03 ha and for legal entities, 93.27 ha. In Georgia, farm restructuring has been more limited owing to the emphasis on creating large leasehold farms.

The Balkans

Croatia has a dual agricultural structure consisting of small, fragmented family farms and large state farms. Although the transition and privatization processes started over a decade ago, agricultural conglomerates are still under state ownership, are highly indebted and do not possess a clear privatization strategy or future business development (Tanic and Lonc, 2003).

DEVELOPING LAND MARKETS

There are a number of systemic reasons for the slow growth of land markets in Eastern Europe. First, land markets cannot function in areas where the restitution process is incomplete. If the land is either lacking title

or subject to dispute, purchase and sale cannot occur. A second reason for the slow growth of land markets relates to basic economic issues of supply and demand. In some instances, the presence of state land fund land has created a surplus of agricultural land on the market, thereby depressing agricultural land prices. When prices are unrealistically low, owners of land withhold it from the market to wait for higher prices. The lack of realistic real estate prices complicates the pricing of mortgage loans and mortgage bonds, and low agricultural profitability and the inability to use immovable property as collateral depresses the value of land assets. The effects of these factors are compounded by uncertainty over ownership security and a high conveyance tax on land transactions.

A further limitation on the development of a private land market is the preferential treatment given to cooperatives under the laws of certain countries. Individuals have few options to use the market to lease or sell land; thus, they settle for placing their land in cooperatives on extremely unfavourable terms. Almost all of the countries surveyed prohibit or limit foreign ownership of agricultural land, although, pursuant to their accession negotiations, this barrier will gradually disappear. A number of the countries have requested transitional periods prior to allowing their agriculture land to be sold to foreigners (Daugaliene, 2004).

Lease

EU accession

Even though agricultural land is freely transferable in all EU accession countries, land markets are generally underfunctioning. Many of the emerging markets are still hampered by the slowness of the initial privatization and titling of land. Lease of agricultural land is much more common than purchase and sale. Slovenia and Romania both have active lease markets that seem to be working because the number of households owning land has decreased while the total area farmed has increased.

Two supply-side factors have had negative effects on the lease market. First, in Estonia, Lithuania and Poland, the state continues to own much agricultural land and its land leasing activities undercut the entire lease market. Second, in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia, new landowners often lease their land back to the former collective farms. This too has market-wide impacts.

Another problem that has arisen in the lease market concerns restrictions on lease terms. In Hungary, ten-year lease terms or shorter have encouraged farmers to think in terms of short-term gains, not long-term land stewardship. Nevertheless, the agricultural lease market is very dynamic; for example, 85 percent of the land belongs to individuals, but nearly 45 percent of the land is used by farming organizations, which are not allowed to own land. They therefore have to look for land on the lease market. An overly fragmented ownership structure is reflected by the fact that, on average, one cooperative has contract-based leases with 662 people as lessors, with each lessor owning a plot of 2.6 ha on average. The majority of lessors are unemployed pensioners or absentee landowners. Individual cultivation of these plots is probably not a realistic option because of the age of the landowners, their weak link with agriculture and the small size of their plots (Fulopp, 2002).

A different problem with the lease market occurs in Bulgaria, where the leasing law obstructs transactions by requiring that lease contracts be written, notarized and registered in notary and Land Commission registration books. Few formal leasing transactions take place because of these stringent requirements. When leases do occur, they are typically informal and unrecorded, thereby increasing the costs and decreasing the competitiveness of the market.

Western CIS

Much of the leasing in the western CIS countries occurs between land share owners and the corporate successors to the former collective farms. Most agricultural

enterprises underpay (or do not pay at all) the owners of land shares for the use of their land.

CIS Transcaucasus

In the rural areas of Azerbaijan, landowners successfully lease land and often receive payment in the form of harvested crops. Foreigners are also allowed to lease land. Leases can be for short- or long-term use and lease fees may be paid in cash or in kind. In Armenia, many landowners lease land from the state (through the village council) to increase the size of their holdings. Private two-party leasing, on the other hand, is not a common practice.

In Georgia, farmers are permitted to lease land from the state or private owners. Over 1 000 private agricultural land leases have recently been registered. The bulk of these leasing transactions have involved retired farmers leasing their land to those who may be better able to use it. However, this number is far smaller than the estimated 46 000 leases of state-owned land. State land is much more attractive than private land because the only payment is the land tax.

Purchase and sale

EU accession

Of the ten EU accession countries, only Lithuania and Poland have relatively active land markets. Furthermore, the purchase price for land varies widely among different regions. For example, land prices in some areas of rural Romania are €230–270/ha, whereas prices in some areas of Slovenia reach €25 000/ha. Although high land prices positively influence access to credit, they also make land consolidation more difficult. Low prices, in contrast, often prevent land from being used as collateral and lead to fears of land speculation.

The agricultural land market in Poland is active and relatively free. The Agricultural Property Agency estimates that approximately 2–4 percent of farmland is sold each year on the private market – about 500 000 to 1 000 000 ha annually. This is within the range of market activity for agricultural land in Western Europe.

In Lithuania, about 4 percent of all land parcels change ownership annually through market activity. In 2003, the total number of all land transactions was about 3 659 per month. In 2004, land market activity continued to increase as 7 500 natural persons submitted applications to buy over 65 000 ha of state-owned agricultural land and 156 legal entities applied to buy 34 000 ha of land (Daugaliene, 2004).

Land prices in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary and Poland are expected to grow over the next few years, although prices differ significantly among regions. Currently, the Slovakian land market is characterized by the sale of very small land areas to enlarge personal plots or to construct buildings, but not for agricultural reasons. In 2002, 0.6 percent of total agricultural land was sold. In Hungary, the land lease market rents do not correspond to land prices. For example, in some areas, land prices are higher but rents are lower because landowners use their land as unemployment insurance. Legal experts in Romania have noted that the law regarding the legal movement of land does not favour the development of the land market. Furthermore, the low prices and lack of taxation limit extension of the land market. High land transaction fees also discourage land market activity. Leasing could be a way of circumventing this situation, but it is not yet popular in Romania. Bulgaria, too, has low land prices, although they have increased slightly in recent years and the government has now created an agency to stimulate the land market, which could include state purchases of land to decrease supply.

Western CIS

The Republic of Moldova has no structural barriers to land transactions. Despite this fact, there are still very few purchase and sale transactions. Although the Russian Federation and Ukraine legally recognize private agricultural landownership, land sales are restricted both by law and in practice. For example, in Ukraine, the size of agricultural land plots is restricted until

2015 and foreign citizens and legal entities cannot acquire agro-industrial lands – they can only lease land. Furthermore, until 2007, Ukrainian citizens must demonstrate agricultural knowledge or a relevant background to be able to purchase land (Nitsevych, 2005). Belarus does not allow land transactions for agricultural land.

CIS Transcaucasus

In Armenia and Azerbaijan, there are no legal barriers to land transactions, but fewer than 1 percent of the respondents to a nationwide survey in Armenia reported buying or selling land. Purchase and sale in Armenia is constrained by the high cadastral value of land fixed by the government, which is well above current market prices, and the need to pay a substantial tax in cash based on the cadastral value when registering transactions. In Georgia, the law on agricultural landownership has been amended to make it easier for landowners to sell, mortgage and lease, and for leaseholders to engage in transactions relating to agricultural land, even while leasing it from the state or private citizens. In Georgia, at least 3 000 agricultural land sales have taken place since the beginning of 2000, although this figure still represents less than 1 percent of agricultural land holdings and less than 2 percent of all agricultural households. In both Azerbaijan and Georgia, foreigners are excluded from the land market.

The Balkans

Land transactions and land markets in the Balkan countries are infrequent, inefficient and risky. In The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the land market is dominated by the public sector, particularly with regard to the sale and lease of state-owned land (Dimova and Cenova, 2004). Inheritance is the primary type of transaction for agricultural land, whereas purchase and sale are more common for urban lands. Leases are a third (minor) source of transactions, although in some regions up to 25 percent of all farmers lease

in land. Lack of access to credit was cited by farmers as the most frequent constraint to leasing in land. Notably, the price for rural agricultural land is very low. In Serbia too, the land market is only active in urban areas and prices for rural agricultural land are extremely low (Bozinovic, 2004).

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, in addition to the typical constraints seen in transition economies, there are several other reasons why land transactions are rare. First, there was extensive destruction of property during the war – an estimated 10 000 ha of arable land is unusable because of mine infestation and bomb damage. Second, the focus on return of property and the related application, hearing, decision and execution processes makes it difficult to establish title to many parcels. Finally, many displaced property owners would be in minority status if they were to return to their formerly occupied properties and, as such, they are showing no sign of wanting to return.

In Croatia, the agricultural land market was not legal until 1998. However, unclear landownership, poorly functioning leases, incomplete privatization of land used by former state agricultural companies and a lack of clarity in property laws have impeded the process of developing a functional land market. There are also major inconsistencies between the land registry and the cadastre. Continuing ethnic conflict and land disputes have also taken precedence over governmental focus on updating agricultural land law. Furthermore, people who have received land seem to be keeping it as a social safety net.

Albanian land markets have only begun to develop relatively recently owing to earlier restrictions on the sale of land. Between 1998 and late 2004, 30 000 transactions of agricultural land were registered and land sale records seem to indicate rising land prices (Lushaj, 2004). Before 1995, the sale of land was prohibited. However, informal sales were common, which caused titling and registration problems and increased insecurity. Foreign citizens still cannot purchase land, but they may lease cropland. Current obstacles to a

viable Albanian land market include public uncertainty as to whether land can be properly bought and sold, and a fear of divesting the family of land.

Mortgage

EU accession

All the EU accession countries have quite limited land-based lending. The primary reason is that the market for land is reasonably new and is still underperforming. In some countries, land titles are not clear or secure. In others, land prices are very low. While in many countries this situation has changed in the last few years, banks still perceive titles to be insecure. Several EU accession countries do not have separate mortgage laws, but instead have mortgage rules within the Civil Code, the Code of Civil Procedure, the Commercial Code and Laws on Contracts. As these separate laws are amended to meet the needs of a market economy, the foreclosure rules and priorities are often conflicting.

In Estonia, Hungary and Lithuania, mortgage lending is at an early state of development and is severely constrained by the restriction on landownership by legal entities, because banks are less willing to take land as collateral if they cannot take ownership of the land in foreclosure proceedings. At a minimum, this would probably lead banks only to lend on the security of agricultural land that is clearly marketable and has value well in excess of the loan amount, so that sale to a third party at an acceptable price at a foreclosure auction would be virtually assured.

In Slovenia, credit services have been slow to develop, even though land prices approach the highest levels in Europe and are also high compared with the land profitability prospects. Land markets in Slovenia have been hampered by the lack of a mortgage-banking infrastructure. The central problem is the inability of the financial sector to engage in true, long-term secured lending because the sector is undercapitalized and cannot afford to have money lent out for extended periods of time.

In Slovenia, there are no laws, statutes or regulations that specifically deal with mortgage banking services or protecting consumers.

Western CIS

In the western CIS countries, there are few private landowners and few land transactions – mortgages of agricultural land are therefore very limited. In the Republic of Moldova, the Law on Pledge was amended in 1999 to make land mortgage easier. In the Russian Federation, mortgage law excludes agricultural land. In Ukraine, the new Land Code provides the right to pledge (mortgage) privately owned land. However, only Ukrainian banks may act as pledges (mortgagees) and then only if they comply with the requirements established by the law. The Belarus Civil Code of 1999 relaxed leasing and mortgage restrictions, and leaseholders can now sublease and mortgage their use rights to land. However, the mortgage of lease rights is highly unlikely in a non-market economy.

CIS Transcaucasus

Although mortgage legislation has been passed in the Transcaucasus states, few, if any, mortgage transactions have taken place.

The Balkans

Mortgage lending is rare in these countries. Although all the countries have laws that would theoretically permit mortgage lending, none has the necessary support structures (reliable and searchable mortgage registration systems) or support institutions (courts prepared to conduct fair foreclosure proceedings, for example) in place to allow mortgage lending to thrive.

The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has laws allowing and regulating the right of mortgage, but the lack of development in the land market and the lengthy procedures for foreclosure have made mortgages very rare. A new 2004 law of contractual pledge addresses regulation and registration of mortgages, and aims to increase the number of mortgage

transactions (Dimova and Cenova, 2004). Serbia currently has a draft law on mortgages. It is worth noting, however, that although banks in Serbia do provide mortgages for real estate investments, none of them process mortgages for agricultural land owing to the very low prices of land (Bozinovic, 2004). In Croatia, there is little, if any, mortgage lending. The problem of loan collateral in agricultural lending is aggravated by the lack of a functional land market and poor land registers. Monopolistic market structures, inefficient markets for farmers and inappropriate agricultural education and training further contribute to insufficient competitiveness (Tanic and Lonc, 2003).

The Albanian Civil Code provides for mortgage lending and the Immovable Property Registration System provides for the registration of mortgages. However, although banks accept land as collateral for agricultural production loans or housing purchases, they do not accept land as collateral for agricultural land (Lushaj, 2004).

LAND ADMINISTRATION – REGISTRATION AND TITLING SYSTEMS

EU accession

Government land administration programmes in the EU accession countries generally consist of land registration, land appraisal and tax administration, land use planning and, in some cases, consolidation programmes. Donors have placed a great deal of focus on registration in EU accession countries. There have been considerable differences among countries in the effectiveness of several key registration issues.

In the past, many of these countries had separate land and cadastral registers (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia and Slovenia) and in some cases (Lithuania) even a separate mortgage registry. In the case of Romania, two different registration systems were in place. Donors have worked assiduously to promote integration and modernization of the systems. However, as a result of the

vast increase in the number of land parcels created during restitution, there can be a significant lag between land possession and title issuance.

In many countries, restitution of agricultural land has created small plots and has spatially dispersed land. These countries have struggled to encourage land consolidation without interfering excessively with the market. People who keep small shares of land as insurance are not interested in giving them up, and land consolidation in general, whether simple or complex, can be costly and difficult to implement without coercive tactics or expensive incentives for landholders.

Western CIS

The western CIS countries have all started registering land (with the exception of Belarus). However, land legislation requires registration in the state land cadastre and demarcation of boundaries on the ground. In addition, the State Registration Act (2002) requires that both real land rights and contractual rights are registered (Vaskovich, 2005). In the Russian Federation, implementation of land registration has been problematic, partly as a result of a lack of funds to survey land shares. In the Republic of Moldova, privatized agricultural land was registered at the village level, but the law provides that such land can be the subject of transactions only if it is also registered in the regional registry. A three-year United States Agency for International Development (USAID) project is currently under way (2003–2006) to rectify the errors of past privatization by working with the National Cadastre Agency in the Republic of Moldova. The goal of this project is to address questions regarding how land plots were previously divided, and then to create more certainty about parcel ownership, as well as to offer general assistance with facilitating land market transactions. In Ukraine, the registration system is still underdeveloped and Ukraine estimates that a five-year donor-funded project will be necessary to complete the land registration of titles.

CIS Transcaucasus

Land titling has been a topic that both the World Bank and USAID have emphasized in the CIS. Azerbaijan has a single centralized land cadastral documentation system. In Georgia, the government privatized and transferred many land parcels to rural households, but only began to register them in June 1999. In Georgia, USAID is providing assistance for land titling, including surveying, registration and titling parcels in 51 regions of Georgia. By the end of 2001, more than 1 300 000 agricultural land parcels and 9 800 enterprise land parcels were registered. Furthermore, the sale of 2 000 enterprises and 3 700 agricultural land parcels was supported (Ebanoidze, 2005).

USAID also supported a three-year land titling and registration project in Armenia. However, the process of surveying and preparing titles has been markedly slow and inefficient.

The Balkans

The status of land titling and registration systems varies but is generally underdeveloped and unreliable, with the exception of Albania, where land registration is nearing completion. Albania is also one of the few countries to have created a government agency (Immovable Property Registration System) to focus directly and solely upon land and land market support. This agency was the result of a USAID land registration project that was active from 1994 to 2001. By November 2000, all district registration offices were open and operating, and it was estimated that 65–80 percent of all properties would undergo first registration by the end of 2002. This goal has since been moved back to 2006 (Lushaj, 2004).

In The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the initial registration of parcels has not been completed and subsequent transactions have not been recorded. It is estimated that within six years, the real estate cadastre will replace the land use cadastre (Dimova and Cenova, 2004). Bosnia and Herzegovina

have had a framework in place for land titling and registration since the 1930s. Land registers are updated manually and many transactions have not been recorded because of political instability and a 15 percent purchase tax on real estate. Although modernized in 1984, the system was only 10 percent functional in 1999 and the lack of comprehensive registration is still an obstacle to a functional land market. Croatia has a cadastral and land registration system, but both of them are incomplete. The World Bank is currently financing a project to aid completion. The World Bank is also helping to finance the establishment and modernization of the real estate cadastre and registration system in Serbia to increase confidence in the system and to lower land transaction costs (Bozinovic, 2004).

CONCLUSION

Most Eastern European countries are progressing towards private ownership and management of land and a viable land market. The process of change varies with each country, based on their historical situation and current political will.

It is remarkable to consider the progress that has been made since 1989–91 in terms of the progression of agricultural land privatization and titling. Essentially, the restitution process in almost all instances is nearly complete and, where it is not finished, progress continues at a rapid pace. The second phase of the restitution or privatization process is under way in a number of countries. This entails determining how to dispose of state-owned lands that were unclaimed or never subject to privatization. In most cases, disbursement of these lands now involves their sale on the open market. In other instances, where land shares were issued, the second phase of the process has involved demarcation and issuance of title to shares, a process that is under way in a number of countries, but that has stalled in others. In most countries, agricultural land can now be legally purchased and sold.

Despite significant progress in privatization efforts, agriculture is still dominated by large, collective-style farms in most countries. Farm breakup did not necessarily accompany the privatization process and overall there has been little change in the structure of the average farm. In some countries, cosmetic reorganization of farm assets did occur, but this has not proved to be a meaningful step in the transition to small family farms.

Land markets in Eastern Europe have been very slow to develop. Even though agricultural land is freely transferable in many countries, land markets are generally underfunctioning. Many of the emerging markets are still hampered by the slowness of the initial privatization and titling of land. Lease of agricultural land is much more common than purchase and sale, and there are only a few countries where land sales are on a par with Western Europe. Furthermore, prices vary widely across the region and within countries, and are often quite depressed. Finally, almost all countries have sought to prohibit the sale of land to foreigners, although this prohibition is gradually being lifted.

The development of land-based lending through mortgage in the region has been predictably slowed by the lack of functionality in the purchase and sale market. Other factors that have served to limit access to credit include inadequate legal frameworks for mortgage, poor title security, low land prices and banker reluctance.

In contrast, modernization of land administration practices is an area where significant progress has been achieved throughout the region. In part, this progress has been donor driven, resulting from donor emphasis on titling and registration projects. Although these projects were designed in part to foster greater title security, they have not yet borne fruit in terms of achieving traction in stimulating agricultural land markets.

Overall, much systemic progress has been made over the past 15 years in paving the way for functional agricultural land

markets, most notably in the privatization of land and the development of land administration systems. These legal and policy changes have laid the groundwork for the continued improvement in land market activity. Future improvement depends on political will and the support and development of institutions that will foster land market activity.

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Décentralisation et développement du gouvernement local en zone rurale en Amérique latine

Une nouvelle structure municipale plus dynamique voit le jour en Amérique latine, ouvrant la voie à une transformation législative importante déterminant un contrôle accru des collectivités locales sur l'organisation institutionnelle locale, une gestion de plus en plus durable des ressources naturelles et une réduction de la pauvreté. Toutefois, la transformation des zones rurales nécessite des intrants extérieurs pour lancer des processus d'appropriation des institutions par la population locale, autour de priorités définies conjointement dans le cadre des processus de planification et de décision et qui soient à la fois participatifs et itératifs, s'inspirant de l'expérience du terrain et illustrant les meilleures pratiques. Le rôle des projets externes dans ces processus est uniquement celui d'un médiateur qui observe, facilite l'interaction entre les acteurs locaux et documente les processus du point de vue technique.

Descentralización y desarrollo de la administración local en las zonas rurales de América Latina

En América Latina se está revitalizando la estructura municipal, lo que sienta las bases para una importante transformación legislativa encaminada a lograr un mayor control de la organización institucional local por parte de los entes locales, una ordenación de los recursos naturales cada vez más sostenible y la reducción de la pobreza. Sin embargo, esta transformación de las zonas rurales requiere contribuciones externas para iniciar procesos de apropiación de las instituciones por parte de los habitantes locales, basados en prioridades determinadas conjuntamente en los procesos de toma de decisiones y planificación y que son, al mismo tiempo, participatorias e iterativas, teniendo en cuenta la experiencia adquirida sobre el terreno y las mejores prácticas documentadas. La función de los proyectos externos en estos procesos no es sino la de un facilitador que observa, facilita la interacción entre los actores locales y documenta técnicamente los procesos.

Decentralization and local government development in rural areas of Latin America¹

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A reinvigorated municipal structure is emerging in Latin America, setting the scene for an important legislative transformation that should give local rural constituencies greater control over local institutional organization, ensure increasingly sustainable management of natural resources and reduce poverty. This transformation of rural areas does, however, require external inputs to initiate appropriation of institutions by local people. Priorities in the process should be identified through participatory and iterative decision-making and planning, informed by learning gained from field experience and documented best practices. The role of external projects in the process should be solely facilitative, enabling interaction among local actors and documenting the processes from a technical standpoint.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROCESSES IN THE LEMPIRA DEPARTMENT, HONDURAS

The Lempira Sur project was established at the end of the 1980s to prevent drought from causing severe famine. The project was implemented by the Government of Honduras with technical support from FAO and financial resources from the Government of the Netherlands between 1990 and 2004.

The major priority of the project was initially food security. The premise for achieving food security was that food needed to be produced locally, rather than being supplied from external sources. Traditionally, local staple foods were produced on the hillslopes with inclinations that averaged more than 30°. Food was produced through slash-and-burn agriculture, a legacy from precolonial times and which has a strong cultural value. In the past, this was a sustainable agricultural

practice, as people could migrate freely after each crop, and it had been successful in feeding local populations for millennia. However, by the early 1990s, it was no longer sustainable owing to a number of factors, namely:

- population growth in mountainous areas, which had rendered the possibility of migrating after each crop increasingly unfeasible;
- control of the valleys by plantation activities, especially by fruit corporations;
- massive introduction of livestock in tropical areas;
- privatization and other changes affecting land tenure.

Local food production was the first measure proposed to deal with the changed situation. It was also recognized that the impact of drought could have been minimized had the farmers adopted more sustainable production practices. It was thus concluded that the Lempira Sur project should promote the adoption, on the widest possible scale, of sustainable agricultural practices that preserved, rather than destroyed, the existing vegetation.

The project aimed to respond to a crisis that did not discriminate between social

¹ This article draws on experiences from Latin America. Most findings, however, result from visits of the author to the Lempira Department in Honduras during the 1990s and the first three years of this decade (for more on this, see Evaluation Mission Report 2002 [unpublished]). A longer version of this article can be found at: http://www.fao.org/sd/dim_in2/in2_050501a1_en.htm

groups, but had an evenly disruptive impact on all sectors. It therefore helped to bridge gaps between the better-off and the marginalized population groups, thus creating the conditions for alliances between both sectors and a common approach to addressing the crisis.

At the same time, the project enabled the development of the local institutional arena, which was largely controlled by traditional institutions such as the *patronato* (board of management). The first step was to modernize the structure of the *patronato* in order for it to respond more effectively to the needs of the democratic societies evolving in Central America.

One important step in that process was the establishment of sectoral commissions within the communities to address the various aspects of the agricultural and food security crisis. The process of establishing these communal commissions (described in more detail below) was key to devolving power beyond the existing local elite.

Once the commissions had become operational, it became clear that the *patronato* was no longer capable of responding to the increasingly structured and organized demands of grassroots organizations. With the support of the project, communities engaged in a dialogue about the need for an alternative designation for the *patronato*, which subsequently evolved into the community development council, or *Consejo de Desarrollo Comunitario* (CODECO).

In the case of Lempira, local development councils were at the heart of the project's success in eliminating the burning of fields. CODECOs also played an essential role in negotiating better uses for upstream water reserves by putting pressure on cattle farmers to prevent their animals from feeding near the water, thus greatly protecting the vital natural resources.

KEY FACTORS FOR PROJECT SUCCESS

Long-term commitment to rural development

From the outset, the donor (the Government of the Netherlands), the recipient (the Government of Honduras)

and the executing agency (FAO) agreed that the socio-economic, institutional and environmental transformation needed to achieve food security and rural development in Lempira Sur would require a long-term commitment and investment. Thus, the project was planned to run for a minimum of ten years. This enabled project management to:

- build a multidisciplinary team of technical staff who were not only professionally qualified but also willing to adopt a learning approach and view themselves as local process facilitators (rather than subject matter experts) who would teach the local populations how and what to do;
- build a relationship of trust with and an understanding of local partners and social power relations;
- undertake field-level experiments of different approaches to the bottom-up consolidation of institutions, as well as to the management of natural resources in order to identify best practices;
- counterbalance the influence (on the project's budget and other resources) of those representing "hard sciences" (agronomists, veterinarians, forest engineers, etc.). In practice, this was not always possible, as such project staff tended to be allocated a greater share of budgetary resources for most of the project's duration, leaving less for experts from the "soft sciences" (sociologists, planners, communication specialists, etc.), who were not considered to be technical staff.

Operating in an institutional vacuum can be advantageous

When project operations commenced, the presence of institutions in Lempira Sur was limited to: religious entities, especially the Catholic Church; the municipalities; and one key non-governmental organization (NGO), financed by religious NGOs, i.e. the Central Committee for Water and Integrated Development of Lempira (or *Comité Central Pro Agua y Desarrollo Integral de Lempira* [COCEPRADIL]). This NGO had been

established in the 1970s to foster water supply projects in remote communities, which it achieved with highly successful results and to the satisfaction of local communities. The general institutional vacuum, together with the positive record of COCEPRADIL, helped the project gain credibility in the department, as people had no reason to distrust government projects, which is a frequent reaction in many rural areas of Latin America.

Choosing entry points that cut across social differentiation

Many development projects that target small communities in rural areas tend to perpetuate social differentiation by putting the resources in the hands of wealthier groups. The Lempira Sur project successfully addressed this issue by identifying constraints that affected the better-off as well as marginalized groups, in order to work on common ground where both groups would be equally interested and did not have conflicting interests.

One such example was that all social groups lived in homes of a similar design, with the kitchen in the house and a grain store loft above. The kitchen stoves consumed a large quantity of firewood and generated a large amount of smoke, which rose into the loft. While this preserved the stored grains and repelled insects, women and children, especially the youngest, spent much of the day inhaling this smoke. This had a devastating effect on their health, and local clinics were registering 70 percent female admittance for respiratory complaints related to smoke inhalation.

The establishment of communal commissions addressed sectoral issues such as housing, education, health and pathways, which would assist people in their efforts to restructure their houses. These sectoral commissions were led by volunteers.

Over time, these commissions accessed important in-kind and cash resources from the project and the local communities, to the extent that their negotiation capacities increased considerably, thus empowering

different actors within the communities and enabling their active participation in negotiation processes within the *patronato*. It was then only a matter of time (two to three years) before communities realized that the *patronato* was not capable of addressing the increasingly organized demands from the sectoral commissions. The project then facilitated communal negotiations, which eventually led to the establishment of the CODECO.

Empowered through the bottom-up consolidation of their political capacities, CODECOs soon became the platform for communal decision-making. However, given their limited economies of scale, they needed to link to higher-level institutions in order to: (a) manage natural resources within the local watersheds in a sustainable and productive manner; and (b) access and influence resources and services provided by central government and other actors. The only appropriate institutional forms present in the region were the local municipalities (discussed below).

Establishing strategic alliances

From the outset, the project established a strategic alliance with the local bishop. The *celebradores de la palabra*, or local lay leaders, responded positively to the project proposal because its economic activities complemented their social struggles. However, this created tensions with the local priests who, like other local power brokers, found it difficult at times to adjust to a development strategy that implied a loss of patronage and the continual need to earn a leadership role by providing concrete answers to concrete problems. However, those priests who understood the logic behind the project's approach (the institutionalization of decision-making processes) became its strongest allies. When the bishop was actively involved, the problems were resolved. When his involvement declined as a result of ill health, tensions with certain priests rose, particularly as lay leaders tended to prioritize activities that led to material benefits for their supporters.

Using constitutional tools to promote participation

The project promoted the use of such constitutional tools as the *plebiscito* (referendum) when communities needed to resolve confrontational issues. For instance, when the powerful and wealthy cattle producers of one municipality opposed the idea of prohibiting the use of fire in agriculture and cattle ranching, the mayor, with support from the municipal development council or *Consejo de Desarrollo Municipal Ampliado* (CODEM) decided to hold a municipality-wide *plebiscito*, the result of which would be a municipal law. The major landowner and *cacique* (traditional chief) of the municipality was convinced that he could manipulate the local population to vote in favour of allowing the use of fire in agriculture and cattle ranching, and so agreed to hold the referendum and promised to respect its outcome. The mayor and the Municipal Environment Committee, with the support of the local priest and the son of the traditional *cacique*, rallied the population in favour of the local ordinance banning the use of fire, while the *cacique* rallied his supporters, offering financial incentives. The *plebiscito* was won by a majority of more than 75 percent, and the power of the *cacique* was broken.

No incentives to manipulate opinion

Project management staff consistently refused to offer local populations incentives, which many development projects use to persuade local people to pursue approaches promoted by a project. By consistently rejecting this practice, the Lempira Sur project succeeded in building local ownership of project resources.

STATE REFORM, DECENTRALIZATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Enabling factors for decentralization

Decentralization has been high on the policy agenda for many decades. However, in the period before structural adjustment programmes and globalization became popular concepts, decentralization was viewed as a managerial tool to improve the

effectiveness of sectoral public institutions (such as ministries of agriculture and health) at the local level. Instead of being considered as a decentralization process, it was a process of institutional de-concentration.

Nevertheless, significant developments in Central America have created new opportunities for a paradigmatic reform of the state that would enable cross-sectoral decentralization processes as a result of the following factors:

1. The implementation of structural adjustment policies has dramatically changed the institutional setup in most developing countries, weakening the state and especially sectoral ministries, which have demonstrated little capacity to assume their new normative role. At the same time, there has been a devolution of the operational responsibilities of local governments without provision of the necessary resources. The problems encountered in implementing these changes have led to the possibility of a paradigmatic shift from sectoral planning (top-down) to territorial governance (bottom-up).
2. The return to democratic government in many developing countries – especially those of Latin America – has resulted in constitutional modifications that allow for local election of municipal authorities.
3. The signing of peace agreements in Central American countries in the 1980s and 1990s ended traumatic conflicts between right-wing paramilitary forces and left-wing guerrillas, which had had a disruptive effect on all economic activity in the region.

However, more often than not, state reform has been an argument to justify the removal of the state's role as a provider of sectoral products and social services. The strategies that were invoked to reform the state included privatization and decentralization. Although it now seems very obvious that these have not been consistently successful in bringing about the desired changes, it is also broadly admitted that (a) the initiated transition is irreversible and (b) the new situation holds promise for democratization

as long as the necessary mechanisms for community control over municipal decision-making processes are in place. These mechanisms were successfully developed in the Lempira Sur project.

One of the greatest challenges for rural development is transferring capacities to local-level institutions for the delivery of services that were previously provided by sectoral agencies of government. The advantage of such transfers is that local institutions are in close contact with the day-to-day life of the farming population. Furthermore, in a situation where communities take control of their own local institutions, they are in the best position to determine the type and quality level of services required. There is little evidence that privatization of services can significantly improve their delivery for small farmer populations. In contrast, there is increasing recognition that representational institutions consolidated from the bottom-up will enable improved delivery of essential services, significantly enhancing the capacities of states to satisfy the requirements of their populations.

Constraints on rural development

Rural dwellers have traditionally been viewed as suppliers of food for home and market consumption. However, recent technological and economic developments (such as genetically modified organisms and the liberalization and globalization of trade) have questioned the role of small farmers as suppliers of food for the market. The removal of government subsidies, the prevailing low prices of commodities, quality standards and the increasing presence of supermarket chains in even medium- and small-sized towns are pushing rural dwellers out of agricultural markets and into urban environments as an underexploited labour force.

The importance of preserving the presence of rural dwellers in their places of origin is broadly recognized by governments in developing as well as in developed countries. However, rural dwellers are facing increasing difficulties in competing on

the market. In the past, most countries of Central America subsidized the production of such staple foods as maize and beans by guaranteeing threshold purchase prices. This practice has been abandoned by governments in the framework of regional and global free trade agreements.

This article does not analyse the pros and cons of free trade agreements; it does, however, contend that thousands, if not millions, of small farmers are being pushed out of farming activities because of their inability to compete with products produced by large corporations enjoying unprecedented economies of scale and applying technological innovations that are far beyond the reach of small farmers. This leads to production cost gaps that cannot be bridged.

Decentralization requires bottom-up development of local-level institutions

An essential condition for the successful decentralization of capacities to local-level institutions is that these institutions must be deeply rooted in civil society.

The primary institutional setting in rural areas is the household.² Most families, even those residing in the remotest rural areas, live in villages composed of more than one household. Thus, the first challenge is for these families to be involved with local community organization. Once a village has an institution to represent it, the families (whatever their nature may be) can begin their empowerment process through their integration into the municipal structure.

These institutions are *representative*. It is important to make this clarification in order not to confuse these institutions with producers' organizations and financial organizations such as credit unions. Producers' organizations are an essential tool for building governance. Such organizations enable small- and

² It should be noted that households are in constant and dynamic evolution and that contemporary families do not necessarily correspond to classic nuclear family models. Contemporary families are often polarized in terms of age because children and the elderly are left behind while those of working age migrate out of rural communities.

medium-sized farmer households to build the economies of scale required to compete on the market. They have also played a key role in Lempira. For example, several communal banks were established. Some have been more successful than others but they have all helped build the economic capacities of farmers.

It should also be noted that producers' organizations may have conflicting interests with representative institutions. For instance, an interest group (e.g. a forestry cooperative) within a community may be very interested in cutting down trees for the production of fuelwood, in contrast with the overall community needs of preserving the vegetation cover for the production of water. It is thus very important to differentiate clearly between representative organizations (belonging to the municipal structure) and other forms of people's organizations, including NGOs, cooperatives and private companies.

Alternative sources of livelihoods

The role of natural resources in developing countries is increasingly evolving from that of supplying inputs for the industrial transformation of agricultural products towards that of providing environmental services for local communities and the global population. Environmental services may consist of the supply of public goods for (a) basic survival, such as water and oxygen, and (b) recreational purposes in the form of landscapes, cultural diversity and rural tourism.

Recognition that rural livelihoods are under threat as a result of trade liberalization and the spread of supermarket chains is key to devising new livelihood strategies for rural families and appropriate responses from the representative organizations under discussion. Only a clear understanding of the challenges facing rural dwellers can improve the chances for success of decentralization processes. As discussed below, the *quality of financial capital* held by a municipality is a function of the proportion of capital generated from local tax payments *vis-à-*

vis the proportion from central government contributions. In view of this equation, it is clear that only when the economy is active in rural areas will institutions representing farmers be financially strong. It is therefore essential to identify alternative sources of livelihood for the farming populations that have traditionally relied on agricultural production for their livelihoods.

THE MUNICIPAL STRUCTURE

Importance of municipalities in Latin America

After religion and language, probably the strongest and most durable heritage from Spanish colonization of the region is the *municipal structure*.

The strong presence of municipalities is partly the result of the void left by sectoral institutions (such as ministries of agriculture and their extension and related services) and other institutions previously present in rural areas. Tables 1 and 2 describe the strengths and weaknesses of municipalities.

The six links in the municipal chain

In order to allow a participatory democratic process of budgetary and political planning to flourish, municipalities should play a role in linking families with higher-level decision-making bodies through the consolidation of a municipal chain. The municipal chain is composed of six links: the family, the community, the municipality, the intermunicipal association or *mancomunidad*, the departmental/provincial association of *mancomunidades* and the national association of municipalities.

First link: the family

The first link in the municipal chain is the family. Families in the present millennium differ significantly from the traditional nuclear family structure, and they will continue to evolve in the future. Whatever their structure, families remain the first socio-institutional reference for individuals. The terminology of some demographers of the 1970s and 1980s defined families as the "basic cell" of society, and this still holds true.

TABLE 1

Strengths of municipalities

Asset	Description
Presence	In Honduras, municipalities exist throughout the national territory, and the whole territory – from the village, through the <i>patronato</i> or the CODECO up to the municipal association in the capital of Honduras – is covered by the municipal chain in the sense that the law does not recognize territories without municipal jurisdiction
Legitimacy	Mayors are elected by popular vote. Their mandate can be revoked by <i>cabildo abierto</i> , or open town council. In Honduras, municipalities are administrated by a municipal development council (CODEM) that has the power to represent wide sectors of civil society. These CODEMs are integrated from the submunicipal level and can be represented at higher levels through intermunicipal associations or even at the national level. An important challenge is to strengthen CODEMs' permeability to participation from rural producers or residents from the most remote localities
Cross-coverage	CODEMs' territorial mandate enables them to cover a wide spectrum of responsibilities that cut across different sectors, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustainable use of natural resources • food security • risk management • local tax collection • construction and maintenance of infrastructure for the support of production • supply of health services, electricity, education for children and adults, etc.

TABLE 2

Weaknesses of municipalities

Constraint	Description	Challenge
Control of benefits by local elites	The main risk for cross-sectional decentralization processes of subnational entities is that, when transferring responsibilities to local entities, the area's most powerful social actors will take ownership of the benefits, resulting in their concentration rather than their intended distribution	Promote the construction of submunicipal structures that permit the control of benefits by the community. Increase the proportion of funds coming from local contributions as a strategy for shifting accountability downwards
Paternalistic and patronizing practices	Probably as a result of the colonial origin, there is a deeply rooted culture of paternalism and patronage among members of municipal institutions, from the village level to the heads of the municipalities An example of this attitude is the practice whereby the municipality hands out gifts (instead of providing a service) to local members of civil society in exchange for their political support	Build a change of attitude that will enable local civil society to demand useful services for its social and economic benefits. To achieve this, it is necessary to build the municipal chain starting from the villages and the marginalized base sectors, so that this may transform the municipality into a service provider with concrete proposals for action
Poverty and financial dependency	Municipalities, especially in rural areas, receive scarce financial resources from central government, and their few personnel lack the necessary training, as a result of frequent turnover	Increase local financial inputs, which requires breaking the vicious circle of rural poverty with support from appropriate production projects for the rural areas, and thus creating a culture of participatory auditing
Accountability	Mayors depend administratively on the central government, from which they receive their salaries and to which they are thus accountable; for this reason, they usually feel more committed to satisfying their superiors' demands rather than supplying the services required by their local clients	Strengthen local fiscal contribution in order to create a culture of participatory auditing
Municipal fragmentation	Rural communities are usually small and lack the economies of scale necessary to make the investment required for developing an infrastructure for local production Fragmentation also limits access to policy decision-makers and central levels of the government	Establish new and strengthen existing intermunicipal associations (<i>mancomunidades de municipios</i>) in order to develop economies of scale Strengthen intermediate levels of the government

Socio-economic demographic trends (including the anti-agricultural bias of structural adjustment policies) are increasingly pushing millions of rural dwellers of working age to migrate to ever more congested urban environments. This migratory process is not only massive, but it is also highly selective in terms of age.

It mainly involves the working age population, with the consequence that populations left behind are becoming polarized in terms of age, i.e. children and the elderly.

An important challenge for governments and other actors concerned with the development of rural areas is to restore the

appeal of living in rural areas. Strategies could include:

- compensating rural dwellers for managing the environment in a sustainable manner. This compensation could come in the form of payment for *environmental services*;
- developing tourism in rural areas, which are increasingly attractive for urban populations in need of the solace that can be found in a natural, pollution-free environment and areas free of violence deriving from crime and social unrest.

However, the greatest challenge in establishing strong roots of democracy and economic development lies in strengthening family ties. For this, the family needs to be linked to the community.

Second link: the community

The second institutional link in the municipal chain consists of communal institutions at village level. While they may vary from one country to another (and even between regions within these countries), communal institutions in Latin America often share the same names, such as *patronato*, *parroquia* or *vereda*.

These names are a legacy of Spanish colonization and immediately denote the paternalistic nature of their roots. These institutions have a number of shortcomings, for example frequent domination by powerful local groups, partisan politics and a strong bias in favour of the male population. By strengthening these institutions there is also risk of strengthening the control of resources by the more powerful to the detriment of the marginalized.

Third link: the municipality

As an innovation in the institutional arena, the Lempira Sur project successfully promoted the establishment of the widened municipal development council (CODEM Ampliado). This innovation has produced a broader representation in the traditional CODEM to include people from remote communities in municipal planning and policy-making processes. In practice,

this institutional structure enables the participation of one representative from each village (with one vote each) in CODEM planning and other exercises.

On a number of significant occasions, the importance of this structure has resulted in reorienting scarce municipal funds from a traditional *pro-urban bias*³ towards an increasingly greater proportion being assigned for (a) solving urgent problems (such as access to drinking-water) in isolated communities; and/or (b) addressing investment priorities for the development of rural production.

Until now, there has been little evaluation of whether the overall capacities of municipalities to promote rural development have increased in recent years. However, the extent of success of a decentralization programme could easily be measured by evaluating how, or simply whether, the three dimensions of decentralization (i.e. the *political*, *financial* and *administrative*) have evolved within municipalities. Considerations for measuring decentralization could include the following:

Political capacities

- the extent to which CODECO representatives from small villages participate in municipal planning exercises and decisions over the use of municipal budget allocations (the Lempira Sur project achieved this by facilitating the establishment of the CODEM Ampliado) and thus the extent to which the municipality is pursuing a truly bottom-up approach in the design of its decision-making processes;
- the extent to which municipal authorities are accountable down the line to local constituencies (here again, the CODEM Ampliado was a key tool);
- the balance between genders in decision-making processes;

³ In the increasingly blurred divide between urban and rural, the concept "rural" here describes villages of fewer than 5 000 people, and sometimes even fewer than 1 000. The *pro-urban bias* is reflected in the fact that the lion's share of municipal budgets is used for the construction of urban facilities such as the central village park, the school or the main street.

- the extent to which municipal services are reaching remote communities (a strong CODECO can ensure this);
- the chance that representatives of small villages can be elected municipal mayor;
- the extent to which electoral decisions are based on partisan preferences rather than policy priorities;⁴
- the capacity of municipalities to influence higher levels of policy decision-making. This capacity is frequently a function of municipal integration into municipal associations that increase negotiation capabilities *vis-à-vis* regional and national government decision-making processes.
- the extent to which the municipality is investing in:
 - a) basic requirements such as drinking-water supply, electricity and telephone networks;
 - b) the sustainable management of natural resources, such as watersheds;
 - c) risk management activities;
 - d) production and marketing infrastructure;
- the extent of municipal participation in the *mancomunidad* and its institutional development.

Financial capacities

The financial capacities of a municipality consist of budgetary and service allocations. Most municipalities in rural areas are dependent to a high degree (usually up to 90 percent) on contributions from external sources. In the course of the past decade, new actors are beginning to fund municipalities. These include bi- and multilateral donors, social funds, etc.

The *quality of the capital* held by a municipality is a function of the proportion of its funds coming from internal sources. The higher this proportion, the healthier the municipal finances, in terms of downward accountability. Thus, a key challenge for the municipal chain is to strengthen its capacities to raise income from local taxes.

Administrative capacities

Administrative capacities consist of the human and infrastructure capacities at the disposal of a given municipality, such as:

- the professional qualification of the mayors and their staff;
- the quality of available office premises, office equipment, electricity, telephone lines, access to the Internet, etc.;
- the extent to which national programmes are reaching the municipality;

Fourth link: the intermunicipal association or mancomunidad

In addition to the above-listed problems, which are of an internal nature, municipalities also face problems of an external nature, for example: (a) their lack of economies of scale; (b) their lack of political influence in regional and national levels of policy decision-making; and (c) the mismatch between geographical realities and institutional dynamics. To address these problems, municipalities are increasingly resorting to different sorts of horizontal intermunicipal arrangements.

Fifth link: the departmental/provincial association of mancomunidades

This is where the municipal chain meets the central government chain. In other words, this is the point where two conflicting dynamics meet (i.e. the bottom-up and the top-down). It is therefore the point where the strength of the municipal chain will be tested. In Honduras, a new institutional structure was recently established, the *Consejo de Departamental de Lempira* (CODELEM), which has met resistance from mayors and other local actors who view the CODELEM as a top-down construction that does not reflect their internal processes.

When municipal dynamics (e.g. electoral processes, budgetary and policy planning, programme and project design, implementation and execution) are all carried out with strong civil society participation, intermunicipal associations will be empowered to obtain the best

⁴ An important limitation to the development of municipal democracy in most countries is the requirement for candidates to belong to registered political parties.

results in negotiating with provincial or department-level authorities, irrespective of partisan dynamics.

Where such intermunicipal associations are strong, they will dramatically curtail the costs of programme and project design and implementation, as well as the costs of accountability and monitoring and evaluation, thus greatly contributing to the cost-effective management of scarce provincial budgetary resources.

The complexity of this challenge is self-evident. In many countries of Africa and of the Latin American region, provincial and department governors are designated by central governments. A large number of countries of the Latin American region, however, have mechanisms for the popular election of governors. Whatever the case may be, provincial governors tend to be more responsive to central government authorities up the line than to local constituencies down the line; this is only natural, given their relative distance with respect to those populations.

Sixth link: the national association of municipalities

In a number of countries, national associations of municipalities have emerged over the years. These experiences are still very recent and face various limitations, including:

- control of urban over rural municipalities;
- partisan control;
- financial control by external actors;
- trade union behaviour.

However, a national association of municipalities offers a number of advantages. For example, a strong national association of municipalities can become a legitimate interlocutor with central government authorities up to the level of the president of the republic. This potential capacity is a unique feature for the empowerment of rural families. Through the municipal chain, the rural family is thus in a position to influence national policy decision-making processes. Such influence enhances participatory democracy.

This means that national policies and programmes will be determined from the grassroots level. This has political, financial and administrative advantages, for example:

- political advantages as a result of civil society seeing its views reflected in national policy decision-making;
- administrative advantages in the enhanced and homogenized quality of training of mayors and mayoral candidates while still respecting local-level needs;
- financial advantages by enabling bottom-up project, programme and policy formulation processes to be borne by local-level actors. In contrast, sectoral services (e.g. extension, technical assistance, credit) can be channelled down the line by the national association of municipalities towards the lower levels at lower costs.

CONCLUSION

Rural dwellers are facing a crucial challenge for their survival. They can no longer rely only on the production of food items for self-consumption and for the market, but need to diversify their sources of income from natural resources. The management of natural resources is not only related to the sources of income for small farmers – it is also related to the management of risks associated with natural hazards such as mud slides and soil erosion. The management of natural resources needs to involve criteria of sustainability and cannot be left to the discretion of single producers. It should be undertaken within the framework of appropriate institutional structures. This article has argued that, in the case of Latin America, the management of natural resources should be integrated within a chain that links the family with national governments through municipal structures.

The municipal chain is best positioned to link poor rural producers and their families with higher decision-making levels

It is broadly recognized that the closer the institutions are located to their users, the

more effective they will be. This is known as the *principle of subsidiarity*.⁵ In the Latin American context, the institutions that are closest to civil society are the municipalities. However, while on the one hand municipalities are too *small* to reach directly into policy decisions at central government level, they are also too *big* to reach all families, especially those residing in remote rural areas. For this reason, a chain needs to be built to connect the rural producers and their families to the communal (*representative*) institutions of their villages and through them to municipal decision-making processes. The chain should continue up the line to regional intermunicipal associations and, subsequently, national associations of municipalities which will then be empowered to establish a dialogue among equals with central government decision-making bodies.

Connection between local institutional capacity building, food security and natural resources management begins at the family level

More often than not, natural resources are the main source of cash income for rural families (when not used merely for subsistence). Given the scarcity of financial resources that municipalities usually receive from central governments, municipalities increasingly rely on locally raised taxes. However, the capacity of local populations to contribute financially to the municipal tax base depends greatly on their use of natural resources as well as income obtained from off-farm economic activities. These resources seldom suffice to fulfil their livelihood requirements. This is probably the greatest hurdle to the development of rural municipal life.

Watershed management requires governance structures that go beyond the political territorial division

Watersheds frequently cross national and subnational territorial boundaries

⁵ The principle of subsidiarity is that problems should be solved at the level where they arise and should only be elevated to subsequent levels as a function of their complexity.

with no respect for cartography. Different types of dwellers settle and organize into villages and towns of different sizes beside the watershed. Depending on a number of conditions, the management of these watersheds may be more or less sustainable.

The first problem for the sustainable management of watersheds is that settlers along river basins frequently fail to see the watershed as a unity with an interdependent logic that begins at the upper part of the river and carries its problems downstream.

According to the results of participatory rural appraisal exercises carried out with facilitators from an FAO project, rural producers who do not migrate (or who no longer migrate) and who have settled along the Rio Grande in northern Argentina fail to understand that there is a connection between the origin of the watershed in the Bolivian Plateau (*Altiplano*) and the characteristics of the river downstream. Owing to this lack of awareness, rather than addressing the root issues, the settlers tend to quarrel with their immediate upstream neighbours, blaming them for the scarce water supply.

Risk is best managed by the municipal chain

When Hurricane Mitch hit Central America, the Lempira Sur project was well into the second half of its second phase, thus in the eighth year of implementation. It had already shown consistent results in addressing the environmental crisis of the early 1990s for which it had been established. The Government of the Netherlands then requested the project management to test the methodologies developed in Lempira in five other regions that had been hit by the hurricane.

Towards the end of this emergency project implementation, a mission was requested to note the lessons learned from the US\$1.5 million project.⁶ One key

⁶ *Apoyo a iniciativas locales de reconstrucción y Transformación Rural* by Tomás Lindemann, Elías Suazo and Ian Cherrett (unpublished).

conclusion of the mission was that, where social capital was in place, communities were well positioned to respond to the crisis both during the emergency post-disaster moments and in the rehabilitation phase. In Lempira, social capital had been built during the rehabilitation that followed the drought of the early 1990s. Rehabilitation had produced prevention capacities to the extent that Hurricane Mitch made little impact in Lempira. It should be recognized, however, that winds and rainfall seem to have been lighter in Lempira than in the worst affected areas of the country, and it is not yet known to what extent this reduced the impact.

Decentralization processes require strong institutions at the subnational level

Devolving responsibilities to local authorities requires previously established political, administrative and financial capacities of the municipal structure. Development projects can play a significant role in breaking the inertia created by the paternalistic and clientelistic approaches that have traditionally undermined the development of democratic management structures. Rural development projects should help to reinvigorate the local dynamics that could connect rural families with communal organizational structures such as community development councils, and further up to municipal structures and national governments. This requires a long-term commitment of development projects in an all-encompassing perspective of processes at the local level. Projects need to build the capacities of territorially based institutions with cross-sectoral responsibilities. Municipalities and the representational institutions related to them at the sub- and supramunicipal levels (i.e. communal organizations and intermunicipal associations, respectively) offer such an environment. The role of rural development projects is to build the financial, administrative and political capacities of municipalities for the sustainable and productive management of natural resources.



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