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

Expectations and Reality Check. Evaluation of Impact Assessments of Upgrading Strategies for Food Security

ENRIQUE ALBERTO HERNANDEZ LOPEZ^{1,2}, FRIEDER GRAEF², HANNES KÖNIG²

¹*Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Albrecht Daniel Thaer-Institute of Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences (ADTI), Germany*

²*Leibniz Centre for Agricultural Landscape Research (ZALF), Germany*

Abstract

Rural food insecurity continues to be an unfortunate shadow of many regions, such as semi-arid Dodoma and sub-humid Morogoro regions in Tanzania. In this sense, Trans-SEC project is oriented to understand and address this problem under the umbrella of a Food Value Chain approach. In this five years project, interdisciplinary groups of researchers alongside local rural stakeholders designed and evaluated strategies to enhance local food security. This paper will present the outcome of an *ex-ante* vs. *ex-post* mid-term evaluation, where local stakeholders scored the implemented strategies based on their personal experiences. Using a focus group discussion, nine different strategies were evaluated and scored under nine food security criteria, by a sample of implementers. The evaluation was then discussed in the focus group to gain insights on the “impact arguments” and story lines behind seemingly odd scores. Later-on, the outcome of these evaluations was then compiled, compared and analysed within the village and in between villages and regions, thus gaining a deeper understanding on the reasons behind different outcomes. Results show expected differences between regions, but interestingly there are differences between outcomes that are not entirely related to bio-physical characteristics of the region. The qualitative analysis pointed at implementation status, engagement attitude, unexpected drought conditions, and poor implementation. Whereas the analysis of determinants shows that there are context specific characteristics that influence, both expectations and impact results. Regarding the food security criteria there are clear differences within and between villages both in expectations and impact results. Results signaled areas of improvement in project design, targeting and implementation practices.

Keywords: Food value chains, impact assessment, stakeholder evaluation, upgrading strategies