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“Agricultural development within the rural-urban continuum”

Women Collectives: A Hub of Lifelong Learning and Food Security

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Abstract

This presentation emanates from a study conducted among the Bang' Jomariiek women collective in rural Seme area of Kisumu County in Kenya. The initial study focused on the indigenous teaching and learning processes the women employed in the production of pots, baskets, and indigenous architecture. The study also considered the women's production of practical art items as important income generating and community development initiatives. These women and their community were the first consumers of the pots, baskets, and the indigenous architecture thus produced. A more interesting serendipity finding in the study involved the ways in which the women ensured food security for their families and community. The study found that these women have evolved a sustainable system of food production that contributes substantially to poverty alleviation in their community. This system involves an agricultural education process, easily identifiable as an aspect of lifelong learning and which proceeds in a cyclical manner with some members always present at the various points in the continuum. This collective's members have a learning/work team through which they conduct their food production activities. Members benefit from this team in various ways: learn good food production practices from others knowledgeable about the same, access a work team for their farms and so are able to produce more food than if they worked alone in the farm, and are always in a vibrant indigenous learning environment with its attendant advantages. As they worked members shared their knowledge and experience about the work at hand, and being an indigenous learning environment, they taught each other about matters as came up in their engagements.

Keywords: Food security, women