

Internship report

Royal Danish Embassy Uganda

Hand in: 27.01.17

Author:

Karoline Duus Jørgensen

Supervisor:

Annette Mikkelsen La Cour

Cultural Sociology, Social Transformation Processes
University of Southern Denmark, Esbjerg

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1 Introduction

Being a cultural sociology intern in the economics team at the Danish embassy in Kampala, is much like being a fish amongst giraffes. Very nice giraffes! But still... giraffes. It has been challenging and highly interesting to work in a team with people with multiple academic backgrounds and experiences.

The objective of this report is to give a specific example of one of the assignments I have undertaken in my time as an intern with directly benefits from my knowledge as a cultural sociology student. It is an attempt to show that a sociologist can contribute to the work at an embassy, and that the work with private sector led development can benefit from both sociological theory and methods.

This report is a result of a 6-day case study in the Acholi sub-region, with findings based on focus group interviews with a total of 115 young farmers, and an attempt to gain insight into young people in Kitgum and Lamwo's perception, attitude, experience and thoughts about employment in agriculture. Based on this knowledge recommendation for the new country programme UPSIDE (to be implemented 2018 - 2022) are developed for how to engage youth more actively in agricultural activities in the new Northern Uganda engagement.

This assignment will include a presentation of the embassy and the work done here, including my role as an intern, a presentation of the case study and the methodological and theoretical perspectives used and the recommendations made based on the results, and end with a reflection of the internship and the case study.

2 The Danish Embassy in Uganda

The Danish embassy in Uganda is located in the center of the country capital; Kampala. The embassy manages Danida funds through various development programs in Uganda, along with diplomacy, trade council jobs etc. The embassy is currently divided into two teams that manage the programmes; the political team, in charge of the Uganda Good Governance Programme (UGOGO) and the economics team, which I have been a part of.

2.1 The Economics team

The Economics team manages the Embassy's engagements within the areas of economic growth and development in Uganda. The team is responsible for the implementation of the Uganda Growth Programme (U-Growth II) with a focus on agri-business, an enabling environment for the private sector, and recovery and development in Northern Uganda. Finally, the team leads the Embassy's efforts in support of Danish commercial interests and economic diplomacy.

The current programme, U-Growth II, being implemented consists of three components; Agricultural Business Initiative (aBi), Trademark East Africa (TMEA) and Northern Uganda Component (NUC). I have had the chance to participate in various projects across the team portfolio (see appendix), but my place was mainly within the Northern Uganda Component, and this assignment will focus on the study I did in extension of a joint monitoring trip to Acholi in December to oversee both finances and the implementation processes.

NUC is being implemented in the Acholi sub-region under the name RALNUC3. It has three sub-components; Good Agricultural Practices (teaching farmers groups sowing, post-harvest handling, ox-ploughing and marketing), Capacity Building (strengthening the district local governance through education, courses and new equipment) and Infrastructure (letting farmer groups get paid to build community access roads.). The informants for my study have been part of both farmers' groups engaged in infrastructure and GAP.

3 The Case Study

RALNUC3 have considered young people as human capital and part of a 'constructed' demographic group, viewing them as a group of possible labour, but have failed to take into consideration the 'experienced' youth and thereby understanding the perceptions, willingness and drivers for the youth to engage in agriculture. It is a paradox, that in a time with rapid population growth and increased youth unemployment, and the agricultural sector identified as the sector that can lift Uganda out of poverty, young people are turning away from farming.

Agriculture plays a considerable large role in Denmark's development engagements in Uganda, especially in the Northern Uganda component. Furthermore, as part of the sustainable development goals, Denmark has an interest in including both youth and women in the projects.

Because of the violent conflict driven by the Lord's Resistance Army, Northern Uganda significantly less developed than the rest of Uganda. For example there is more poverty, higher youth

unemployment and less equality. The high level of poverty is one of the main reasons for Denmark's engagement in this part of Uganda, focussing on helping some of the most vulnerable in the country.

One of my assignments has been to carry out a fieldwork in Kitgum, Northern Uganda on the youth's attitude towards agriculture and bring forward suggestions on how to make employment in this sector more attractive for the youth. As agriculture is still believed to be the best vehicle to take Uganda out of poverty, the Danish embassy will continue their presence in this field, also in the upcoming country programme running from 2018 – 2022 with a total budget of 750 mio DKK, 250 mio DKK to be used in the new Northern Uganda component.

Objectives of the study:

- Gain insight into young people in Kitgum's perception, attitude, experience and thoughts about employment in agriculture.
- Understand how this knowledge can be useful for the Danish Embassy
- Develop recommendation for UPSIDE based on this knowledge

Although many assessments of various kinds touching upon agriculture in Africa have been made, none of them focus specifically on the Northern Ugandan region (FAO, 2014; EPRC, 2013; World Bank, 2013).

Studies exist on why young people don't want to work in agriculture and this assignment will elaborate further on that statement, with a specific focus on the Acholi sub-region, where RALNUC3 is being implemented. Youth will in this assignment be defined using the World Bank's definition including people aged 15 – 24 (worldbank.org).

3.1 Theory

Theory has not played a large role in this study, as it was emphasized from the embassy that it was not a key factor, and as of as much importance as the methodological approach. It is however important to notice that even though theory has not played as explicit a role as it would have in an academic research, the fact that it has been carried out by someone with knowledge about various theoretical approaches and analytical concepts, does give it an implicit sociological theoretical perspective.

3.1.1 Bourdieu's capitals

One specific theory having been used in the analysis is Bourdieu's theory of the three capitals, which have provided deeper understanding and substance to the findings. Bourdieu distinguishes three forms of capital; economic, social and cultural. According to him, these three capitals provide understating of structure and functioning in the social world (Bourdieu, 1986).

Shortly, the capitals can be explained as follows:

Having economic capital refers to the access to money and material goods, Cultural capital refers to access to education and knowledge that will allow you to access what is considered higher levels of society, and having social capital is your network and being part of certain social groups (Bourdieu 1986:243). It is important to notice that the various forms of capitals can be "invested" in other capitals.

In this assignment, the forms of capitals have been used in relation to motives for youth to engage in farming, and an assessment of the gaining of which capitals have the largest motivational factor for the youth.

3.2 Methodology

This is a case study, with an intensive and limited scope. A case study can be defined as *a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, using multiple sources of evidence* (Flyvbjerg, 2015).

3.2.1 The Field

Uganda is divided into regions, sub-regions, districts, and parishes. This study has been taking place in the Northern Region, Acholi sub-region, and in 2 different districts; Kitgum and Lamwo (see map in appendix). Although the Acholi sub-region is a geographical area, it is defined more on the terms of borders of ethnicity. The Acholi people share ethnic belonging with neighboring Acholi-tribes in Southern Sudan and their culture, language and history are different from other Ugandan ethnicities.

The Northern part of Uganda has for many years been center for a violent conflict during the time of the Lord's Resistance Army. Especially in Kitgum were this study have taken place, is still recovering from the war. Many people have been living as Internally Displaced People (IDP's) and have only been back from the camps for 6 years, and are still trying to establish everyday life. This also means that ownership of land is a big issues, as knowledge from previous generations about which clans different land belongs to have been lost.

Not much information about the Acholi and their culture has been written, and much of my knowledge about the field has been learned by speaking to Acholi people themselves. The Acholi people speak Luo, a language very different from other tribal languages in Uganda. They belong to different clans, but the clans are all friendly, although some considered more powerful than others.

3.2.2 Data Collection

Data was collected through 7 focus group interviews, and a total of 115 informants. The focus group interview was chosen based on its ability to produce knowledge on social norms, and giving focus on not only what is said, but the social interaction taking place.

It has been taking consideration that the informants rarely speak English, and that an interpreter has been used. Since the level of English is very low, also for the interpreter, the questions were kept as simple as possible, allowing the informants to feel included. Furthermore, conversations were made with the interpreters during the week before the focus groups, as to develop a relationship and understanding of each other. A more tight and structured approach was used, due to the need of a translator, and that I had been told that specific questions would be needed to make these people understand. During the focus group interviews I was aware of my role as a facilitator more than an interviewer.

Data from observations and informal interviews during my time in Kitgum have also been used.

3.2.3. Informants

A total of 115 people between the age of 15 and 30 participated in the seven focus groups. Furthermore, informal interviews with both elders and people not engage in agriculture were conducted. Both male and female informants participated, although the majority were male. This was due to the fact that females are responsible for the household, and are often not able to leave home to participate in such things, as they are expected to take care of the children and work in the garden.

Informants were chosen with the help of Danish Refugee Council and the Danish Embassies decentralized implementation unit in Acholi. This means that I made a brief about the criteria's and characteristics I wanted people to have, and DRC and RAU help set up the meeting, reaching out to the informants, briefing them on the objectives and translating during interviews.

I made a choice to use network participants (Brinkmann & Tangaard, 2015: 141) informants from the same network in order to make the discussion flow better, since the knowledge gained from focus groups depends on the participant's social interaction with each other.

3.2.4 A Muzungu in the field

Muzungu means "white man that looks lost" and is a term used for a white person in Uganda. Although my first perception was that the word was a swearword and quite offensive, it is in fact just used as a statement or observation, or even a name. Everywhere you go in Uganda it is yelled at you in the streets.

I was the first white person many of my informants saw, and that affected my study, since white people are associated with money, and many thought that I was there to give them money, which further emphasised the need for explanation. They also associated me with the Danish Embassy, and had somehow unrealistic expectations of my power. "Muzungu, tell the Danish people that we want more seeds for sunflower"

I followed the recommendations made by Puchta & Potter when doing focus groups with a social constructivist perspective, and focussed on informality and was very aware of my clothing, body language and conversation style (Brinkmann & Tangaard, 2015: 143). However, since my knowledge about cultural appropriation was still fairly limited, and I was the first white person many of these people had ever seen, it was very hard to minimize the researcher affect, and my presence was clearly uncomfortable for some of the informants.

Despite this seemingly discomfort for some, people were eager to express their opinions and not reluctant to speak at all. However, this might have been based on a wrong incentive and the hope of more support and have resulted in some exaggeration.

3.3 Analysis

3.3.1 The boda-boda business dream

The story among development partners in Uganda regarding tendencies is that young rural Ugandans will sell their land and move to the city and buy a *boda-boda*¹ make some small money, ride it till it breaks down, and then be on the streets. It is a story they laugh about, and until conducting fieldwork among the rural youth, I was not sure how much truth there was to it.

¹ Motorcycle used as taxis

But there is truth to it. Every single farmer group had a mentioning of the ultimate goal: to be able to get out of farming and buy a boda-boda. Unfortunately for many, buying a boda-boda is not a sustainable way of income (this also has to do with the non-existing maintenance culture in Uganda, which is a whole other story) There were mentioning's of other goals for the future as well, all having to do with having a small business, selling salt or sugar, or making bricks.

The most important finding was that farming was not considered a job. Nobody wanted to stay in farming, nobody talked about farming as a job, but as a means to get food. "I don't have a job, only farming" or "I am unemployed, so I have to farm". Through the focus group interview and informal interviews with people living in Kitgum town, it becomes clear that one of the main reasons that farming is considered to be for people without anything else to do. They are seen as dirty and uneducated.

Many of the farmers refer to this, giving the understanding that this is also the way they see themselves; as people without education as possibility for doing something else. In some of the focus groups it was clear that one or two persons knew English at had some level of formal education. These youths expressed even greater contempt for farming, bringing attention to one of the great problems in rural areas that have some economic growth: Many children have enough education to long upon farming, but not enough education to be employed elsewhere.

Some of the farmers did express happiness about being in farming, claiming it to be "the backbone of Uganda", but as soon as asked if their children would then also be farmers, there would be laughter. No, of course nobody wanted their kids to be framers, they wanted what they considered to be a better life for them, working in an office or having a small business.

The objective of the study was to find out youths attitudes, perception, experience and thought about *employment* in agriculture, but it become clear through the analysis of the 7 focus group interviews, that farming was not even considered employment. It is a necessity to survive, to provide food for your family, and maybe, if you're lucky, you will gain enough capital to start something else.

The few that had accepted farming as their way of life, wanted something else for their children then to be farmers. Although other reasons for this came up, such as high uncertainty, the problem of getting access to land, hard psychical labour, the main reason was that being a farmer was the same as having low social status. Farming is experienced and perceived as nothing of real value. It is not a job, it is something you have to do to be able to survive. The goal is always to get out of farming.

3.3.3 Motivational factors

When implementing a programme like RALNUC3, the objective is to increase people's income. The focus is on money and economic capital. It has been expected, that when poor people are given the opportunity to participate in a programme to increase income, they will.

And yes they will, but there has been seen some reluctance and unwillingness from the youth to participate actively. The thinking has been, as economic motivation has been enough, but it becomes clear through the focus group interviews, that the talk among these youths are not only focussing on money, but also prestige, pride, and social status.

By introducing Bourdieu's theory of capitals; economic, social and cultural, we see how RALNUC3 have been relaying on the motivation of economic capital to be enough to engage the youth, but according to the youth themselves, both social and cultural capital plays a role in their engagement in the programme.

This becomes evident when the informants engage in discussion about the perception of farming in relation to other jobs. Farming is for people without connections or social status. It is not cool. One of the points raised about having a boda-boda business is that you can meet people, so you can know people, and when talking about office jobs, mentioning's of respect and status are made. The buying of a boda-boda can thereby be seen as an example of investing economic capital into social capital, and emphasizes the fact that other capitals are of high value for the Acholi youth.

Having a small business, is for the farmers not only seen as a possibility for gaining economic or social capital, but also cultural. Compared to the rest of Uganda, these young farmers will not have much cultural capital, lacking education knowledge and taste. But in relation to their community, having a small business means having cultural capital, as only a person with high level of knowledge and education can have this, it is seen as only someone part of the higher levels of society can have.

One could argue, that by becoming rich, gaining economic capital, and social status would follow. But to these youths, social and cultural status needs to be one of the motivational factors for engaging in agriculture in the first place. Even though U-growth II and UPSIDE are programmes of economic inclusive growth, it fails to take into consideration that ideas about social and cultural capital are also important factors in order to motivate the youth in what will result in economic growth.

3.4 Findings and recommendations

3.4.1 Summary of findings:

- Farming is not perceived as a job by the youth
- Farming is a last resort and not an active choice

- Farming is seen as a means to something else; the goal is to get out of farming
- Economic motivation is not enough to engage the youth

3.4.2 Recommendations

Make farming a business

My first recommendations based on the findings is to put more emphasis on the fact that being a farmer is in fact like having your own business. In the NUC we train farmer groups in planting, post-harvest handling and using ox-ploughs. A small work on marketing is also being done, encouraging the farmer groups to make a plan for the selling of their products. I believe that it is this part of the programme that could be further elaborated in order to engage youth further.

By focusing more on the planning and managing process of the marketing component, people would get that feeling of being in charge that seems to be the missing link between farming and “having a small business”. Even though the weather is unpredictable, steps can be taken as a farmer to be in charge.

Furthermore I believe that the way in which training is spoken about during the training sessions could also be changed. Focus should not only be on the fact that they will get more yield doing it like this, but also that what they are doing are in fact part of an education. They are trained in a specific set of skills, that not just help them put food on the table, but also allow them to see themselves as a person educated in farming and capable of changing it into a business.

We should not engage the youth in the programme in order to help them escape farming, which is now the objective and motivation for most, we should help them see the opportunities in farming as being a future business for them, providing a sustainable income but also allowing them to develop their social networks and status.

Focus on other motivational factors

The economic capital is defined as being at the root of all other types of capital (Bourdieu, 1986: 256) and the choice of the youth in Kitgum might still be based upon this as the most important factor, but through this study it have become clear that other motivational factors should also be considered.

My recommendation is that a more specific focus is put on the youth, encouraging pure youth farmers groups, focussing also on the social aspect of farming. Even though it is believed that a mixed

farmer group will allow older generation to pass down information, I would argue that it is in fact hindering the youth to participate.

A farmer group consisting only of young people will encourage innovation without having the older generation doubtful about it. Young people are more willing to change, and this could be beneficial. Furthermore the social aspect will appeal more to the youth.

In some of the focus groups it was discussed that many of these farmers have never been outside their village, and knew very little about how farming was done in neighbouring communities. This focus in the discussions puts further emphasis on the need to also focus on the social aspect.

Visiting youths doing farming in other villages and parishes could be beneficial for the motivation for youth to participate, and also create a broader sharing of experiences and the possibility for creating a network among the young farmers.

4 Reflections

This internship and especially the case study in Kitgum have been both a challenge and an opportunity. It has been an opportunity to reflect on the work of cultural sociology and how to work in close relation with other disciplines. And it has been an opportunity to see some of the contributions cultural sociology can be to the work at an embassy. Some of the consultants used by the embassy are sociologists, but this is the first time that a person with a sociological academic background have participated in the everyday life at the embassy.

The challenge has been to transform academic knowledge into something that can be beneficial for the organization, and to do a sociological project that resulted in actual recommendations. As this assessment and the recommendation were made for the embassy, not much emphasis was put on theory. This has been one of the main differences experienced in doing academic research and research for a company or organization. Although analytical theories played a small role in the research, the methodological approach has been the biggest strength.

As a last remark, I must admit that having focus group interviews under a mango tree is for me one of the dream scenarios and an absolutely amazing experience as a young researcher. I am happy that I had that experience, and that it also resulted in something useful for the embassy.

5 Conclusion

The equation is clear: a large percentage of youth in the population + high unemployment rates + high poverty rate in Northern Uganda + not enough food produced in the country = youth in agriculture is the way forward! But what do we then do, if we implement a programme focusing on good agricultural practices, in an attempt to increase income, and the youth are not too interested in participating?

This study is an attempt of assessments of the youth's attitudes, thoughts and experience with working in farming, and the message is clear: farming is not a job. Based on the findings that having a small "business" is a high level of prestige for the youth, I have recommended that the marketing component of the programme should be slightly modified to meet this need; make farming a business. Furthermore, I have pointed out the need to acknowledge other motivational drivers than economic capital in order to engage the youth.

Many things cannot be changed by the Danish Embassy or our programmes: youth's access to land, the divide between rural and urban life, and the class differences in the country. However, the central finding that farming is not perceived as a job can possibly be changed through small modification of the current programme.

Being able to use the methodology of sociology in a field otherwise dominated by political science and economy have been a great experience and have given me the opportunity to use the participatory approach from sociology and give recommendations on a programme that is normally only concerned with economic outcome. I have had the possibility to show the value of sociological inputs, not only during this specific case study, but also during the everyday life and decision-making processes at the embassy.

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Appendix B – Table of work tasks from Internship Assignment (handed in 20.01.1)

Project/Task	Work Tasks
Monitoring DAR/RALNUC implementation	Participating in 10 days joint implementation and financial monitoring (5 in Acholi, 5 in West Nile). Carrying out small study on refugee/host situation and youth/agriculture. Write 'back to office' reports and report on findings (will be the focus of my internship report)
Agriculture	I have worked closely with the Senior Programme Advisor, participating in donor coordination meetings, the making of progress reports and monitoring.
Communication	External communication on various media platforms; Uganda.um.dk, facebook and twitter. Creating new external media strategy for the embassy.
Nordic Sports Day	Planning and carrying out an event for the Nordic expats in Uganda. 300 participants (set up venue, get sponsors, get and organize volunteers, make invitations, arrange fund-raising evening dinner and party)
Trade Council	Assisted in the assessment of applications for Danida Market Development Partnerships. Carrying out small studies for customers of the Trade Council. Participation in meeting with businesses and investors looking for opportunities, or already working in, Uganda.
TMEA (TradeMark East Africa)	Participating in meetings and discussion regarding the EU -East African Community, Economic Partnership Agreement (EU-EAC EPA). Including meetings with civil society, the EU and the Ministry of Trade. Visiting the Busia border post (Kenya) that have been funded through Danida.
New Country Programme	Participating in the planning process of the new Country Programme to be implemented 2018 – 2022 with a total budget of 750 mio DKK. Participating in the discussion and assessments, and been a part of the team's decision making regarding future engagements in private sector led economic growth in Uganda. Also assisted in the writing of Terms of Reference for consultants. Furthermore I have been on the Task Force for the new Country Programme.
Refugee Situation	Uganda hosts 1 mio. refugees, mainly from South Sudan and Congo. Donor coordination and dialogue with UNHCR, Danish Refugee Council, DanChurchAid etc. Writing reports to the ministry of Foreign Affairs updating on the situation.
CKU/culture	Participating in meetings regarding the closing of CKU and the evaluation of their projects.
Administration	Various administrative tasks have also been carried out, such as drafting letters, responding to inquiries, preparing meetings and taking minutes from meetings. Making programmes for visitors from Denmark (latest for Martin Bille, Secretary of State for Danish Development Cooperation) and setting up meetings for Danish Delegations.

