

## **Zambia Forests and Farming: An Analysis of Rural Livelihood Programs for Poverty Reduction in Eastern Zambia**

Olson, Garrett  
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University of Montana – Forestry

This paper investigates the effectiveness of Joint Forest Management (JFM) and agricultural programs at reducing rural poverty in Zambia. Community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) programs in Africa have been aimed at improving livelihoods, creating tangible benefits, and increasing incomes from forests and forest products through the sustainable use and conservation of forest resources. Agricultural programs have often had similar goals regarding improved livelihoods, benefits, food security, and income generation for soil conservation and reduced forest conversion due to agricultural expansion. With increased rates of deforestation and forest conversion, Zambia is in need of effective measures for the sustainable utilization and conservation of forest resources.

JFM and agricultural programs are analyzed and compared to distinguish key indicators of success and failure and how these programs are relevant to Zambia in terms of improving livelihoods, household and food security, incomes, and reducing rural poverty.

Levels of local participation, adoption, the resulting effects on local populations, and five key factors (socio-cultural, historical, institutional, design, and benefit) that influence program success frame the analysis and comparison for improved livelihoods and poverty reduction.

This paper is based on a review of the literature in both the fields of community forestry and agricultural programs and on the author's research and experience with community based natural resource management and agricultural livelihood improvement programs in Zambia. The results from this paper suggest that agricultural programs are performing better at this point in time for livelihood improvement, food security, and poverty reduction.

Barriers and pitfalls for each of these programs are identified and recommendations are offered that may help to improve their ability in achieving the project goals of livelihood improvement and conservation, in addition to reducing rural poverty in eastern Zambia. The recommendations may have utility across Zambia.