

Agriculture and bio based economy a driver of rural transformation and livelihood?

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The structures of rural communities are formed by the past development of agriculture. Industrialized agriculture does not need rural communities anymore, and in some cases even in conflict with the rural communities. The profits made by agricultural activities have increasingly been moved from rural to urban areas. Some see rural development completely decoupled from agriculture; others see bio economy as a potential revitalization of rural livelihood. This paper addresses the question under which conditions agriculture and bio based economy can be a driver for revitalization for rural livelihood. This analysis is drawing on a range of different case studies of agricultural activities that have made a difference to the mainstream development. The main findings from these analyses are that these cases focus on: transparency and non-generic products that link producers and consumers; synergies between different economic activities, rooted on the local social, cultural, natural and economical context; organizational forms and partnership between local stakeholders that supports long-term development, as a precondition for breaking with the industrial production logic. In conclusion bio based economy will only contribute to revitalization of rural livelihood if embedded in these activities.