THE AGRARIAN RURAL HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY

Status report on livelihoods, rights, and land use in selected sites in Kwazulu-Natal, Limpopo, Eastern Cape, and Western Cape

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

June 2012
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction
Tshintsha Amakhaya (TA) is an action learning platform of civil society organisations that support local community struggles in land and agrarian reform. Through action research, campaigns, and building active participation, the TA alliance seeks to enhance rural people’s capacity to secure and realise their livelihoods and rights, and to promote alternative models of land tenure and agricultural production for food sovereignty.

The partner organisations in TA are the Association for Rural Advancement (AFRA), Border Rural Committee (BRC), Farmer Support Group (FSG), Legal Resources Centre (LRC), Nkuzi Development Association (Nkuzi), Southern Cape Land Committee (SCLC), Surplus People Project (SPP), Transkei Land Services Organisation (TRALSO), Trust for Community Outreach and Education (TCOE), and Women on Farms Project (WFP).

In this summary report key findings are presented of a baseline survey conducted at the end of 2010 and the start of 2011. The aim of the survey was to identify key priorities for joint action on land access and agricultural production amongst constituent communities. For this purpose, the survey focused on income, food, livestock and crop production, and land, with a focus on farm dwellers by some partners. There were 1,743 respondents in 12 local municipalities, across 4 provinces (Figure 1).

Description of sample
An average of 194 respondents was surveyed by each organisation. Three organisations were over the average (SPP, TRALSO, and SCLC), and the remainder were under. The survey was skewed towards the Western Cape, reflecting the composition of TA.

Six tenure types were captured in the survey. From largest to smallest they are communal land (36%), farm dwellers on commercial farms (34%), land reform (redistribution and restitution) (13%), commonage (10%), informal settlements/towns (4%) and church land (2%).

Demographics
The average household size was 4, with 6,987 household members covered. Women and girls constituted 51% of surveyed household members.

82% of respondents had primary or secondary education as their highest level of education.

28% of household members had farming as their primary economic activity, as identified by respondents. 31% of men and 25% of women were identified in this category. 26% of household members were farm workers. 17% were employed off farms, and fewer than 6% had their own business or were self-employed.

24% of household members were unemployed. Unemployment was higher for women (28%) than men (19%).
Land access
84% of respondent households had access to land. 78% had access to land for cropping, and 28% had access to land for grazing, with some overlap between the two.

71% of those who specified crop land size had access to crop land of less than 1ha. 7% had more than 5ha of land for cropping.

Land sizes were small and constituted a fundamental constraint to increasing production.

Income
Along with food security, household income is used as a proxy measure for livelihoods.

Wages were the main source of income, at 58% of members in responding households (excluding children). Off-farm wages were more important than farm wages across responding households.

Social grants (mainly pensions and child support grants) were the second biggest source of income at 33%. If we disaggregate wages into off farm/on farm and full time/casual, then grants are the largest primary income category.

Own business was the primary source of income for 4% of members in responding households.
The agrarian household economy: TA status report

Agricultural production was the primary income source for only 2% of members of responding households, with another 6% having agriculture as a secondary source of income. This is despite farming being considered the primary employment for 28% of adult household members.

Wealthier households tended to have higher levels of livestock ownership, while crop production tended towards the lower income households, with a rise amongst the highest income category (more than R10 000 per month). This aligns with previous studies that show that the poorest and the richest households are most likely to engage in agricultural production. Nevertheless, we do find the ‘middle income’ households doing production.

The average household income was R2 606 per month, and the median (below which half of all cases fall) was R1 860. The average was around the level of poverty lines proposed in the literature, indicating that more than half the households live in poverty (measured by income).

Access to food
31% of households went hungry sometimes, often or always, in the previous year. 5% went hungry often or always, signifying severe food insecurity. The situation is worst in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and then E Cape, and is also worst on communal lands and in informal settlements.

More people who produced crops went hungry than those who do not produce crops. Rather than indicating that crop production means more hunger, we can assert that food insecure households tended to engage in crop production to alleviate the impact of hunger.

More people without land went hungry compared to people who have land.

Women tended to go without food first if there is not enough food for all household members.

Supermarkets were the main source of food for household consumption across all food types. It is highest for dairy and meat and lowest for fruit and vegetables.

Local markets were the main source of different food products for 10-20% of respondent households, except for maize where local markets appeared to be limited.

Own production was the primary source of maize and fruit for around a quarter of responding households. Bread and vegetables were the most often consumed types of food, and meat and chicken were the least often consumed. There were provincial variations with bread being a staple in W Cape and to an extent E Cape, and maize being a staple in KZN, Limpopo and to a lesser extent E Cape.

Livestock ownership, sales and marketing
57% of respondents kept some kind of livestock. 43% had some kind of livestock apart from poultry, and 38% had poultry, with some overlap between the two.

The most commonly held livestock were chickens (35%) and cattle (30%). Less than 20% of respondents kept goats, pigs or sheep.

KZN and E Cape had higher levels of livestock ownership, with Limpopo lowest (apart from chickens) and W Cape also on the low side.
86% of respondents had chickens and two thirds had cattle in KZN.

Respondents with commonage and communal tenure had the highest proportion of livestock by and large, with informal settlements and farm dwellers the lowest. The latter masked significant differences between labour tenants in KZN with high levels of livestock ownership, and W Cape farm dwellers with very low levels of livestock ownership.

28% of cattle herds were 10 head or more, and 60% of chicken flocks had more than 10 chickens.

Limpopo and KZN tended towards bigger cattle herds, while W Cape had bigger goat and pig herds and E Cape had the larger sheep flocks. Poultry flock sizes were more similar across provinces.

All livestock types except pigs experienced declining herd sizes over the past year, with goats and cattle faring the worst. E Cape and KZN (where herd sizes tended to be larger and ownership was higher) experienced negative growth in herd sizes, while W Cape experienced positive growth across all livestock types and Limpopo was mixed (increases in cattle and goat herd sizes, decreases in pigs and chickens).

The main reason for the decline of herds was unplanned deaths, except for pigs where forced sales and voluntary sales were equally important. Lack of medication and technical support for livestock health, and lack of food were the main reasons cited by researchers.

Livestock was mainly kept for household use, although 50-60% of respondents said they did sell pigs, cattle and sheep at times.

20% or less of livestock sales generated more than R12 000 per year (an average of R1 000 per month).

Local buyers and auctions were the main outlets for livestock sales.

Cattle were important across all four provinces.

Livestock management is a key point of intervention, especially secure access to grazing land, grazing management (camps, herding techniques), technical support (vets and dipping) and infrastructure (fencing, dipping and water).

Integrated livestock and crop production systems will orient production onto an agro-ecological path.

**Crop production, sales and marketing**

55% of respondent households produced some kind of crops.

41% of respondents produced vegetables, and 31% produced maize (although this was skewed because the sample leaned to W Cape where maize is not widely grown). 19% produced dry beans, 16% produced ‘other traditional crops’ (pumpkin, butternut, sweet potato) and less than 7% produced fruit and nuts.

There were high levels of maize and vegetable production in KZN and Limpopo in particular, but also in E Cape. Nearly 80% of respondent households produced maize in KZN, and 70% produced vegetables. In Limpopo, 69% of households produced maize and 60% produced vegetables.

W Cape exhibited low levels of crop production apart from vegetables, but even in this case less than
30% of households produced. This skewed the entire sample since W Cape constituted 56% of the sample households.

Amount of production was fairly low by commercial standards. 70% of maize producers produced at or below subsistence level (400kg/year). The vast majority of households produced less than 100kg of other types of crops.

More than 80% of households produced crops mainly for own use (except vegetables, where 70% produced mainly for own use). This reinforces the idea of poor households seeking to alleviate their own food insecurity.

Most sales generated less than R1 200 a year, although 19% of maize sales generated more than R2 400 a year.

Income earned from crop sales was between R308 (vegetables) and R1 280 (maize). Although these numbers were low, they made a contribution to households whose average income was around R2 600 a month.

Markets for crops were overwhelmingly local and informal.

A higher proportion of households who experienced hunger - often or always - were crop producers, especially of maize and vegetables. This provides further evidence of the character of crop producing households in the survey as poorer households.

We recommend an emphasis on intermediate storage and processing technologies and the facilitation of local food exchange.

**Water access and agricultural support**

The primary water sources for both crops (68%) and livestock (76%) were rivers, streams or dams. We did not ask how the water is brought to fields.

For crop production, taps/standpipes were important in Limpopo, W Cape and to a slightly lesser extent in KZN. Boreholes and rainwater harvesting were important in KZN.

Taps were the main source of water for livestock in W Cape.

Respondents generally did not pay for water (85%).

45% of respondents had received some kind of agricultural training, with Limpopo and E Cape having the highest proportions. Training was most common on land reform, communal land and commonage, and low amongst farm dwellers.

Only 16% of households were visited by a government extension officer in the past year. Extension support was more common in KZN and least common in Limpopo.

7% of households had access to production credit, with almost a quarter in E Cape but less than 10% elsewhere.
There was a positive correlation between access to extension services and amount of production, especially for maize and chickens.

There was a negative relationship between access to agricultural training and amount of production. The relationship for production credit and amount of production was mixed. This may suggest training and credit are inappropriate or not properly targeted.

**Farm worker conditions**

54% of farm workers in the respondent households were women. The majority of farm workers (78%) interviewed were permanently employed. 5% of workers were employed by labour brokers (all in Cape Winelands).

Compliance with basic conditions of employment was between 65% (maternity leave) and 92% (annual leave). 71% of workers got the minimum wage, and 79% were registered for Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF).

Compliance was generally lower for women workers than men.

**Evictions**

Four organisations asked questions about evictions, covering farm dwellers but also other respondents.

11% of households experienced eviction in the past 10 years. 13% indicated a current threat of eviction.

The situation was much worse in KZN (only amongst labour tenants in Amajuba), with 32% saying they had experienced evictions in the past ten years and 48% indicating a current threat of evictions. This is a flashpoint that TA should focus on.

17% of those in informal settlements (in Rawsonville in the Cape Winelands) indicated a current threat of evictions.

The majority of those who face evictions (73%) first looked to civil society organisations for a response, mainly to advice offices. Of the quarter that turned to government, the majority went to the municipality, despite the existence of a Department of Rural Development and Land Reform (DRDRL) national support programme.

**Organisation**

In 63% of respondent households someone was a member of an organisation. Religious organisations were the most common (87% of households), followed by burial associations (55%), political parties (54%) and farmer associations (52%). 30% of households had members in savings groups, and 20% had members in movements or campaigns. Only 9.4% of households belonged to a water forum.

Membership of religious organisations may be passive, for example members may merely attend church once a week and otherwise not be involved. So membership does not necessarily indicate active participation.

Over 80% of households in land reform, informal settlements/towns and commonage had members in some kind of organisation.
Conclusion and recommendations
While government and private sector resources are going into building a Black commercial smallholder sector to feed into formal agri-food value chains, this is likely to benefit only a small minority of producers. The survey showed that the marginalised majority of producers are TA’s core constituency.

Key recommendations
• Focus on improving agricultural production for household use and sales to local markets
• Learn from and strengthen local distribution systems
• Immediate welfare interventions for households that are often or always hungry
• Extend secure access to grazing land, including management systems
• Livestock management, especially grazing systems, fodder production and health
• Extend secure access to crop land
• Integrated livestock and crop production systems
• Intermediate processing and storage technologies for both livestock and crops
• Develop farmer-to-farmer participatory systems of sharing and learning
• Look both at basic conditions of employment and on access to land for production for farm dwellers

CONTACT DETAILS
Dr Monique Salomon (Coordinator TA)
Tel +27 (0)33 260 6173 / 6275
Cell +27 (0)83 301 2936
E-mail moniqueta@spp.org.za

Dr Stephen Greenberg (Research manager)
Tel +27 (0)11 615 8231
Cell +27 (0)83 9882 983
E-mail Stephen.greenberg@axxess.co.za

Google site https://sites.google.com/site/tshintshaintranet/

PARTNERS
E CAPE  Border Rural Committee, 16 St George’s Rd, Southernwood, East London 5201, Tel 043 742 0173
          Transkei Land Service Organization, 60 Wesley St, Mthatha, 5099, Tel 047 531 2851
KZN    Association for Rural Advancement, 123 Jabu Ndlovu St, Pietermaritzburg 3201, Tel 033 - 345-7607
          Farmer Support Group, UKZN Life Sciences Campus, Pietermaritzburg 3209, Tel 033 – 260 6075
LIMPOPO    Nkuzi Development Association, 151 Schoeman St, Polokwane 0699, Tel 015 297 6972
W CAPE  Legal Resources Centre, 54 Shortmarket St, Cape Town 8000, Tel 021 481 3000
          Southern Cape Land Committee, 01 Davidson Road, George 6530, Tel 044 803 9900
          Surplus People Project, 266 Lower Main Road, Observatory, Cape Town 7925, Tel 021 448 6505
          Trust for Community Outreach & Education, 36 Durban Rd, Mowbray 7764, Tel 021 6853033
          Women on Farms Project, 32 Four Oaks Building, Crnr Bird & Molteno St, Stellenbosch 7599, Tel 021 887 2960