

Factsheet on Alternative Livelihoods to tobacco Farming in Africa

1.0 Introduction

Article 17 of the FCTC obligates Parties to cooperate with each other to promote “economically viable alternatives for tobacco workers” and “growers” who want to escape the cycle of poverty and the negative health effects caused by tobacco farming (WHO, 2003). These economically viable alternatives will vary from country to country depending on the market and environmental conditions in the country. The approach is considered to be viable along with economically sustainable alternatives to tobacco growing or crop diversification. Suffice to note is the fact that the tobacco industry uses the existence of tobacco farmers as an argument against all tobacco-control policies and implementation.

1.1 About the Factsheet

This factsheet highlights the key facts related to Article 17 of the WHO FCTC, with examples from the African Region. The factsheet provides information needed by policy makers, tobacco control actors and researchers on the effect of tobacco farming on the economy and how they can provide solutions in terms of policy options, programs and research on supporting tobacco farmers to transition to economically viable alternatives.

2.0 Tobacco Leaf Production in Africa

This section provides facts about the tobacco leaf production and its pricing in Africa, with examples from the 3 main growing countries.

- Globally tobacco is grown in over 125 countries, on over 4 million hectares of land (Tobacco Atlas, 2012). In the past 20 years, production of tobacco leaf in developed countries decreased by more than one-third and increased by two-thirds in developing countries.
- In Africa, at least 21 African countries grow tobacco, with the top 3 being, Malawi, Tanzania and Zimbabwe in that order as shown in Table 1 (WHO 2012).
- Malawi, Tanzania and Zimbabwe produce 5.2% of the total leaf production in the world, which is 60% of Africa's production.

Table 1: Africa's Top 3 Tobacco Leaf Producers

Country	Leaf Production ('000 Tonnes)	Area Harvested ('000 Ha)
Malawi	152	160
Tanzania	120	156
Zimbabwe	115	93

- In 2012, global leaf production was 7.5 million MT, of which 8.7% is contributed by Africa region (WHO, 2014)
- In most African countries, the value of tobacco leaf is less than one percent (1%) of their total value of agricultural

products (WHO, 2013; World Bank 2000; Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, 2007).

3.0 Tobacco Production System and Pricing

- In Africa the tobacco farming system is mainly controlled by the tobacco industry, which is aimed at manipulating and locking farmers into continued cultivation to ensure reliable supply and make outrageous profits.
- Tobacco leaf production is mainly done under direct contractual arrangements with small holder farmers who are the majority (WHO 2012)
- The tobacco companies operate as banks by extending credit, inputs and technical support to the farmers and in return the farmers agree to sell the leaf to the tobacco industry.
- The Tobacco Industry grades the leaf and determines the price thus leaving farmers with less than the value of the loan for the inputs hence net losses. This keeps the farmers trapped in a debt cycle (WHO, 2011; Action on Smoking 2012).

4.0 Economics of Tobacco Farming

This section provides facts about the magnitude of labour requirements for tobacco farming, farming system and pricing as well as the profitability on the part of farmers.

4.1 Labour Demand for Tobacco farming

- Tobacco growing is extremely labour intensive, requiring about 3000 hours per hectare as against 298 and 265 for beans and maize (CTCA 2012, World Bank, 2010; WHO, 2013)
- Tobacco farming in Africa mainly survives on family labour, where women and children provide most of the labour to minimize costs.
- Tobacco farming requires an average of 18 man-hours per farmer per day (WHO 2013)
- Tobacco is a perennial crop grown all year round as indicated in Figure 1 and therefore ties up labour throughout the year.

Figure 1: The Tobacco Farming Cycle

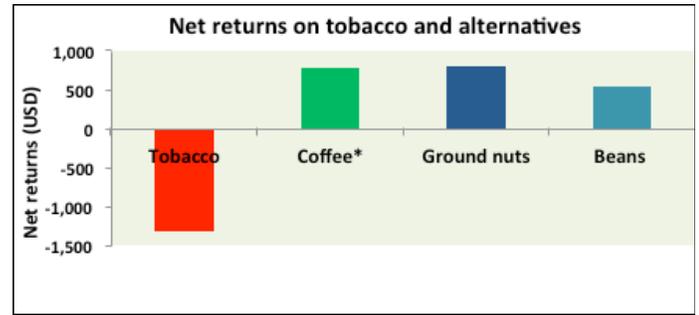


Source: CTCA Report on Tobacco Growing Districts in Uganda, 2012

4.2 Profitability of Tobacco Farming and Viable Alternatives

- Many tobacco farmers in developing countries make very low profits if not none because the price of the tobacco leaf is low and mainly controlled by the tobacco industry through a stringent leaf grading systems. (WHO, 2013; World Bank 2000; Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, 2007).
- Graph 1 shows an analysis of the net return on an acre annually to the farmer for tobacco farming in comparison with other viable alternatives.

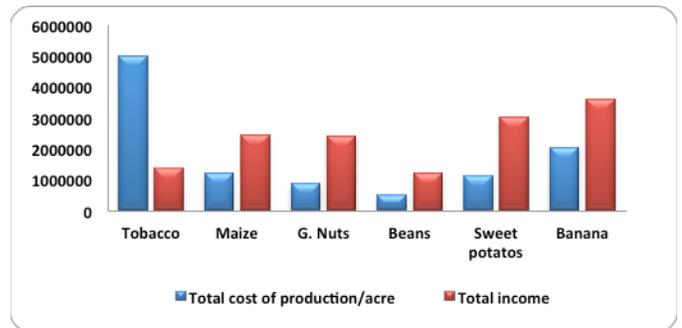
Graph 1: Net Annual Return Analysis for tobacco and other alternatives



Source: CTCA, 2012

- In Kenya, a project funded by the IDRC in South Nyanza Region; promoting bamboo as an alternative crop to tobacco farming (2006-2012), revealed that the annual estimated income from bamboo farming is 4-5 times higher than tobacco at the farm gate prices on the same acreage.
- In Uganda, the cost of cultivation and gross income for 5 alternatives to tobacco growing as shown in Graph 2. Results showed that the cost of production for the 5 alternatives was low compared to the tobacco farming; similarly the total income was higher for the 5 alternatives compared to tobacco annually on the same acreage.

Graph 2: Cost and Gross income for alternative crops and tobacco



Source: Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Industry Uganda, 2013

5.0 Impact of Tobacco Farming on:

This section provides facts on the effects of tobacco growing on employment, child labour, gender and culture and food security and nutrition.

5.1 Employment

- The exact number of tobacco farmers is difficult to estimate due to a lack of reliable statistics on the tobacco farmers and reliance on the tobacco industry data, which in most cases is exaggerated.
- Independent studies have shown that most countries implementing comprehensive tobacco control programs would experience no net job losses and some actually experience net gains in employment levels (Action on smoking, 2012)

5.2 Child Labour and School Dropout in tobacco farming communities

- In Africa, Malawi has the highest occurrence of child labor; with 78,000 children who work on tobacco estates, for long hours, with low pay, and without protective clothing (Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco Growing Regions, Report, 2011).
- In Malawi, tobacco growing is the biggest contributor of child labour with over 55% of all the children in tobacco growing districts in child labour (Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco Growing Regions, Report, 2011).
- The same report shows that 12 percent of children working on tobacco farms were injured or sick because of work, 24 percent were exposed to hazardous work and worked for more than 43 hours a week. 8 percent were out of school because of work or had their schooling affected by work. (Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco Growing Regions, Report, 2011).
- 78% of children between the ages of 10 to 14 and 55% of 7 to 9 year olds work full or part-time with their parents on tobacco farms in Mozambique, Malawi, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Kenya (FAO, Institute for Applied Social Science 2000)
- Children between 6- 14 years account for 8 per cent of all regularly working household members in male-headed households and 29 per cent in female-headed households in Malawi (Kamkondo & Wellard 1994).
- In Uganda, tobacco growing communities have their children failing to start school, where 4 out of 10 boys never go to school and 6 out of every 10 girls never go to school because they have to provide labour to the tobacco farms all year round. (Muwanga and Bayego, February, 2014)

- 84% of the parents of the children working on the tobacco plantations/farms came from poor and very poor socio-economic backgrounds in 5 countries of Mozambique, Malawi, Tanzania,

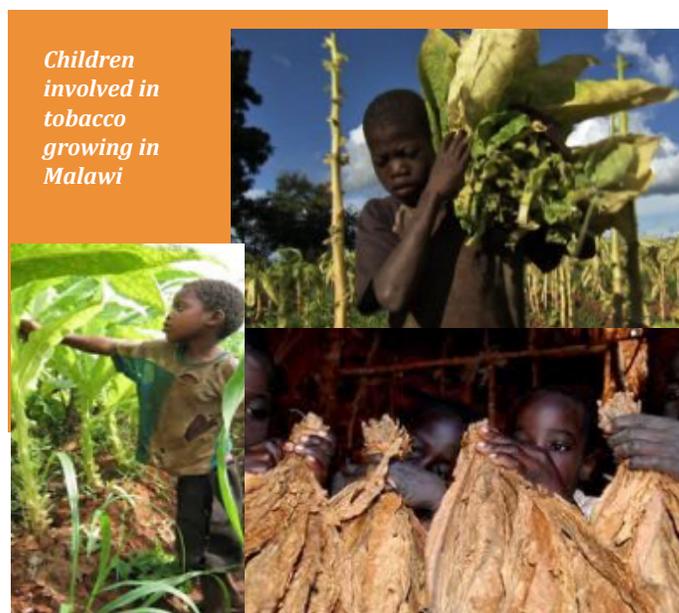
Zimbabwe and Kenya. In Tanzania parents of children working on tobacco farms earn, on the average 100 US dollars per year making it difficult for them to keep their children in school (ILO 2000).

A study, conducted for the second meeting on economically sustainable alternatives to tobacco growing for the WHO-FCTC in June, 2008 summarised child labour in tobacco farming communities in the WHO Africa Region as follows:

- Mozambique: A tobacco-industry funded study reported that 80% of tobacco families used their children as young as 6 years old on tobacco farms.
- Nigeria: School age children harvest and help to cure tobacco, earning little or no money and are denied education.
- Uganda: 9% of children from tobacco growing families are kept from school and sent to fields to weed, water, string and sew bunches of tobacco leaves together for drying in flue-curing barns.
- Tanzania: Children who weed and harvest tobacco experience nausea, vomiting and faintness due to nicotine poisoning as well as spine injuries from heavy lifting and repetitive strains.
- Zimbabwe: Children involved in weeding and planting tobacco suffer health problems from the use of the pesticide ethylene dibromide.
- Zambia: A tobacco industry funded study reported that over 6,000 children work on tobacco farms and perform tasks such as lifting heavy loads and working excessively long hours.

5.3 Gender and Culture

- Women and children are the main source of labour for tobacco growing, mostly done by hand, without any protective wear (The Kenya Situational Analysis on tobacco control, 2008).
- 39% of the child respondents in the study areas in Iringa in Tanzania came from female-headed families (ILO Study, 2000)



5.4 Food Security and Nutrition

- The ILO Study in Tanzania, revealed out of 100 working children in the tobacco growing districts, 63% took only two meals, and only 19% had meals three times a day.
- The same study revealed that children working on the tobacco plantations/farms in Iringa and Urambo areas in Tanzania did not get adequate food.

6.0 Policy Options to support Transitioning

1. Regulate tobacco leaf production through taxation.
2. Support agricultural zoning based on weather patterns, agricultural practices and markets, hence providing information on viable and suitable alternatives
3. Support development of value chain infrastructure aimed at supporting marketing for the alternatives.
4. Develop viable and sustainable financing systems aimed at linking farmers to private sector for alternative farm input, marketing, extension services and competitive prices
5. Support establishment of cooperatives to improve the bargaining power, sustain supply and penetrate bigger markets.
6. Diversification to remove dependency on single crop.
7. Mainstreaming tobacco control into government poverty reduction programs within a multi-sectoral approach.
8. Sensitize farmers on health effects of tobacco use and available alternatives

7.0 Experiences on implementing Alternative Livelihoods in Africa

A number of economically sustainable alternatives to tobacco growing have been identified through research; these include sugar cane and bamboo in Kenya, maize, soya beans, bananas, and rice in Uganda, rose blooms in Zimbabwe, maize in Malawi; however obstacles to adoption include the large net investment, a lack of cash flow in initial years, and transportation problems in

getting to markets (Maravanyika 1998).

Evidence shows that there are two modes of transitioning: extrinsic and intrinsic. The extrinsic mode of transitioning is government and or donor led; while intrinsic is Farmer led transitioning. Farmer led transitioning is driven by the realization that tobacco growing cannot get the farmer out of poverty, leads to ill health, food insecurity, soil degradation and forestry cover destruction and exploitation from the tobacco industry and natural calamities that make tobacco growing non-profitable (CTCA Report, 2012)

7.1 Ghana: Working with UN to support Alternative Livelihoods

- In Ghana, the UN Agencies have supported tobacco farmers to transition through the following actions:
- The FAO provided technical support on sustainable crop production intensification and provided an update of the world tobacco production and market situation.
- UNCTAD supported collaboration of key partners including international agencies to conduct research and analysis of the tobacco supply chain analysis from the 'farm to the cigarette' as well as reviewed policy of tobacco producing developing countries to include diversification options.
- UNEP: Promoted green economy framework for economically viable alternatives for tobacco growers and workers.

7.2 Kenya- Bamboo as an Alternative Crop and Livelihood Strategy for Tobacco Smallholder led by University

The University of Nairobi in partnership with IDRC, implemented a Research intervention on alternative livelihoods to experiment the potential of bamboo as an alternative crop and livelihood diversification strategy to tobacco smallholder farmers. The activities of the project included

- I. Farm trials of bamboo seedlings
 - II. Household Surveys
 - III. Capacity building/ trainings/ field visits/ demonstrations/ extension services
 - IV. Provision of inputs and information on bamboo production and marketing
- Results of the project:

- Bamboo production profits/ acre are 4-10 times higher than tobacco farming depending on the production value chain
- Bamboo growth performance is good in tobacco farming zones and it has the potential to rehabilitate degraded forests within 2-3 years
- Bamboo was also been used for protection of riverbanks and to clean water downstream already polluted by tobacco farming activities
- Rural community-based small-scale Bamboo Farmers Enterprises which boosted incomes.

7.3 Uganda-Farmer-led Transitioning

•In Uganda, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries-MAAIF; tobacco growing is not an enterprise crop and therefore, agricultural zoning and ranking for alternatives has been done based on the net productivity.

•MAAIF is promoting the identified alternatives through the existing government programs including the Plan for Modernization of Agriculture (PMA) and National Agricultural Advisory Services-NAADS.

•In South Western Uganda, famers have transitioned on their own after realization that tobacco growing has a negative net gain. The speech mark shows some of the testimonies from famers who transitioned on their own.



8.0 Progress and Gaps on promoting Alternative Livelihoods in Africa

1. A working group was created during COP 3 to start drafting the guidelines on Alternative Livelihoods, which guidelines were adopted in COP 6.
2. Limited locally based studies to ascertain the determinants of tobacco cultivation as a basis for development of the related policy framework towards shifting tobacco farmers to economically viable alternatives.
3. Limited capacity building to raise awareness and knowledge of the tobacco farmers on the adverse health, environment and socio-economic effects of tobacco cultivation
4. Limited involvement of tobacco farmers in the planning and implementation process of the transition initiatives.
5. No concrete public health awareness programs for the tobacco famers on health risks of tobacco growing

Products of the Bamboo Project in Kenya



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