Land for Equity and the GADCO Rice Project: A Sustainable Agriculture Model for Youth and for Ghana?

Gertrude Dzifa Torvikey
(PhD Candidate)

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
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the energy of the youth can spark economies,...the future belongs to them and they have a clear vision of the world we need to build together.....the opportunity to make a better life’ – Ban Ki-moon, UN General Secretary.
Introduction

• In Ghana, Youth in Agriculture policies and programmes have been churned out not only to slow the pace of youth unemployment but also to replace aging farmers (the average age of a farmer in the Volta region is 70, GSS, 2013).

• Commercial agriculture is touted to be the antidote to the problem of high youth unemployment especially because most youth lack productive resources to start a farm on their own.

• The study examined the GADCO Business Model and how the youth have been drafted into the whole process.
GADCO

- Located in the South Tongu District of the Volta Region
- Established in 2009 to produce rice and the largest rice field in the country
- 1000 hectares of land under cultivation
- Operates a rice mill
- One of the 33 Ghana Commercial Agriculture Project (GCAP) grantees (USD 500,000)

Key Selection Criteria
- The inclusiveness and benefits to women and youth
- At least 40% employment for women in all units of production
Fievie in Perspective

- A community of about 2000 people
- Communal land allotted to clans
- Subsistence farming and cattle rearing
- Never cultivated rice
- GADCO land was used by these multiple users
- Advantaged because both the rice mill and the field are located in the community
- Community’s responsibility to relocate the users of the GADCO land
Land Acquisition Processes

- Chiefs
  - Initial consultation
- Households
  - Two representatives
- Clan level
  - Clan level meetings important since land belongs to various clans
- Community Durbar
  - USD2 per hectare rejected
  - Land for Equity approved
Business Model

- Its model is based on the Copa Connect Initiative.
- This is a mixed model made up of two sections- the Nucleus Outgrower and the Potential Outgrower.
- Nucleus Outgrower scheme with farmers who lost their lands and their children as key participants.
- 120 more farmers drafted to start the new farming season -60% women.
- Nucleus outgrowers-45 outgrowers with 35 women.
- Employed 200 young people mostly from the community in the mill, rice fields and its warehouse.
- Five per cent of the harvested produce goes to the community as dividend.
Copa Connect Manager’s take on the Model

- ‘Every land owner must remember the principles of sharecropping’.
- Sharecropping is widely accepted all over Ghana since nobody loses. Everyone gains. But sharecropping arrangements must be reviewed within a specified period. For instance at Fievie, the sharecropping arrangement started with 2.5% initially of the gross crop production for the community. This was moved to 5% after five years. There is another clause which mandates a review after 20 years. The sharecropping arrangement is sustainable. But it must emphasize revenue and not profit. If profit is used, communities will gain nothing. Investors will find a way of recouping their money and telling communities that they made no profit at the end of the season. A 1% gross in an agreement is better than a 20% profit. What you must know is that, the old practice of leasing land for fifty years and getting monetary compensation is no longer working. That practice is not sustainable. The model has worked so well that the Ministry of Agriculture is currently using this model for other communities which are involved in land transactions’.
Extent of Youth Involvement in the Processes

• Negotiation led/facilitated by community youth especially those working in cities and with higher education
• Youth participated in the community durbars
• Youth represent the community at the company level to check production
• An appreciable number of the 21 member community council are young people
• Copa Connect Manager is a young man
What do young People think about GADCO?

• I used to cultivate cassava and maize on a two acre plot. Now, GADCO has given me one hectare to cultivate. I make more money from this farm than from my other farms. We harvest three times a year. If the company can expand, many more young people will get work to do (Mama, 29th July, 2014).

• I was a commercial motor rider. But when GADCO came. I stopped. I was given a hectare which I cultivated. I have harvested twice already. I think the company and the community have cordial relationship and so conflicts will be minimised…… Although GADCO has employed many people, the return of many youth into the community with the hope of getting jobs is eroding gains the company might have made in terms of youth employment. It is also causing competition. But, I always encourage my friends that job in the company is not their only way to get employed. They should approach the family head to allocate land to them so that they can also cultivate rice. That is even more profitable than wage job in the company (Joe, 27 years, 29th July, 2014-Fievie)

• I think that the fact that the company has allowed us to do after harvest rice picking is a good thing. I don’t work in the company. I don’t cultivate rice either. But I harvest rice. I pick rice after harvest which I process in the local processing mill. I make money from it. My household also eat very well these days because of that (Nunana, 28 years old, Fievie)

Over 300 people mostly young women engage in after harvest rice picking.
After harvest Rice Picking
Conclusion

• The underlying policy argument of this study is that the commercialization of agriculture already is and will continue to shape opportunities for rural youth.

• Policy actors therefore need to think about the impact of their interventions in ways that are connected particularly to the question of generation.
Thank you