

LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES OF HOUSEHOLDS IN KAGERA AND MARA RIVER BASINS

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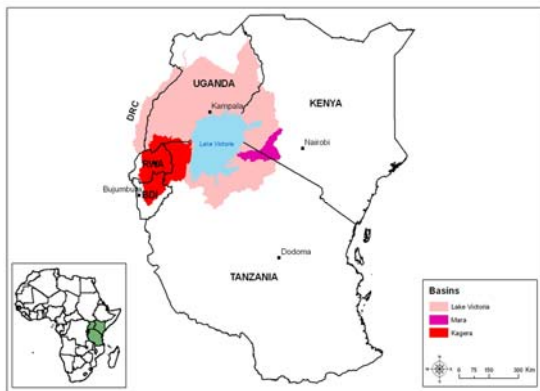
Introduction

Rural household surveys were conducted in Mara and Kagera basins located within the Lake Victoria Basin (LVB), in East Africa as one of the activities in the project titled "Potential impact of conservation agriculture (CA) in the LVB"

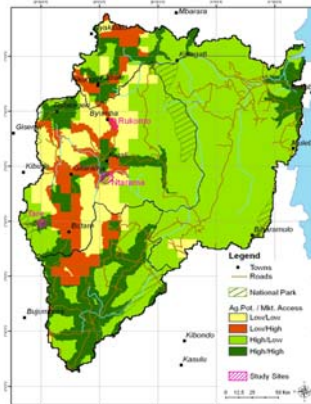
Methodology

- Spatial characterization of the Mara and Kagera Basins, identifying the erosion hotspots and development domains
- Soil erosion hotspots were based on bio-physical modeling, and development domains were based on market access and agricultural potential
- Site selection for household surveys in Mara and Kagera Basins based on erosion hotspots and development domains
- A total of 373 households were interviewed, 248 from the Mara Basin (Kenya & Tanzania) and 125 from Kagera Basin (Rwanda)

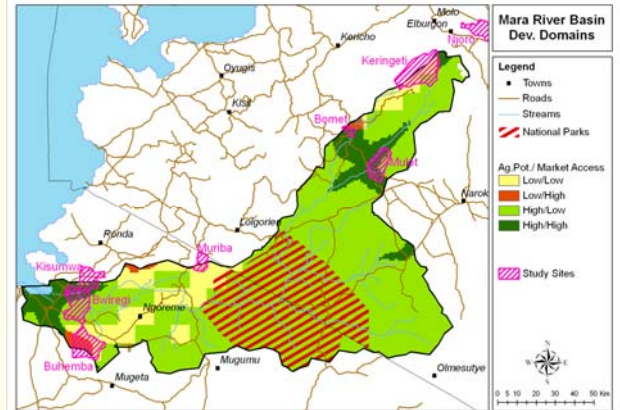
Location of Lake Victoria Basin in East Africa (indicating Mara and Kagera Basins)



Study sites and development domains in Kagera Basin



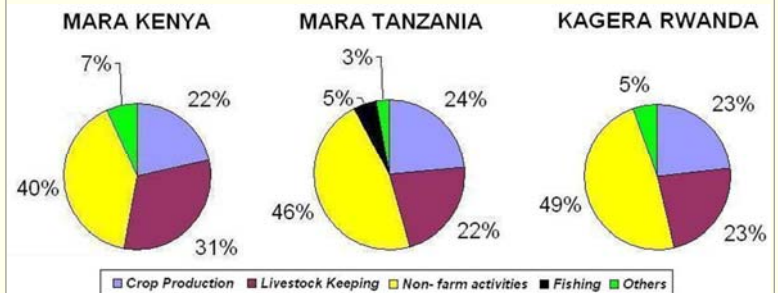
Study sites and development domains in the Mara River Basin



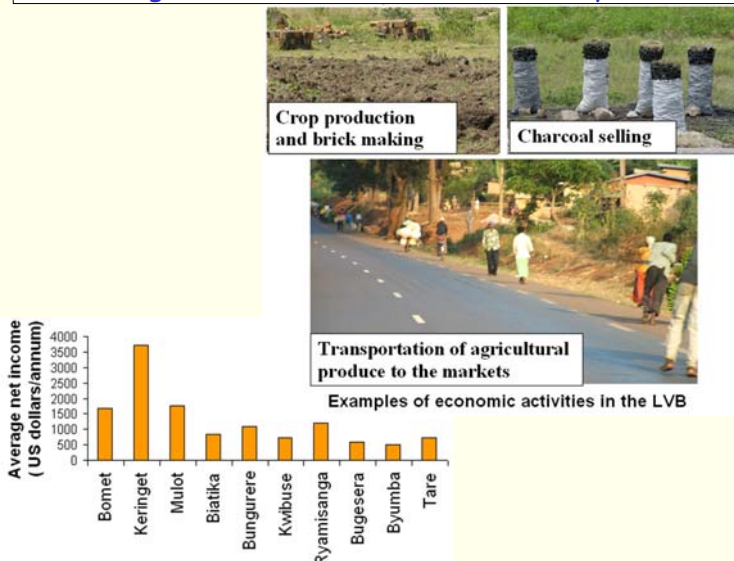
Livelihood activities of the respondents

- Crop production and livestock keeping are major economic activities
- Crop production is mainly for subsistence
- Maize is an important food and cash crop in the Mara basin, occupying more than 25% of the farmland in most study villages
- Crop livestock interactions were observed in all sites
- Drought and rainfall unreliability greatly reduced crop productivity in most of the study sites in the past year
- Non-farm activities (e.g. business, self/formal employment, casual jobs etc.) provided a big contribution to the respondents' income in all study sites

Respondents' income portfolios in the LVB



Average household income in the study sites



Examples of economic activities in the LVB

What can be done to improve livelihoods in the LVB?

- Promotion of best practices for land and water management to improve agricultural productivity (e.g. CA, small-scale irrigation, rain water harvesting) combined with the use of improved inputs
- Improvement of rural agricultural marketing infrastructure and promotion of farming as business
- Development of alternative income generating activities and micro-enterprises to provide the rural poor with more livelihood options to ensure food security and increased income

Is CA applied in the study sites?

- CA as defined by FAO (combined use of three principals: permanent crop cover, reduced tillage and crop rotation or crop combination) is not applied anywhere in the study sites
- However, most farmers applied at least one of the practices, or other soil and water conservation measures
- Even though CA has not yet spread in these sites, its promotion may be relatively easy because farmers already understand the need to conserve soil and moisture.