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Analyses of Value Chains in Food Production in Africa to Create Start up Ideas

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Abstract

A deep understanding of the value chains in agriculture and food production is the basis for entrepreneurial activities and so for income increase and improvement of rural livelihoods in Africa. Success or failure of development in the agricultural sector depends often on the development of strong and effective value chains for the agricultural products. It is not enough to produce agricultural goods but to develop the whole value chain from the input supply over production and processing up to the retail and consumption in order to increase income of farm families. In the past, the scientific focus was often given to single elements of the value chains such as soil, pesticide use or fertilising. Understanding the holistic concept of value chains allows us to identify weak points of a value chain and to overcome the relevant bottlenecks. This leads to optimised resource utilisation and thus income increase. Furthermore, it opens opportunities to identify business start-ups that can be further developed. The presentation deals with the example of such start up ideas created from participants of the Postgraduate Course Food Chains in Agriculture at the Weihenstephan-Triesdorf University of Applied Sciences. The elements of a value chain and their interaction under the holistic concept are shown. The process of elaborating a study project from idea over deep problem analysis and suggestion of a cost efficient solution up to implementation in practice is depicted. A focus is also given to the economic analysis and interpretation of the meaning of the single steps. Pros and cons of the approach as well as challenges for the realisation of the start-ups are analysed and discussed in more detail. The realised start-up gives the opportunity to increase income, create employment in rural areas of African countries, and so improve the living standards of people.

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