

Announcement of MSc thesis research fieldwork funding on the topics of

1) Implementing participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) systems for self-monitoring with dairy farmers and milk transporter groups

2) Out-scaling innovation by supporting peer-to-peer learning networks in the Kenyan small-scale dairy sector

to contribute towards

[Social Sciences: Knowledge, Collaborative Learning and Action \(Sub-Project 7\)](#)

in the frame of the project

[Reduction of Post Harvest Losses and Value Addition in East African Food Value Chains \(RELOAD\)](#)

funded through the

[Research for the Global Food Supply \(GlobE\) initiative of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research \(BMBF\) in cooperation with the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development](#)

Project aims and approach:

The RELOAD project aims at developing and testing improvements for the reduction of post-harvest losses and the creation of added value using transdisciplinary research methods based on a cooperation of scientists, practitioners and other societal actors. Through the integration of cross-cutting social science methods (SP7), a project goal is to implement learning possibilities with different actors along the supply chain, including producers, transporters and small-scale processors, to enlarge their scope of action and to improve their position along the value chain.

Transdisciplinary approaches for action research inform how to engage with the people who comprise the human activity systems that create these food chains such that they can increase their benefits through reduced losses and added value. Qualitative research methods based on facilitation of group activities will inform analysis. Quantitative methods can be used when the people involved are interested in the results such as through a co-inquiry, in order to ensure that the process of research remains relevant and fine-tuned to the people directly involved. When the people whose actions make up the system are engaged in learning, there is more possibility, that they might be able to change their actions, either individually, or through collective action.



Photo 1: *Lelea, 2015, milk trader group in Nakuru, Kenya*

Focus area:

Cow milk is currently Kenya's most important agricultural commodity, both in terms of quantity produced and in terms of value (FAOSTAT 2011). Milk is produced predominantly by smallholders. Losses in milk take many forms; such as spoilage when milk transporters are delayed by police checks or slippery roads; or from foregone benefits, such as when an added value possibility exists but is not organized as when farmers sell their milk individually rather than bulked for a higher price. SP7 RELOAD research in dairy in Nakuru County includes collaborative learning with diverse actors along the dairy chain. A multi-stakeholder group was established in 2015 with dairy farmers and milk trader/ transporters from multiple areas of the County and retailers (milk bar owners) from the city of Nakuru, along with strategic government officials. Research in 2017-18 will continue collaboration to expand activities.

Two MSc thesis topics are available. Students with background in the following fields are encouraged to apply: Social Ecology; Agricultural Science; Education and Extension; Systems Science with focus on Food Systems and Human Geography.

1) Out-scaling innovation by supporting peer-to-peer learning networks in the Kenyan small-scale dairy sector

During the fieldwork this thesis includes the following tasks:

- Analyse agricultural extension possibilities through peer-to-peer training approaches
- Facilitate network-building among small-scale dairy sector farmers, milk transporters and milk retailers to investigate out-scaling possibilities
- Support on-going multi-stakeholder processes to improve communication and cooperation
- Support institutionalization possibilities with regulatory and government bodies

2) Enhance learning with dairy farmers and milk transporter groups through implementation of participatory monitoring and evaluation (PM&E) systems for self-monitoring

During the fieldwork this thesis includes the following tasks:

- Support newly formed and established dairy farmer and milk trader groups to increase the benefits from milk production with the goal of reducing losses and adding value
- Facilitate creation of self-monitoring structures with farmer groups and milk transporter groups
- Support collaborative learning among these farmer and milk transporter groups to include critical analysis and evaluation of their own self-monitoring
- Facilitate revisions of action plans based on their PM&E and support the groups in enacting revised action plans with sustained PM&E

Time frames

- First round of application review: September 1st, 2017 and second round of application review September 30th, 2017. **In your application, please specify exactly when you would be available for three months of fieldwork.** All fieldwork must be completed by March 2018. The amount of time needed to prepare for fieldwork will depend on previous qualifications as well as on availability (part-time or full-time for fieldwork preparation).

Study area

The study will be carried out in pre-selected research sites in collaboration with other RELOAD research partners within the Rift Valley, in Nakuru County, Kenya.

Prerequisites

- Strong interest in active collaboration with people involved in small-scale milk supply chains and application of social science methodologies associated with a transdisciplinary action research approach
- Familiarity with tropical smallholder farming systems/supply chains
- Fluency in English for fieldwork activities and for writing of MSc thesis in English
- Knowledge of Kiswahili is an asset for fieldwork but not required
- Permission from MSc program for first supervisor to come from DITSL

Funding

Costs of fieldwork and travel are covered by the BMBF project - RELOAD. This includes travel from Germany to the fieldsite, in-country transportation, supplies such as facilitation materials, field translation services and transcription. This does not include housing and food.

Supervision from DITSL

Prof. Dr. Brigitte Kaufmann and Dr. Margareta Amy Lelea

Application Process

Please send your application (CV, transcript of records, motivation letter) to m.a.lelea@ditsl.org or ask for further information.