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“Management of land use systems for enhanced food security:
conflicts, controversies and resolutions”

Diversifying Food Systems - Horticultural Innovations and Learning for Improved Nutrition and Livelihoods in East Africa (HORTINLEA)

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Abstract

Food security and poverty remain aggravating challenges in East Africa despite decades of development work and research. Enhancing food security having complex dimensions of food availability, food accessibility, food stability and food utilisation, requires an integrated approach that transcends disciplinary boundaries and aims at solving real world problems not merely at contributing scientific knowledge. Horticulture, in particular African Indigenous Vegetables (AIV) provide a comparatively advantageous entry point as they offer largely untapped potentials in terms of workplaces and income opportunities, the delivery of vital micronutrients for combatting malnutrition and, last but not least, a raised diversity of agricultural production systems. However, top down research approaches generating only knowledge from selected disciplines have reportedly failed to provide smallholder farmers with affordable, practical and readily available solutions to their problems; adoption rates of scientific inventions are low. Interdisciplinary knowledge generation must be embedded in an effective innovation system extending to all stakeholders to bring about change.

The HORTINLEA research framework holistically analyses the food system and AIV value chains of Kenya and bordering regions of Tanzania and Ethiopia using an integrative, interdisciplinary framework adapted from natural, social and communication science, ecology, gender studies and development economics, developed by more than one hundred young and senior researchers from Kenya and Germany within our international research project. In this presentation the general logical framework, project structure, challenges and opportunities will be discussed.

Keywords: African indigenous vegetables, dissemination, food security, horticulture, HORTINLEA, interdisciplinary