



Tropentag, September 14-16, 2022, hybrid conference

“Can agroecological farming feed the world?
Farmers’ and academia’s views”

Agroecological bottlenecks for home gardens to mitigate food and nutritional insecurity within Mbororo minority communities

PRIDE ANYA EBILE

University of Hohenheim, Production of horticultural crops, Germany

Abstract

Home gardens are a nutrition-sensitive agricultural tool used to mitigate food and nutrition insecurity in different types of communities and settings around the world. The type of garden may vary, but one primary objective in the different settings is to increase the availability and accessibility of fresh nutrient-rich crops. Across the world, urban gardens, indoor gardens, rooftop gardens, and vertical farms make an important contribution to the supply of nutrient-rich and fresh vegetables in urban cities with land scarcity. In contrast, home gardens - which can be found in many rural communities in the global south - are still poorly structured and developmental collaborative garden projects mostly run just for a few years. This is more severe in the case of minority communities because they lack access to basic needs than other communities in the same locality. This study aims to evaluate bottlenecks that might hinder a home garden project to be effective in a minority community to increase the availability and accessibility of fresh nutrient-rich vegetables for home consumption and sale. The study uses qualitative research methods such as in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participatory observations to examine a home garden project within the Mbororo minority community of the North West Region of Cameroon.

The results showed that over 90% of the beneficiaries were concerned about hunger and income, not nutrition, in contrast, the project initiators were concerned about dietary diversity and nutrition. Indigenous vegetables such as “Lalo” (Jute mallow) were the least affected by irregular rains and pests. However, the seeds of these indigenous vegetables were scarce because they were not commercialised. Poor soils, irregular rains, and pests, such as caterpillars, hindered the growth of all vegetables.

The study concludes that the indigenous vegetables were the most adapted and preferred by the beneficiaries. Even with their limited knowledge of gardening and bottlenecks, the beneficiaries planted, harvested, sell, and increased their intake of fresh nutrient-rich vegetables. This suggests that capacity building and co-learning or co-development of good horticultural practices will increase the efficiency and effectiveness of home garden projects in minority communities.

Keywords: Home garden, horticultural practices, minority community, rural communities