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“Global food security and food safety:
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Engaging Actors in Participatory Research in Organic Farming: Lessons from Sustainable Agriculture Tanzania — ‘wprd’ Approach

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Abstract

In a context of a changing climate and growing concerns for more healthy food systems, agro-ecology is gaining momentum as a scientific discipline, sustainable farming approach and social movement. However, its promotion in public agricultural policies, research and extension in developing countries as Tanzania is still limited (Silici, 2014). The trust is more on conventional farming despite its little contribution in reducing hunger and poverty. The serious problems of hunger and agrarian unsustainability in Tanzania cannot be solved through technological changes that lessen environmental impacts alone. Although technological change is important, changing the agri-food system as whole is vital (Barbercheck, 2011). Collaboration and active participation of all actors in the development of agro-ecologically relevant technologies is crucial. In this understanding, Sustainable Agriculture Tanzania (SAT), since 2013, in collaboration with the College of Agriculture of Sokoine University of Agriculture has been organising Workshop for Participatory Research Development (WPRD) every year. The workshops bring together farmers, student researchers and their advisors to identify, prioritize farmers’ problems, formulate specific research issues to solve the problem and form research teams.

WPRD follows a Participatory action research (PAR) framework. The research team comprising of researchers and farmers collaborate in all stages from planning through execution to evaluation of action research projects on identified priority research issues. This presentation reflects on stakeholders’ evaluations of the last four WPRD processes, and using content analysis method, presents views and testimonies of all actors on the power of the approach in fostering a belief in a collective power/action, a commitment to participation and establishing trust and accountability towards building capacities for local organic farming. Finding show that actors view the approach as potential for enabling collaborative restructuring of knowledge development and information that support local farming practices, and as a means to achieve greater farmers’ autonomy and self-management. Thus a more sustainable use of local resources to enhance food security and on the other hand improving relevance of university learning and research programs

Keywords: WPRD:Agroecology:Organic Farming:Action Research: Foodsecurity