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“Solidarity in a competing world —
fair use of resources”

Impact of Food Knowledge and Social Structures on Educational Program Development in the Scale-n Project in Rural Tanzania

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Abstract

Food and nutrition security is still one of the most pressing challenges to constantly growing populations in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Scale-N project aims to safeguard food and nutrition among Tanzania's local poor by supporting the development of sustainable agriculture and local knowledge integrated education programme on nutrition. Within the Scale-N education programme the role of food knowledge and social structures in critical food security situation as well as the driving forces for food adoption of the local population in food insecure situations will be assessed. Methodological steps to assess interlinkages between traditional knowledge and social structures on the behaviour in food insecure situations will include (1) exploratory expeditions (2) participant observation (3) household surveys focusing on problem understandings and food perceptions and (4) focus groups. In total 650 households at four different study sites are involved in project activities. Exploratory expeditions and participant observations showed that despite the influence of biophysical environmental conditions (i.e., drought, lack of infrastructure) the patrons of sociocultural structure plays a fundamental role in critical food security situations (scoping strategies for adaptation, routine of child feeding, consumption practices, gender relations of food sharing). Next, in-depth information will be generated (3 and 4) about local knowledge on the driving forces for food adaptation strategies of the local population in food insecure situations. Scale-N project findings will target to inform the national policy planning sectors of food security to develop livelihood adoption strategies and to implement key finding to improve future school and university curricula.

Keywords: Food adoption strategies, food perception, nutrition education