

## “Bridging scientific and indigenous peoples’ knowledge for sustainable and inclusive food systems”

Date of the event: July 06, 2021, 4:00pm -5:30pm CET

The side-event ‘Bridging scientific and indigenous peoples’ knowledge for sustainable and inclusive food systems’ was held on 6th July, 2021 in the framework of the UNFSS 2021 Science Days. The event was organised by Dr. Katharina Löhr and Dr. Constance Rybak (ZALF), Prof. Dr. Hettie Schönfeldt (University of Pretoria), and Dr. Harry Hoffmann (Welthungerhilfe). Major objectives of the event included discussing the science-indigenous knowledge nexus and the ways to bridge the gap between science and indigenous knowledge to achieve sustainable food systems.

The session that included six presentations and a Q&A slot was held online with participants from all over the world attending the meeting. Lectures were delivered by Dr. David Ludwig, Wageningen University (Netherlands), Prof. Dr. Hettie Schönfeldt, University of Pretoria (South Africa), Carlos Vacaflores, San Andrés Agricultural Institute (Bolivia), Dr. Dhanya Vijayan, Leibniz Center for Agricultural Landscape Research (Germany), Ulla Santara, Welthungerhilfe Mali, and Dr. Hadijah Ally Mbwana, Sokoine University of Agriculture (Tanzania). Topics covered theoretical aspects regarding the current debates of science-indigenous knowledge nexus and the need of integration of traditional indigenous knowledge with current modern food systems supported by case examples from Bolivia, India, Mali and Tanzania.

### Based on the lectures and the Q&A the following themes were emerged:

Science led modern agriculture and food systems do not integrate indigenous knowledge to great extent despite the debates on bridging the gap between science and indigenous knowledge and bridging the knowledge systems requires high level political and knowledge integration.

Indigenous food systems are generally diverse, healthy, nutrient rich and produced in a sustainable way. In spite of global challenges including rapid urbanisation, loss of indigenous languages, land grabbing and forced displacement of indigenous people, indigenous food systems can provide important knowledge and technologies on and for sustainable, healthy and affordable food systems. To optimize the potentials of traditional knowledge systems however, a bottom-up approach is essential, based on a dense network of research institutions embedded within their local contexts.

Traditional indigenous cultures were highly adapted to their environment and their knowledge evolved through centuries of human-nature interaction which was subsequently lost also to colonization. Building new paradigmatic frameworks of knowledge, dialogue and ecology, where scientific and traditional knowledge can take advantage of the richness of the biocultural food heritage is important to achieve the nexus of science and indigenous knowledge.

Current forest management policies, for example, do not integrate the traditional indigenous knowledge and thus leads to the loss of traditional food system knowledge and human-nature harmony. Generally, policy reforms need to aim at building local knowledge and support collective resource management.

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