Summary news articles AgriFoSe2030 2024:

Theory of Change: Planning and measuring impact in projects and research

Event 5 December 2024

GCUA 2030 welcomes you to an inspiring webinar on the Theory of Change approach with Dr. Elisabeth Rajala (SLU) and Prof. Robert Musundire (Chinhoyi University of Technology, Zimbabwe).

The webinar will cover practical use of the Theory of Change (ToC) approach for planning and measuring impact in projects and research, drawing on case studies of the AgriFoSe2030 (Agriculture for Food Security 2030) programme and related initiatives to translate science into policy and practice:

- Elisabeth will demonstrate how ToC has served as a core tool in the design and implementation of AgriFoSe2030, and highlight key elements of the programme's ToC and impact pathway.

- Robert will showcase application of the ToC approach in project work on "Edible Insects for Food Security and Health – from Practice to Evidence and Policy Implications in Democratic Republic of Congo and Zimbabwe".

We invite participants to join from GCUA partner and other universities, to find inspiration and practical tips on applying ToC to your own projects and research.

AgriFoSe2030 cookbook triumphs again: Clinches top spot in Gourmand Awards' Future Foods category

Published: 16 January 2024

We congratulate the amazing project team behind the second edition of the Edible insects cook book winning the Gourmand Awards in the Future Foods category. The project belongs to challenge 1 in AgriFoSe2030.

In October 2022, the AgriFoSe2030 project team at Chinhoyi University in Zimbabwe launched a ground-breaking cookbook titled "Edible Insects: Food for the Future." This culinary venture aims to showcase the potential of incorporating insects into the African diet as a sustainable solution to combat food insecurity. The AgriFoSe2030 team's commitment to innovation and sustainability was duly rewarded in November 2023 when the cookbook secured a prestigious victory at the Gourmand Awards in the Future Foods category. This recognition not only celebrated the culinary excellence of the cookbook but also highlighted the importance of embracing unconventional yet sustainable food choices in the face of global food challenges.

The project team had previously received acclaim for their inaugural cookbook, "Les Délices de Mikese" which won the 1st prize in the Best Innovation Category at the Gourmand Awards in 2022.

One remarkable aspect of this culinary movement is its transformative impact on the lives of collectors and traders. The income generated from insect collection and trade has become a catalyst for positive change, contributing not only to individual well-being but also to community development. Families are now better equipped to meet their basic needs and plan for the future, thanks to the economic empowerment facilitated by the burgeoning insect industry.

The EastAfrican emphasise AgriFoSe2030 project in Kenya

Published: 15 February 2024

The widely spread newspaper The EastAfrican recently published a news article emphasising the successful training manuals produced within Challenge 4 in AgriFoSe2030. The manuals focuses on traditional leafy vegetables and are part of the project "Governance of food systems for improved food security in Nakuru and Kisumu Counties, Kenya" lead by Samuel Onyango Omondi.

"Traditional leafy vegetables, native to Africa, play a crucial role in local diets due to their good response to inputs, adaptability, and richness in vitamins and minerals. An AgriFoSe2030 project, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), identifies these vegetables as pivotal for improving food and nutrition security, as well as providing income to smallholder farmers in Nakuru and Kisumu Counties, Kenya..." - The EastAfrican

Why does science communication matter?

Published: 12 March 2024

In a digital era where we are overwhelmed with information from different directions, effective science communication stands as a essential bridge between complex research findings and public understanding. Recognising this, the AgriFoSe2030 programme together with SIANI, hosted a successful event to empower researchers with enhanced media engagement skills.

The primary objective of this media engagement training was to equip researchers, scientists, and experts in food systems and agriculture with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively communicate their research findings through various media channels. By enhancing their ability to bridge the gap between scientific knowledge and public understanding, the training aimed to foster increased awareness, engagement, and impact. 73 participants joined the webinar from more than 20 different countries all over the world.

"Researchers need to remind themselves whom they are really doing the research for – it's mostly for society rather than other researchers." - Selorm Kugbega, Research Fellow at SEI HQ

Spanning over a three-hour interactive session, the training dived into essential components crucial for effective media communication:

Importance of science communication: Ng'endo Machua-Muniu, Engagement and Impact Officer at SEI Africa, and Selorm Kugbega, Research Fellow at SEI Headquarters, started the training by emphasising the crucial role of science communication in driving societal change and progress.

Practical communication skills: Ulrika Lamberth, Senior Press Officer at SEI, hosted a session abotu understanding the dynamics of media landscapes and improve communication skills to effectively convey complex scientific information.

Crafting compelling content: Thin Lei Win, a renowned freelance journalist specialising in food and climate issues, guided the participants through press releases, OpEds, and media-friendly content. A quick guide to incorporating visuals for impactful storytelling was also provided.

Engaging with media outlets: Arinaitwe Rugyendo, Founder and Editor-in-Chief of ResearchFinds News, Uganda, will share insights on building relationships with journalists and understanding the diverse needs of media outlets.

Communicate your research on social media: Molly Burd, Digital Coordinator at SEI Headquarters, gave an overview of effective social media usage and guided the participants in developing a brief plan for research dissemination, supplemented by a case study.

Conclusion

As the world is facing pressing challenges in food systems and agriculture, effective science communication emerges as an esssential tool for driving positive change. The media engagement training is an important help for researchers and their ability to implicate a deeper understanding of complex issues among diverse audiences. Through collaboration, knowledge sharing, and practical skill development, participants are poised to become influential agents of change in their respective fields.

Did you miss the webinar or do you want to see it again?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wBQFfiK9n1c

Take-home messages:

Find your target audience - which channels do they use?

Make sure your story is newsworthy

- Why are you writing it?
- Which outlet?
- What do you want to achieve?
- Who is the audience?
- Where should it be published?

Do your homework - plan your communication

AgriFoSe2030 project boosts livestock management and environmental conservation

Published: 17 April 2024

The AgriFoSe2030 project "TRAMAP" within Challenge 2 has been a successful collaborative effort between pastoralists, agro-pastoralists, scientists, and local authorities in Samburu County, Kenya, and shown promising results to empower agricultural productivity and develop sustainable rangeland management.

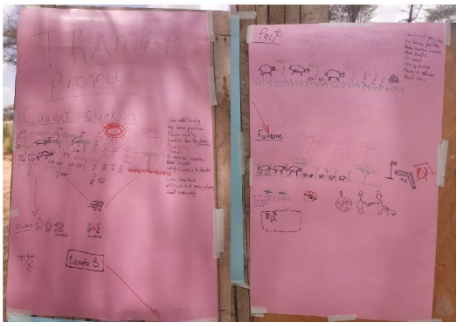
The "Science-based and co-produced transformative rangeland management practices" (TRAMAP) project's overarching objective was to empower pastoralists and agro-pastoralists to enhance agricultural productivity while preserving landscape ecosystem functions through collective action and gender-sensitive adoption of sustainable practices. This initiative aimed to achieve the goals through various specific objectives, including capacity building, knowledge co-production, and stakeholder networking.

A farmer identifies camel forages with other camel keepers during field visit in Samburu East (Photo by J. Mutune, 2023)

One important part was the training of 19 Trainers of Trainers (ToTs) on camel husbandry, health, and welfare. This collaborative learning initiative brought together camel keepers to exchange indigenous knowledge and scientific insights, equipping them with essential skills for improving camel productivity, disease management, marketing, and value addition. The ToTs are expected to disseminate this knowledge widely, promoting household resilience against climate variability and enhancing food security in Samburu County. Another significant part was the capacity strengthening of Mr. Nathaniel Tum, an addition to the County government's Livestock Department.

Peer-to-peer learning on camel husbandry practices in Samburu East (photo by J. Mutune, 2023)

The project had a large focus on the species *Vachellia reficiens* and how local pastoralists and farmers can manage to live and work around it. The local community describes *V. reficiens* as a 'land grabber' because where the species grow, there are no pastures for livestock and wildlife and creates soil surface crusting which exacerbates flooding, soil erosion and low herbaceous plant biodiversity. The reduced pastureland by *V. reficiens* aggravates pasture scarcity and conflicts among pastoralists. The control of this invader species is to reduce the density of the population. The TRAMAP team build capacity of the community and extension workers in Samburu East on mechanical control. The cleared areas are then reseeded with rangeland grasses after installing rainwater harvesting structures.



TRAMAP project – Rich picture exercise at Lerata B, Samburu East Sub-County

The establishment of demonstration sites for hands-on learning purposes underscore the project's sustainability beyond its lifespan. The commitment of the County government to maintain these sites for future training activities highlights a promising partnership between local authorities and the community. By empowering local communities, building institutional capacity, and promoting knowledge exchange, this initiative represents a step forward in enhancing livelihoods and conserving natural resources in the region.

The native land grabber – Vachellia reficiens's proliferation in rangelands

Published: 17 April 2024

The Vachellia reficiens is a native species in most part of Samburu East. The local community described V. reficiens as a 'land grabber' because where the species grow, there are no pastures for livestock and wildlife and creates soil surface crusting which exacerbates flooding, soil erosion and low herbaceous plant biodiversity.

The TRAMAP project within Challenge 2 in AgriFoSe2030 works with capacity building and *Training of Trainers* to support pastoralists and agro-pastoralists to increase agricultural productivity and enhanced landscape ecosystem functions through collective and gender observed adoption of sustainable rangeland management practices and networking. One of the main focuses is to reduce the spread of the species V. Reficiens to be able to increase biodiversity.

The reduced pastureland by *V. reficiens* aggravates pasture scarcity and conflicts among pastoralists. The *Vachellia reficiens* does spread seed dispersal through livestock and wildlife; humans; machinery; water (during floods); and whirl wind. The *V. reficiens* is prolific and successful in varied environments because; it can survive in different ecological systems; grow and mature fast; is prolific and produce many seeds per season; lack natural enemies in the new environment; ability to adapt to new environment fast.

Caption: Community members participate in mechanical bush control. Photo by J. Mutune.

The control of this invader species is to reduce the density of the population. The TRAMAP team build capacity of the community and extension workers in Samburu East on mechanical control – when and at what height to cut, cutting the bush at breast - height, collecting during the onset of the dry season, and mechanically destroying the propagules (i.e. seeds). The cleared areas are then reseeded with rangeland grasses after installing rainwater harvesting structures to reclaim it from the invasive species. During a peer-to-peer network and exchange in Baringo, the Seiya CBO demonstrated to 14 trainers of trainers from Samburu East how to reseed not only for rangeland restoration but also for commercial fodder production.

Upcoming events with AgriFoSe2030

Published: 18 September 2024

AgriFoSe2030 will take part in two Swedish events during the autumn to emphasise and present some of the fantastic outcomes from the programme.

AgriFoSe2030 at the Gothenburg Book Fair 2024

Thursday 26 September – 13:00. -13:40 CEST

Selorm Kugbega from AgriFoSe2030 will represent the organization at the Gothenburg Book Fair 2024, participating in a panel discussion organized by SIANI and Sida on the green/environment stage on 26th September 2024. The event will include an exhibition of edible insects' cookbooks and a video showcase. The panel aims to deepen understanding of innovative and sustainable solutions for food supply at both local and global levels, while also promoting synergies between local development, trade, and aid within Swedish development cooperation.

AgriFoSe2030 at DevRes 2024

Wednesday 23 October - 11:00-12:45 CEST

AgriFoSe2030 will be participating at DevRes2024 at Lund University. Heather Mackay from challenge 4 will be presenting on ***'How AgriFoSe2030 Achieved Research Impact Benefiting Smallholders'*** at the impact story session where we will showcase ***how and in what way*** our research has contributed to societal impact linked to sustainable development in a least developed or middle–income country.

The session is meant to both exemplify the diversity that Swedish affiliated researchers and their international collaborators engage in as well as inspire constructive hope about the critical importance of this research field to contribute to reaching the SDGs.

Stakeholder engagement drives agricultural progress in Kenya

Published: 26 June 2024

A decade ago Kenya embarked on the path of devolution, a transformative move to enhance service delivery and foster self-governance by shifting governmental functions to the county level. This decentralization presented both challenges and opportunities, especially in the agricultural sector. Formerly managed by the National Ministry of Agriculture, agricultural responsibilities now rest with devolved ministries, allowing for tailored, local interventions aimed at boosting productivity.

To navigate this transition and address emerging challenges, the AgriFoSe2030 project, *'Functions in extension service pathways – Kenya, Sri Lanka and Laos',* organized a series of feedback and stakeholder engagement workshops in Embu and Tharaka Nithi Counties. These workshops brought together a diverse group of participants, including 109 smallholder farmers (69 females and 49 males) and 31 county government officials, such as chief officers, directors, and county extension workers.

The primary objectives of the workshops were to provide policymakers with detailed feedback on project outcomes and present the policy briefs prepared during the project period. Another key objective was to inform smallholder farmers about the importance of communicating their challenges to researchers and accessing support from extension workers and policies to improve productivity. Additionally, the workshops sought to unite researchers, farmers, extension workers, and policymakers to highlight the roles of each stakeholder, enhancing collaboration and partnerships for increased agricultural productivity.

The workshops focused on fostering collaboration among stakeholders in the extension support systems within the counties. Through group discussions, participants identified ways to address the challenges hindering increased productivity.

Several key commitments and actions emerged during the workshops. The county governments committed to ongoing engagement with researchers for evidence-based policy development. Researchers were invited to address the Embu county government assembly to highlight the challenges facing extension service delivery and propose interventions. Researchers pledged to co-identify, co-design, and co-implement research projects with farmers and government extension service providers to increase the uptake of developed interventions and impact. County governments committed to boosting budgetary support for extension services. The county assembly representatives promised to engage the executive arm of the county government to employ more extension service providers. Farmers expressed a willingness to receive and provide feedback on scientific evidence related to improved Technologies, Innovations, and Management Practices (TIMPs).

Deputy programme director in AgriFoSe2030, Dr. Cecilia Moraa Onyango, University of Nairobi, together with Dr. Justin Muhoro Nyaga, University of Embu, are leading the Kenyan part of the project.

The workshops observed significant immediate responses and attitude changes among participants. There was a marked increase in understanding and interest in collaborative efforts among stakeholders to improve extension service structures and functions. Government representatives acknowledged the crucial role of research in informing policy and practice.

The workshops significantly contributed to strengthening relationships with stakeholders. Simplified dissemination materials, such as information sheets and policy briefs, were produced to ensure effective communication. Active and purposeful engagement with the county government involved participation in scheduled meetings with farmers. Throughout the project, strong working relationships were developed with farmers, extension service providers, and county government officials.

The workshops also faced challenges - communication in Kiswahili and local languages posed difficulties for some participants, and engaging participants of different ages in a single meeting presented its own set of challenges. Despite these challenges, the willingness of all stakeholders to engage and collaborate was a significant enabler for the success of the workshops.

The workshops in Embu and Tharaka Nithi Counties have laid a strong foundation for ongoing collaboration and improvement in agricultural productivity. By addressing the challenges and leveraging the strengths of each stakeholder, the counties are poised to enhance service delivery and achieve greater food security through effective devolution.

These workshops highlight the transformative potential of stakeholder engagement and collaboration in enhancing agricultural productivity at the county level.