Although the process of urbanization is progressing rapidly worldwide, the great majority of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia lives in rural areas. People in rural areas have very insecure livelihoods and limited options for off-farm income. Trends such as the demographic transformation, globalization and climate change pose a unique challenge for economies and livelihoods that depend heavily on the agricultural sector. Therefore, promoting rural development has become a focus of international development and is enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals 2a and 11a.

The key questions that we will discuss in the seminar are:

- What is meant by development? Is rural development just development of rural areas or is there more behind it?
- Which links exist between cities and rural areas?
- Why are rural areas poorer than the cities?
- Why are gender issues particularly prominent in rural areas?
- What are livelihood strategies and how are they related to people, environments, policies and institutions?
- Is the small farm sector an indispensable driver of the rural economy or should policies focus more on diverse rural livelihoods?

The objective of the seminar is to obtain an overview of the multi-dimensional and interdisciplinary field of rural development, its key theories, debates as well as opportunities and challenges. Students will further develop their research skills over the course of the seminar. They will be able to identify, formulate and pursue a research question of interest.

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