

The recent rise of large land deals by foreign investors in developing countries is a controversial issue. This PhD project focuses on the land acquisition process and implications for local people. Two case studies on European investors in Tanzania (Kilolo and Pangani district) highlight the problematic relationship between forestry companies and local people.

Transnational land acquisitions and local livelihoods in Tanzania

*Martina Locher, Department of Geography, University of Zurich, JACS East Africa
Start date of PhD study: Feb 2010*

Research question: Forestry companies as long-term development partners for local communities?

Forestry companies depend on local people's acceptance to protect their slow-growing produce without excessive costs for fire prevention. Thus, they promise the following benefits:

- jobs for local people
- infrastructure services



New village office in Pangani District, provided by the Tanga Forests Ltd, a subsidiary of the Norwegian Green Resources AS (Photo: M. Locher 2011)

Conclusions

Investors do bring some development, but:

- announced partnerships are based on **unequal power relations** due to local people's limited political power and restricted livelihood alternatives
- without external support **local people depend on goodwill** of their 'partners'

Data

based on qualitative interviews and focus group discussions with male and female villagers, company staff and government officials.

Results: Local people in weak positions in land-related decisions and negotiations for benefits

Politicians' dual role in land deals:

- cooperation with investors leads to conflicts of interest
- difficult for local people to deal with

"These investors always come with district or regional leaders, they [...] put pressure on us. We are afraid to tell them that we cannot sell our land, because those leaders could do something bad to us."
(villager, Kilolo district)

Jobs offered, but with **poor working conditions**:

- hard work, low salary
- accepted due to lack of alternatives

"They [company's managers] know that even if they pay you low salary you must work on their plantation because that's the only way you can get money."
(villager, Pangani district)



Job opportunities in Kilolo district: the tree nursery of the New Forests Company, a UK based investor (Photo: M. Locher 2011)